

George William Arthur Holbrooke

Isle of Wight County Press – 2 January 1909

NEWPORT CHILD'S DEATH.

A WARNING FOR MOTHERS.

On Christmas-eve the Deputy Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.), held an inquest at the Gospel-hall, Union-street, Newport, on the body of George William Arthur Holbrooke, aged 3 years and 3 months, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Holbrooke, of 8 New-street, Newport.--Mr. L. J. Austin was chosen foreman of the jury.--Insp. Cass was present on behalf of the police, with P.C. Collins.

Mrs. Holbrooke, mother, of the deceased, said her husband was an able seaman in the Royal Navy. Deceased seemed quite well until the previous Tuesday morning, when she noticed that he appeared to have a bad cold. She rubbed his chest with camphorated oil and poulticed him. He was playing with the other children during the day, ate a good tea, and went to bed at 6 p.m. Deceased slept all right and did not complain of pain or cough. On Wednesday night he was hoarse and she poulticed him again and kept him in bed in the warm. She did not notice anything serious in his condition and at 6 p.m. he spoke to her and she gave him some milk. She went downstairs to see about putting the other children to bed. She saw him again at 6.30, when he seemed about the same, but at 10 minutes to 7 she found he was getting cold, and she sent for Dr. Castle. He died at 7 o'clock. She did not realise until 6.50 that deceased was seriously ill; he seemed in good spirits. Deceased had always had sufficient to eat. He was at school on the previous Friday.

The CORONER: Not very old to go to school, was he?

WITNESS said that Dr. Castle had previously attended the other children for colds and they got well and she thought deceased was suffering from a cold, the same as the rest.

Dr. HUTTON CASTLE said that he was sent for about 7.30 on Wednesday and he went at once and found that the child was dead. He was not able to tell from an external examination the cause of death and he had made a post-mortem examination that day. Deceased was well nourished. He found acute and very extensive pneumonia of both lungs, and that undoubtedly was the cause of death. The pneumonia had existed for four or five days, but it was quite possible that the mother would not in the early stages recognise that there was anything serious. Children differed a great deal as to complaining of their condition. Deceased could hardly have been able to breathe at all, as he was desperately ill. There would have been a chance of saving the child if a doctor had been summoned early. The mother, as far as he had seen of the home, looked well after her children, and with exception of sending for medical aid, she had evidently done her best for deceased.

The CORONER briefly summed up, remarking that as her other children who had suffered with colds had got better Mrs. Holbrooke evidently thought it would be the same with deceased, and she did not realise the seriousness of the case until it was too late, although, of course, it was

always best for a medical man to be called in early. He did not think after hearing the evidence that they could blame the mother for not having done so.

The jury agreed and returned a verdict of “Death from natural causes.”

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