

Sir Frederick William Black, K.C.B.

**Isle of Wight County Press
14 June 1930**

DEATH OF SIR FREDK. W. BLACK K.C.B.

Newportonian's Distinguished Career

Funeral at Carisbrooke

With profound regret we record the death of a notable Newportonian in the person of Sir Frederick William Black, K.C.B., which took place on Saturday morning at his beautiful Surrey residence, Pinewood View, Frimley Green, and the age of 67. The end came after a brief illness, of which few outside his family were aware, and the suddenness of the distressing event intensified the sorrow at the passing of a distinguished Islander, whose eminent services for his country won the fullest confidences and approbation of those in high authority, as well as the signal recognition of H.M. the King, and the admiration of hosts of friends particularly in the Island, the which he brought honour in a marked degree.

Sir Frederick Black was the second and eldest surviving son of the late Mr. Frederick William Black, on Westminster House, Newport. He was proud of the fact that he was an old boy of the Newport Grammar School, which he entered at the age of nine years, during the highly capable headmastership of the late Rev. E. W. Watts, M.A. There on more than one occasion he won the prize given by the late Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, which preceded those given by the late Queen Victoria. He ever had a warm place in his heart for his old school and head-master, and as a permanent token of his grateful appreciation he some years ago endowed the Watts Memorial prize to be annually awarded at the Grammar School. He afterwards graduated as Bachelor of Arts at London University, with honours in the English language and literature. He passed the examination in open competition for the Civil Service in 1880, and transferred from the Colonial Office to the Admiralty after a further competitive examination in 1883.

It was in his work for the British Navy that he began to make his mark. He served under the Admiralty at stations abroad, including Malta and Ceylon, acting for a time as additional police magistrate in Ceylon. In 1908 he advanced to the responsible post of Director of Naval Stores at the Admiralty, and three years later was promoted to the position of Director of Naval Contracts. He showed exceptional ability by arduous reorganization work in these two important department, and it was doubtless primarily in recognition of his splendid services in that connection that he was knighted by His Majesty in 1913, when his name appeared with that of the late Sir Edgar Chatfeild-Clarke in the King's Birthday Honours list of Knight Bachelor. He had previously been honoured with the Commandership of the Bath in 1908. During his Admiralty service he went on a tour of inspection practically around the world, the stations visited including Hong Kong, Weiha-wei, and the Canadian yard, and he went to Pekin with special official letters just before the siege of the Legations at the Boxer rising.

After the outbreak of the Great War Sir Frederick did outstanding work in connection with the stupendous effort necessary in the organization of the supply of munitions to meet the demands, and in August, 1915, was lent to the Ministry of Munitions as Director-General of Munitions Supply. A very heavy strain was put on Sir Frederick Black and his department, but he proved equal to it. Early in 1917 he was sent to India to assist the Government there in the supply of munitions, and in July, 1917, he went to America on a similar errand. He was attached to the British War Mission to the United States and was placed in charge of the Oil Committee entrusted with the vitally important work of arranging for the purchase and shipment of oil from the United States for the three fighting Services and the Board of Trade. Towards the end of 1917, when Lord Northcliffe returned to England, Sir Frederick Black remained in the United States as acting chairman of the Mission until February, 1918. His services with the War Mission were recognized in 1917 in the honour of the K.C.B., awarded by the King. He was also honoured by foreign countries, being Commander of the French Legion of Honour, 1918, Commander of the Belgian Order of the Crown, 1918, and the Russian Order of St. Anne (1st Class), 1917.

He resigned from the Admiralty Service in 1919 and afterwards held responsible positions in leading oil companies, being managing director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company from 1919 to 1923, when he retired. He was afterwards a director of the Steaua Rowana Oil Companies (British and Romanian) and of other companies. He was also president of the Institution of Petroleum Technologists in 1919.

Keenly interested in the advancement of the education of working people, the late Sir Frederick Black found scope for congenial activities as chairman for eight years of the governing body of the Morley College, Waterloo-road, London, founded in memory of another Islander, the late Prof. H. Morley, of Carisbrooke. He had been connected with the college for nearly 30 years and was a vice-president at the time of his death. He devoted some of his leisure, particularly in late years, to literary work of local historical and general interest, as the columns of this journal have frequently testified. Only a few months ago he completed "A Parliamentary History of the Isle of Wight," which was published by the County Press. It is a work of much historic value and has received considerable public recognition. In it Sir Frederick acknowledged that much of his interest in and knowledge of the subject had been derived from his late father's active participation as a worker in many local electoral contests. The later Mr. Frederick W. Black will be remembered as local Liberal agent for many years. Sir Frederick's personal recollections of local elections went back to the days of open voting, before the passing of the Ballot Act. Sir Frederick wrote the particularly interesting "Foreward" to the "Poets of the Wight," in which appear examples of his own poems, some of which evidence his great love for his native Island. He was also the author of another interesting local publication, "The Lady Isabella," a 13th century tale of Carisbrooke and the Island, commemorative of Isabella de Fortibus, Lady of the Wight, and dedicated to H.R.H. Princess Beatrice. Sir Frederick was a versatile and attractive lecturer on subjects of local and general interest, and one of his last public appearances in the Island was at a League of Nations demonstration at Newport, at which one of his songs, specially suited to the occasion, was sung. He was a warm supporter of the London Vectensian Society, which he had splendidly served as president on more than one occasion, and at annual dinners the singing of his Isle of Wight songs aroused much enthusiasm. He was one of those who took part in the debates of the old Newport Debating Society.

In his early days he was an ardent oarsman and swimmer, a keen athlete, and one who frequently followed the Island fox-hounds on foot. He was greatly interested in the feat of rowing round the Island, as he was one of those who accomplished this arduous long distance pull of 70 miles 50 years ago, achieving what at the time was regarded as a record.

Of a charming personality, modest and unassuming, he was to the end proud of the fact that he was a native of Newport, and he maintained to the last his keen interest in Island affairs and his attachment for the local institutions of his early associations. He married in 1890 Sarah Isabela, daughter of the late James Davisson, of Folkestone, and has one son and three daughters. The deepest sympathy of his many Island friends will go out to Lady Black and family in their heavy bereavement.

THE FUNERAL AT NEWPORT

Due tribute to the memory of one who had brought honour and distinction to his native place was paid at Newport on Wednesday, when Sir Frederick's remains were brought home for burial beside those of his parents in Carisbrooke Cemetery. The flag on the Town-hall was flying at half-mast, many business establishments displayed black shutters, and there was a gathering representative of Sir Frederick's many national and local interests at the Parish Church of St. Mary, Carisbrooke, where a service was held prior to the interment. The Vicar and Rural Dean of West Wight (the Rev. H. S. Footman) officiated, assisted by the Rev. A. F. Hill (headmaster of the Newport Grammar School), who read the lesson.