

Ada Russell
Isle of Wight County Press 27 February 1960

FOUR TIMES MAYORESS
DEATH OF MRS. G. C. RUSSELL, OF NEWPORT

The death on Saturday of Mrs. Ada Russell, aged 79, wife of Ald. G. C. Russell, J.P., of Llangua, Whitepit Lane, Newport, removed from the local scene one who for over half-a-century had been a well-loved resident, and who will be remembered as much for her gentle nature and unobtrusive acts of kindness as for the fact she had been four times Mayoress of the ancient borough. She had been a member of the Castlehold Baptist Church for over half-a-century and it is there, especially, that her devoted work and gracious presence will be missed.

Mrs. Russell, whose maiden name was Prosser, was a native of South Herefordshire, and she met her husband in Hereford, where he started his business career with a local firm. They were married there in 1907, and shortly afterwards Mr. Russell returned to his native Newport to re-establish the family bakery and grocery business which he carried on for many years at No. 1 High Street. His wife joined him, and for many years assisted in the conduct of the business, which was subsequently formed into a limited liability company. Mr. and Mrs. Russell moved to Whitepit Lane in 1928, and had lived there ever since.

As Mayoress during her husband's mayoralties in 1938-39 and 1939-40, Mrs. Russell aptly supported him during the very anxious period, covering the uncertainties following the Munich agreement and the actual outbreak of the last war. She shared the burden loyally, not sparing herself, and gave an energetic lead in such branches of war work as the Red Cross Hospital Supply depot established at Halberry House, where her skill as a needlewoman was greatly appreciated, and also in the work of the Forces' Canteen at Princess Beatrice's Drill Hall. Again, during her husband's mayoralties in 1949-50 and 1958-59, she gave him unstinted support, and continued to perform the many duties which fell to her with that characteristic charm and sympathetic understanding which won her widespread affection and esteem. Among the many activities in Newport in which she took a great interest were the Afternoon Townswomen's Guild, of which she was president during her years as Mayoress and a vice-president for several of the intervening years, and the W.V.S. Darby and Joan Club which was established while her husband was Mayor in 1949-50.

At the Castlehold Baptist Church, in which her husband is also a leading figure and former choirmaster, Mrs. Russell did her utmost to further all branches of church work, especially as a member of the Women's League. She loved flowers and her home, which was run with the same gentle efficiency which marked her public work. Ald. and Mrs. Russell celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in April, 1957, when they were visited and congratulated by the then Mayor (Mr. W. G. Bull, J.P.) and were hosts at a celebration party at Harvey's Restaurant.

THE FUNERAL

A large congregation attended the funeral at Castlehold Baptist Church on Thursday. All sections of the church were represented, and ministers and members of other Island Baptist churches and churches of other denominations, including the Salvation Army, were present.

The Mayor of Newport (Ald. A. O. Purdy, C.C.) was accompanied by Mr. W. R. Wilks (town clerk), Ald. A. F. Wright, J.P., represented the Mayor of Ryde (Lt.-Col. L. W. Lewer, D.S.O.), and magistrates, aldermen, and councillors of the two boroughs and members of the County Council were also present. Among other societies and organisations represented were the I.W. Moral Welfare Association, Young Leaguers, Camp Hill Board of Visitors, Newport Aid to Lepers Society, Newport Darby and Joan Club, Newport Charities Trustees, Central Wight Boy Scouts' and Girl Guides' Associations, Newport Rotary Club, Newport Youth Club, Newport Victoria Sports Club, Newport Afternoon Townswomen's Guild, Newport Allotments Association, King James I Grammar School and the trustees and Old Boys' Association of that school, Carisbrooke Grammar School, the Albany Lodge of Freemasons, and the I.W. Grocers' Association. Mr. W. J. Fallick represented Messrs. G. C. Russell, Ltd.

"WON THE HEARTS OF ALL"

The service was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Williams, assisted by the Rev. W. J. Stokes (Congregational). The choir led the singing of the hymns "There is a land of pure delight," and "In heavenly love abiding," accompanied at the organ by Mrs. R. Knights. Mr. Williams said they were thankful for a life well lived, and in that gathering were paying tribute to one who loved God and gave herself away in service. Any attempt to catalogue Mrs. Russell's activities and works of kindness and goodness would be incomplete, but he mentioned her service to the community as mayoress on four occasions, when her grace and charm won the love, affection, and gratitude of all whom she served so well, and referred to her wartime work, and her interest in the National Children's Home and Orphanage and in various organisations. They would always remember her as one of their most loyal workers at Castlehold, regularly in attendance at the House of God, always quick to leap to any opportunity of service within the church. Although Baptist by conviction, she was catholic in her outlook, and any help she could give to any Christian body was given unsparingly. They would always remember her gracious personality; she won her way into the hearts of all.

The mourners were: Ald. G. C. Russell (husband), Mrs. Muriel Crook (niece), Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. E. Pattie, Mrs. W. Russell, Mr. G. Newbery, Mrs. E. Honor, Miss L. Abraham, Mrs. M. Harding, and Mr. F. Chiverton. Cremation followed at Southampton. Messrs. H. and F. Damp, Ltd., made the arrangements.

It was requested that no flowers be sent, but instead donations be given to the Newport appeal for the World Refugee Year.

Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,

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