

Dorothy May Burnard

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 14 May 1960

"FIRST LADY" OF ISLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RETIREMENT OF MISS D.M. BURNARD

Miss Dorothy May Burnard, of 41 Fairlee Road, Newport, who holds the unique distinction of being the "first lady" of Island local government, and the first woman ever to be employed by Newport Town Council, is to retire on July 27th, when she will have completed nearly 44 years notable service to the borough under four town clerks. Miss Burnard also has the distinction of being one of the few women in this country who have risen to the position of assistant town clerk.

A native of the town, her father was the late Mr. W.S. Burnard, who taught at the Nodehill Boys' School, and her brother was the Customs and Excise officer in Newport. When she left school - the Newport Secondary, now Carisbrooke Grammar/Technical School - she was in the offices of Messrs. Dear and Morgan, grocers, of Cowes, for a few months, and then became a clerk to Mr. T. Ross Pratt, who was part-time town clerk of Newport and also practised as a solicitor. With the extension of the borough boundaries to include Carisbrooke and Wootton in 1933, she became officially a member of the corporation staff as senior clerk, and in appreciation of her services her position was redesigned assistant town clerk in September, 1944. She has been the senior administrative officer under the town clerk and throughout the years has been an invaluable guide and adviser to members of the town council, and has taken the meetings of the council in the absence of the town clerk.

The Mayor (Ald. A.O. Purdy, C.C.) said at the monthly meeting of the council on Tuesday that Miss Burnard's resignation came very close to most of them, and especially the older councillors. She had helped him to start off his council career in the right way and had been most helpful and considerate during his mayoralties.

The town clerks under whom Miss Barnard has served are Mr. T. Ross Pratt, Mr. Robert Preston, Mr. Francis H.W. Buxton and Mr. W.R. Wilks. When she first joined Mr. Ross Pratt's staff the rates were about 4s.8d. in the £ compared with 25s.2d. now. Asked about her plans for her retirement Miss Barnard said she was intending to take a month or two's holiday.

Miss Burnard's successor will be Mr. V.E. Seymour, of Shide Path, who has been with the council since 1945 and holds the position of senior committee clerk. He came to the Island from South Wales after the war, during which he was seconded to the Home Office.

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