

Michael William Cummins

Isle of Wight County Press – 19 January 1907

SHOEMAKER'S SUICIDE AT NEWPORT.

On Wednesday morning Michael William Cummins, bootmaker, living at 53, Hunnyhill, Newport, was found lying in bed dead with his throat cut and a blood-stained razor on the chair by his side.

An inquest was held by the Deputy Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) at the Wesleyan Schoolroom, at Hunnyhill, on Thursday evening.

Mr. J. R. Wise was chosen foreman of the jury, Inspector Cass was present for the police.

John Cummins, of 6 Union-place, Landport, baker, identified the body as that of his son, who was a boot and shoemaker. He last saw deceased nine or ten weeks ago, when he was poorly. He had been poorly from birth in fact.

By the Foreman: He did not know of anything that would have caused deceased to take his life.

Hannah Wiseman, widow, who said she had rented two rooms at deceased's home for the last two years, deposed that deceased had had plenty of work, which was done indoors. On Tuesday night just after 10 o'clock she went into his room and said "Good night," as she had always been in the habit of doing. He was in bed at the time. Nothing whatever had taken place to arouse her suspicion or to attract her specially; deceased was the last man she should have thought would have done such a thing. About 9 o'clock next morning she went to his room with a cup of tea as usual and found deceased lying on the bed with a large quantity of blood on the clothes and a razor was on a chair by the bedside. Deceased had cut his throat very badly, and on feeling his hand she found it was very cold. She did not move the body. She went for help, and Chas. Elliott came at once. Deceased was not very strong; she should think he was in consumption. He had been depressed just lately, but she knew no reason for it. She had never heard him say anything about committing suicide. He shrank from the very idea of such things, and did not care to see a funeral pass.

By the Foreman: Deceased never mentioned to her that he was in financial difficulties.

By the Coroner: On the previous evening she fetched two pennyworth of rum for deceased and took it to him when she said "Good-night."

By the Foreman: Deceased was quite sober at that time.

Frederick P. Barber, a lad of 65, Nodehill, said about 8.45 on Tuesday evening he saw deceased at his door. Deceased asked him in, and witness sat down by the fire and talked with deceased, who asked him to remain with him for a little while. Deceased seemed very low spirited. Witness had often gone there. Deceased pulled a razor out of the case and sharpened it, and witness thought he was going to shave himself. Deceased made no remark as to the razor, but said he had a pain in his head.

By the Foreman: Deceased did not say he was in any trouble.

P.C. Edwards said on Wednesday morning he received information of the occurrence, and on going to deceased's home he found deceased lying on his right side in the bed with his throat extensively cut and a large pool of blood partly on the bed and partly on the floor. Everything pointed to the fact that the injury was self inflicted, and deceased appeared to be hanging his head over the

bed to bleed. Deceased had complained to witness of not being well, and also when he had not had much work.

The Coroner having invited any relative of the deceased to make any statement bearing on the case,

Deceased's sister said deceased was always crying.

The Coroner said that was not in accordance with the evidence of Mrs. Wiseman. (To Mrs. Wiseman): Is that so?

Mrs. Wiseman: Not lately, sir.

Mary Cummins, of 63, King-street, Portsea, said she last saw deceased alive on the 6th of January, when, after staying with deceased during Christmas holidays, she returned home. Deceased was always crying and complaining of pains in the head, side and chest, and he said she did not know what he was suffering. He never mentioned any business trouble to her.

Dr. Thompson said about 10.30 on Wednesday morning he went to deceased's home in consequence of having been called and found deceased as already described. Deceased apparently cut his throat whilst sitting up in bed and then lay down and died. Deceased had a bad attack of bronchitis and asthma just before Christmas, and when witness saw him he said he was low spirited, and witness could understand that from what he said. Deceased dreaded illness, and witness thought he would have been one of the last men to commit such an act. Deceased had been dead at least eight hours when he (witness) arrived.

The Coroner briefly summed up and said the only question for the jury to consider was as to the condition of deceased's mind at the time he committed the act.

The jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased committed suicide whilst temporarily insane, and expressed sympathy with the relatives.

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