

**George Freeland**

**Isle of Wight County Press**

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**AN ACCOMPLISHED THEATRICAL ARTIST**

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**DEATH OF MR. G. FREELAND OF NEWPORT**

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The death on Saturday of Mr. George Freeland, of 55 Linden Road, Newport, removes one who had established a local reputation in the unusual capacity of theatrical artist. Mr. Freeland died at the age of 71 on Saturday after a long illness, during which he was devotedly nursed by his daughter, Miss M. Freeland. His father was head gardener for about 50 years to the Mew family at Polars, Newport, and he was apprenticed as a wheelwright at Messrs. R. Bird Cheverton's carriage works. He subsequently worked in London, but returned to the Island at the commencement of the 1914-18 war, and was employed during the period of hostilities by Messrs. S. E. Saunders and Co., of East Cowes. Mr. Freeland had great natural artistic gifts. In his early years he became interested in myriorama, the forerunner of the cinema, in which a series of views painted on cloth were mounted on rollers, and thus passed before the eyes of the audience. This type of entertainment was featured in the Island by Pool's Myriorama, of Cowes, and Mr. Freeland exploited his talents by painting his own myriorama, which he displayed at parties and similar occasions for the amusement of his friends. At this time he was residing at Staplers Road, Newport, and when a number of enterprising parishioners of St. Paul's, Barton, inaugurated the successful series of Barton pantomimes, Mr. Freeland commenced painting paper scenery for them with great success, as well as adapting the stage for the purpose with a decorated proscenium arch. From this beginning he went on to make a name for himself with his stage settings for the more ambitious presentations of the Wight Strollers, notably the delightful pantomimes which drew packed audiences to the old Rink Theatre (now demolished) at Newport. Mr. Freeland's scenery became a striking feature of these pantomimes each of which included a "transformation scene", in which beautiful effects were achieved with special lighting arrangements and scenic devices which Mr. Freeland arranged with great skill and ingenuity. Following these successes his services were in great demand, and he was responsible for the scenery of many amateur productions in the Island, notably the long series of successes scored by Miss Nesta Meech. Latterly he had been engaged to paint the scenery for the London repertory companies which, during recent years, have been brought to Ryde and Shanklin by Mr. Barry O'Brien. He could create a sultan's palace or Aladdin's cave with a sure and unerring touch, aided only by a few pots of household distemper and the necessary canvas and woodwork.

For many years Mr. Freeland was in business as a painter and decorator, and his hobbies included music and gardening. He was a member of successively the Old St. Paul's, Barton, Fife and Drum Band and the St. Paul's Orchestra, playing drums and percussion, and he was also a member of the old Newport Town Band. Of a quiet and amiable disposition, Mr. Freeland was always ready to assist good causes, and his death is widely regretted.

The funeral service took place at St. Paul's Church, Newport, on Wednesday. The Vicar (the Rev. L. J. D. Wheatley) officiated, and the hymns "Abide with me" and "Now the labourer's task is o'er" were sung. Mr. L. E. Dore being at the organ. In a tribute to Mr. Freeland, the Vicar said that he had faithfully served his fellows in many ways, particularly in dramatic art. The mourners were: Mr. and Mrs. G. Freeland (son and daughter-in-law), Mrs. N. Cooper (sister), Mesdames Booker and Cant (sisters-in-law), Mr. F. Burt (brother-in-law), and Mesdames J. Sibbick and F. Downer, Miss M. Freeland (daughter) was prevented from attending. Others present included Mesdames L. E. Dore, R. Pollington, and H. S. Benzie, and Messrs. E. H. Tuffin and M. G. Watts (representing the Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society), Mesdames A. Gunning and F. Diment, the Misses S. and P. Cleal and V. Lawrence, and Messrs. S. F. Moody, G. F. Tomlinson (chairman of the Ventnor Musical and Dramatic Society), R. G. Shepherd (also representing Mrs. M. A. Shepherd), D. Cox (representing Barton Brotherhood), S. Slade, F. Lawrence, and E. J. Fairweather (representing the Nesta Meech Pantomime Company). The interment was at St. Paul's Cemetery. The many floral tributes included those from Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society; neighbours and friends from Linden Road; Miss Nesta Meech and her company; and Mr. Barry O'Brien. Messrs. O. C. Hamilton and Son made the arrangements.

#### **Death of Mrs. Freeland**

We learned yesterday that the family have suffered a second bereavement by the death at St. Mary's Hospital on Thursday, at the age of 71, of Mrs. Ada Mary Freeland, wife of Mr. George Freeland. She had been seriously ill for some weeks. Mrs. Freeland was formerly well known in the Barton district, and her death is much regretted. Sincere sympathy is expressed with the relatives.

Transcription by Shani Watts for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries.  
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