

A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL IN 100 OBJECTS

A 1933 PRIZE BOOK

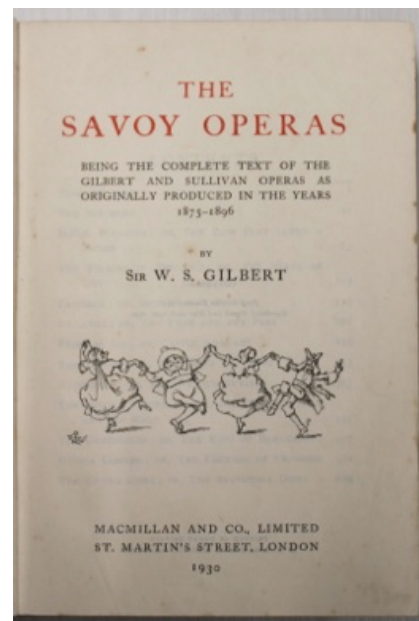
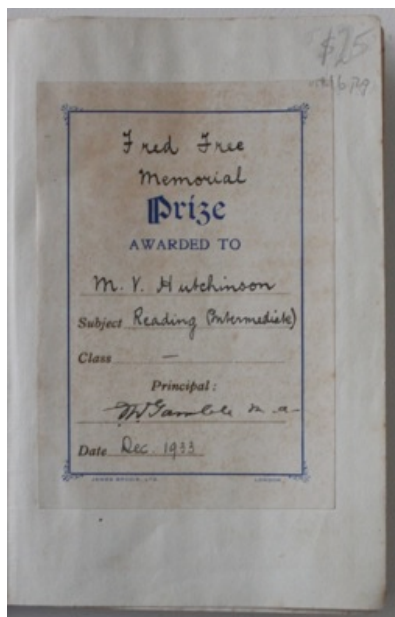
Size: Overall: 4¾in x 7¼in x 1¼ inches /120mmx180mmx30mm

Pages: 4½in x 7in / 110mm x 180mm

Description: The book is cased and covered with blue fabric. It has a highly decorated spine in gold and the words, *The Savoy Operas*. W.S.Gilbert.



The front cover has a cartoon of a judge (and a good judge, too). There is the seal of the Auckland Grammar Schools Board and the name of the School. The book is published by MacMillan and Co (1926 reprinted 1930), 698 pages. The title page is also depicted.



The prize plate is a generalised one and was awarded, in 1933, to M.V. Hutchinson for the Intermediate Reading Prize – Fred Free Memorial. It was signed by Headmaster F.W. Gamble, M.A.

Discussion: The Intermediate Reading Prize is the only one extant. It was named for Frederick Henry Free (known as Freddie) who won a reading prize in 1924 and lost his life in a climbing accident, which was reported in *The New Zealand Herald* of 28 January 1924 (page 6)

BOY'S TRAGIC DEATH.

FALLS 70FT. OVER CLIFF.

WEST COAST FATALITY.

FATHER'S TERRIBLE ORDEAL.

“A shocking fatality occurred near Karekare on the West Coast at 6.30 o'clock on Friday evening, when the 14 year old only son of Mr W.R.H. Free, supervisor of the Telegraph Department at Auckland was killed through falling down the cliffs before the eyes of his father.”

Father and son had camped at Piha, both were adventurous and began to climb down the cliffs at Mercer Bay, which “ ... rise in instances from 500ft to 600ft sheer above the water, forming a most formidable obstacle to the adventurous climber.”



Freddie as a young boy.

Within 70ft of the bottom Freddie fell backwards into 6ft of water and “ ... sustained a broken neck and injured shoulder, death being instantaneous. ”

Mr Free “ ... descended the almost perpendicular cliff ...”. It took him two hours to get Freddie's body out of the water. He climbed the cliff in complete darkness, raised the alarm and on Saturday morning a Constable Hendrickson “proceeded to the scene in the company of Mr Free.”

Freddie's body was recovered and “An inquest was held before Mr J.W. Poyton, S.M., at the parents' residence in Alexander [now Alexis] Avenue, Mount Albert, when a verdict was returned of accidental death.

