

Frederick Brett

Isle of Wight County Press 18 December 1920

NEWPORT

VETERAN POSTMAN PENSIONER'S SUDDEN DEATH.----On Monday morning Mr. Frederick Brett, aged 75, who resided at Westminster-lane, and was well-known as the rural postman on the Calbourne-road, which he travelled for many years on his old-fashioned tricycle, was found dead at his home by a neighbour. He was a bachelor, always living alone, but his home was a model of cleanliness and tidiness, as he had all the good qualities of a "handyman," having served in the Royal Navy in his early days until invalided from the service. He was of a cheery and kindly disposition, and he made many friends. The Deputy-Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest on Tuesday, when Mrs. Ellen Wyatt, the neighbour who found him dead, said that he told her he had no relatives, that he had served in the Navy for 12 years, and was afterwards in the postal service for 36 years, having retired many years ago on a pension. She took him his dinner on Sunday as usual, and also some tea. He was then sitting downstairs in front of his large oil-stove, which he used in place of a fire. He complained of a little cramp, but said he was in no pain. Up till then, as far as she knew, he had enjoyed very good health and had been out every day. He was out on the previous Thursday. He had sufficient food as far as she knew. At 10.30 on Monday morning she found deceased dead in the back-room downstairs. He was in his pyjamas, and was in a sitting position on the edge of the stool by the side of the bath near the oil-stove. Deceased would not have a doctor. She asked him if she should send for one on Saturday, but he said "No, I shall be all right again." Mr. Arthur Snow, sorting clerk and telegraphist, of Newport Post-office, said he generally visited the deceased every Sunday afternoon to take the papers for him to read, and to have a chat with him as an old friend. Deceased was in receipt of a pension of over 13s. a week, and 4s. a week old age pension. On Sunday evening he was in bed. He said he was in no pain, but asked for a drop of brandy, which witness got for him and he drank it. Deceased said he had diarrhoea. Witness returned later to see if he could do anything else for deceased, and left him apparently comfortable. He preferred to live alone, and often said he had no time to go out, as he had such a lot of work to do at home. When he left deceased that night he had not the slightest idea that he was likely to die. He had intended to visit him again on Monday as soon as he left duty in the morning. The Coroner said Mr. Snow had evidently been very kind to deceased. P.C. Springer said deceased was really sitting on the oil-stove with his head towards the table. He was apparently about to light the stove to make some tea early in the morning when he collapsed. Dr. Straton, who had made a post mortem, said deceased's heart was weak, and there was a certain amount of inflammation of the stomach, such as one would expect with diarrhoea, bronchitis (which was recent), and nephritis. He concluded that death was due to syncope arising from a chill and the intense cold, which would be sufficient to have that effect on one in deceased's condition when he left a warm bed and went downstairs. The Coroner returned a verdict accordingly.

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