

George Robert Barrett

Isle of Wight County Press 10 January 1948

DEATH OF MR. G. R. BARRETT, OF NEWPORT.

Former Organist Of Carisbrooke Church.

We much regret to record the death, which occurred on Sunday night at 153 Carisbrooke Road, Newport, where he resided with his sister (Mrs. R. Sheppard), of Mr. George Robert Barrett, for 25 years the able and devoted organist at Carisbrooke Parish Church, and for 45 years a much esteemed member of the staff of the I.W. County Press Company, and the acting manager of the firm during the war.

Mr. Barrett, who was 65, was the elder son of the late Mr. Robert Barrett, a well known engine driver on the Island railways. On leaving school he commenced his association with the printing and newspaper industry as a member of the clerical staff of the "I.W. Express" at Newport. He joined the clerical staff of the "County Press" in 1902, eventually taking charge of the jobbing printing department and later, during the absence of Lieut.-Col. C. W. Brannon, M.C., T.D., D.L., on service during the last war, he deputised for him as general manager of the firm.

His wide knowledge of the industry and his unfailing courtesy and helpfulness gained him the warm esteem of everyone he met in business and of his colleagues of the "County Press". He gave an inspiring example of selfless devotion to duty, and this admirable trait in his character was never more evident than during the difficult days of the war, when heavy burdens fell on his shoulders, particularly when the "County Press" premises and his own house suffered damage by enemy action. The poor health which he had suffered for the last two years, causing his retirement about a year ago, was undoubtedly the result of these war-time anxieties and strains.

Although very well known through his connection with the "County Press", Mr. Barrett was even better known as the organist of Carisbrooke Parish Church. He was largely self-taught, but was a very skilful organist, who held the real affection of the choristers. Under his leadership the music at the church reached a high standard. He loved music, particularly sacred music, and no organist ever had a deeper sense of worship in performing his duties.

His desire for the best in his musical service to the church was shown by the fact that his choir was one of the first in the Island to be affiliated with the Royal School of English Church Music and had taken part in its festivals. He was also organist at the church of St. Nicholas-in-the-Castle, where his playing and arrangement of the music for the services often won expressions of appreciation from H.R.H. the late Princess Beatrice.

As a bass singer Mr. Barrett was for many years a member of the Newport Philharmonic Society, and in addition to assisting the society as a vocalist he gave it greatly appreciated service as its deputy conductor and assistant hon. secretary for a while. He was the chairman of the Island branch of the Hampshire Association of Organists and a member of the former Newport Bach Choir. During the first world war he served for three years in the R.A.S.C.(M.T.) and for a short time afterwards was employed by H.M. Stationary Office, and during the recent war he was a Fire Guard leader. He was a member of the British Legion.

Apart from his calling and his music, his chief interest was in railways. He inherited this interest from his father and had made a close study of the subject, particularly from a models points of view. He

possessed a valuable collection of models and his keenness in this hobby led to him becoming one of the most enthusiastic members of the I.W. Model Engineering Society.

Although never very robust, he was an ardent devotee of rowing in his younger days, being one of the most active members of the Newport Rowing Club.

In all his associations his keenness, good sportsmanship, and unfailing cheerfulness and courtesy won him popularity and esteem, and all who knew him will cherish his memory. Sincere sympathy is felt with his brothers, two sisters, and other relatives in their bereavement.

The funeral took place on Thursday the service at Carisbrooke Parish Church being largely attended. The Vicar (the Rev. D. S. McKenzie), the churchwardens (Messrs. H. Phillips, C. J. J. Samuel, and F. Attrill), and the robed choir met the cortege at the Lych gate and the hymn "Holy Father cheer our way" was sung in procession. The service also included the hymn "My God, how wonderful Thou art". Psalm 23, and Walford Davies' motet "God be in my head", sung unaccompanied by the choir. The Vicar paid tribute to Mr. Barrett's admirable qualities, referring specially to his generosity, his unceasing effort to achieve perfection in the musical part of the services, and his kindly interest in the choir boys. The choir again led the recession while the Nunc Dimittis was chanted. Mr. E. H. Abraham was at the organ.

The mourners were Mr. R. A. Barrett (brother), Mrs. Shepard (sister), Messrs. R. G. and I. N. Shepard and R. and H. Samson (nephews, the last two representing Mrs. M. V. Samson, sister), Mr. S. O. Feben (cousin), Mrs. I. N. Shepard and Mrs. Thomas.

[only family mourners transcribed]

The interment followed at Newport Cemetery, and the large number of beautiful floral tributes included wreaths from the directors and staff of the I.W. County Press Company; churchwardens and Parochial Church Council; past and present members of the choir; I.W. Model Engineering Society; Hampshire Association of Organists; and the Newport Rowing Club. Messrs. H. and F. Damp made the arrangements.

In the evening the bellringers rang a half-muffled peal.

Transcription by Ian Roach for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2021
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