“The cliffs at Mercer Bay are noted for their precipitous nature. Both Mr Free and his son had undertaken a good deal of climbing together and the lad was particularly strong and alert. He was a pupil of the Mount Albert Grammar School, and was a member of St Luke's Church Mount Albert. He showed considerable promise in elocution and singing.”



Mercer Bay

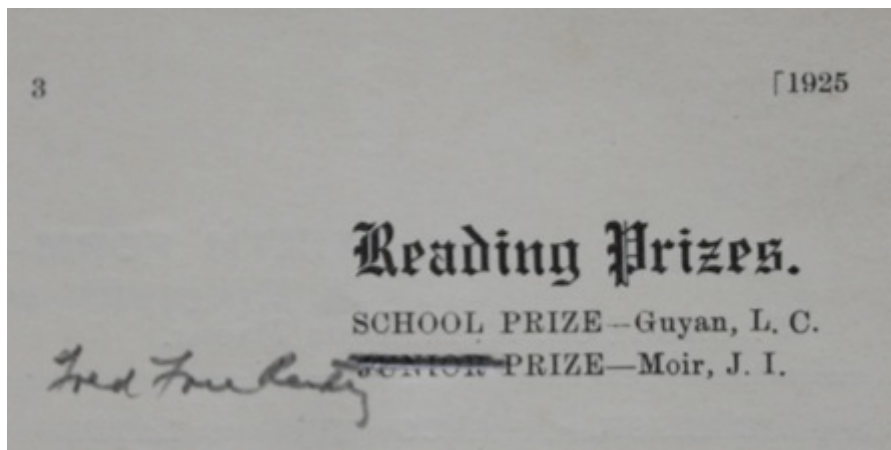
The same newspaper had a family death notice on page 1.

“FREE - Accidentally killed on January 25, at Kare Kare, West Coast. Fredrick Henry, dearly-loved only son of W.R.H. and Margaret Free, Alexander Avenue, Mount Albert and beloved grandson of the late Margaret J Sloane; aged 14 years. Interment today (Monday) in St Lukes’s Churchyard, Mount Albert at 4.00pm.”

An obituary appeared in *The Albertian* 1924 (page 10). The magazine must have come out in early 1925 to include this obituary. It mentioned that: “Free came to us from Hamilton High School and was placed in 4A.; and though he had been with us little more than a term, he soon showed us the stuff he was made of ... He was a very promising pupil and took a keen interest in School life, but particularly in elocutionary studies. At the end of the year he was awarded the Junior Reading Prize.”

Also the printed copy of the Headmaster’s report for 1924 must likewise have been printed in early 1925 for it included:

“I have to record the thanks and gratitude of the School for benefactions during the year. ... to Mr Free for the annual Junior Reading Prize in memory of his son:”



There is a single copy of the 1925 *School List* in which the printed JUNIOR PRIZE has the word JUNIOR crossed out and replaced in manuscript with Fred Free Reading. In 1926 the printed words were JUNIOR PRIZE (Fred Free Reading).

Frederick Henry Free, born 4 October 1909 at New Plymouth, died 25 January 1924 at Mercer Bay.



The 1933 winner of this book was M.V. Hutchinson who was here from 1931-1935. (He was in 4A in 1933. He was very young when he arrived and was in Junior 3A in 1931, then 3A in 1932.) As a boy Maurice Hutchinson was prominent in athletics, soccer and tennis and a bewildering array of cultural and artistic endeavours. He was in top classes and was second in the senior essay competition and got certificates in French and Latin.

He received an MA in French from Auckland University College, and returned to teach here from 1944-1947, teaching mainly French and English. He also taught at Avondale College and was HOD Languages at Auckland Grammar School from 1957-1959 and coached the First Soccer XI. He wrote French texts that were used throughout New Zealand. He became an Inspector of Secondary Schools. In 1965 he was selected, by the Imperial Relations Trust, for a year-long fellowship to the Institute of Education at the University of London. He worked on trends in teaching modern languages. Maurice Victor Hutchinson died on 27 May, 2005.

The Prize is now awarded to the winner of a Year 10 reading competition.

The book that is this Object was discovered by Phillip Rankin, archivist at Napier Boys' High School, and offered to us in September 2011. Phillip's hobby is "trawling second-hand bookshops for old school prize books." Without his enthusiasm and goodwill we would have never discovered this treasure.

Brian Murphy