

**Emma Hill**

**Isle of Wight County Press - 11 December 1909**

**LONELY DEATH AT NEWPORT**

**OCTOGENARIAN WOMAN'S ESTATE.**

On Tuesday evening the Deputy Coroner for the Island (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest at the Baptist Schoolroom, Newport, on the body of Emma Hill, aged 83, a single woman, who had been living alone in a small one-storey tenement at 6 Cross-street, Newport, and who was found dead in bed on Sunday morning. Insp. Cass was present on behalf of the police. Mr. W. Plumley was foreman of the jury.

The CORONER said it would not have been necessary to hold an inquest but for the fact that deceased, who had not been medically attended for a month, died when alone in the house.

Mrs. LOUISA CHEATER, wife of a pensioner, of 5 North-street, Portsea, niece of the deceased, who was present with other relatives, said she saw deceased a few weeks ago, when she was recovering from an illness. Deceased had been in gentleman's service until she was over 70.

Mrs. MARY ANN WRIGHTSON, who lives next door to deceased, said the latter seemed in her usual health on Saturday night, when witness saw her sitting by the fire mending a garment. At about 10.15 next morning Mrs. Ham, who cleaned up deceased's house, told witness she could make no one hear there, and they went together to the house, but being unable to effect an entrance they called P.C. SKEATES, who raised a window which was left unfastened and thus gained admission. They then found deceased lying dead in bed. She was in a very natural easy position, and had apparently passed away in her sleep without a struggle. Deceased had evidently got herself a cup of tea that morning; she had an oil-stove in the room for the purpose. During her recent illness deceased had had someone to sleep in the house with her, but not since she had been better.

Mrs. MARY HAM, of 36 New-street, gave corroborative evidence, and said she knew deceased had money about the house – she told P.C. Skeates about it and helped him to find it and deceased's other valuable belongings, as she did not think it should be left in the house under any circumstances.

Dr. UNDERHILL said that about a week prior to November 3rd he was attending deceased for a mild attack of bronchitis, but not after the date named, as she got better, though she had a weak heart and was feeble. When the constable called him on Sunday morning he found the deceased dead, but warm, there were no marks of violence on her, and no doubt death was due to natural causes, probably heart failure.

The CORONER said Mrs. Wrightson and Mrs. Ham did everything they could when they thought something was wrong, and Mrs. Ham acted with great honesty in telling the constable that there were certain valuable things about the house, and it was much to her credit that she assisted in that way, so as to ensure the safety of the property until the relatives entitled were in a position to claim it. Insp. Cass had very properly taken charge of the money, documents and other property,

had made an inventory of all that was found in the house, and had done everything he could to protect the deceased's small estate.

Replying to a juror, the CORONER said no will had been found or they would not have been discussing that matter. If the executors were found they would properly take possession, but at present, as far as they knew, there was no one in a position to legally act.

The FOREMAN thought the Coroner should take charge of the property until a will was found or the relatives took the necessary steps to place themselves in a position to claim the estate, and the CORONER said he would do so for the protection of the estate.

The jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes."

*Transcription by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,*

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