

George Henry Cross

Isle of Wight County Press 28 August 1926

NEWPORT MAN'S SUICIDE.

ANOTHER LYSOL POISONING CASE.

On Saturday the Deputy Coroner for the Island (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest at the Town-hall, Newport, on the body of George Henry Cross, 47, single, basket maker, of South-street, Newport, who was found dead in his workshop on the previous Thursday night.

Ellen Wooldridge, housekeeper to Mr. Robinson at 20 New-street, where the deceased lodged, said she last saw deceased alive on Wednesday morning, when he said he was going to the County Court, where she believed an action was brought against him for debt, but she did not know if he went there, although it was stated that he did not. Before he went deceased asked if his dog could stay there until his return. As he did not return she went to the workshop on Wednesday evening but found it locked up, and on the evening of the following day, becoming anxious about deceased's continued absence, she reported the matter to the police. Deceased was in bad health, and about a year ago he said: "There is a way out of it, but I don't want to do anything. I would rather die a natural death." Deceased was rather short of money, trade having been very bad lately, and she thought he had worry over family affairs and one thing and another. Usually deceased had a good many calling at the workshop, but Mr. Stagg said he had not seen him there since Wednesday morning.

Inspector Oliver Sibbick said that about 6.30 p.m. on the 19th inst. the last witness reported at the Police-station that deceased had not been home since Wednesday morning, the 18th. In company with P.S. Collins, witness went to deceased's workshop in South-street and found it locked up. They forced an entrance and found deceased lying back in the arm-chair, quite dead and cold and stiff. Deceased had evidently been dead for a good many hours. It was about 9.15 p.m. when they found the body. By the side of deceased on a small box was the glass (produced) containing a small quantity of lysol disinfectant, and an empty lysol bottle was on the shelf. - Q. This is a thing that can easily be obtained? - Yes. It was purchased from Mr. Ramage, who said it must have been obtained within the last month, judging by the bottle it was in. The bottle was labelled "Poison."

Miss Wooldridge, in reply to the Coroner, said she had seen no lysol bottle at deceased's lodgings.

Inspector Sibbick said lying prominently on a small bench or table near the deceased he found the following note (which the first witness said was in deceased's handwriting): "I can't stand this agony any longer. Work is impossible. Harry" (deceased's usual signature). A footnote read "Hamilton's affair is nothing to do with me."

The Coroner said that evidently related to the County Court action.

Witness said he had the body removed to the mortuary.

A relative present said that deceased apparently worried about the County Court action, and there had been a lot of unpleasantness about paying for his brother's funeral.

Inspector Sibbick : That was not his only worry.

The Coroner said that they had to remember that deceased was in bad health and not able to do a full day's work. That might have been depressing him.

Dr. Underhill said external appearances showed that deceased had drunk some of the liquid, which judging from the smell, was lysol, and a post mortem examination showed that the half a pint of contents of deceased's stomach included a considerable portion of lysol, which had apparently been taken without any water. The internal lining of the stomach presented a corrugated appearance and was practically destroyed. He had no doubt that death was caused by lysol poisoning. Deceased had been dead from one to three days.

The Coroner said the evidence of Miss Wooldridge, and the note deceased left behind showed he was very much depressed. Whether he was very much worried about the County Court action one could not quite decide, but deceased appeared to have been in financially straitened circumstances and to have suffered from bad health. There was no doubt that he took the lysol intending to destroy himself, and the verdict would be that "Deceased committed suicide by taking lysol, and that he was temporarily of unsound mind."

*Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,
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