

**Elizabeth Perry**

**Isle of Wight County Press  
14 December 1957**

**NEWPORT STREET FATALITY**

**POOR LIGHTING BLAMED FOR OLD LADY'S DEATH**

**INQUEST JURY'S RECOMMENDATION**

The Coroner (Mr. J. V. Bullin) reopened the inquest at the County Hall, Newport, on Wednesday, on Mrs. Elizabeth Perry, a 79-years-old widow, of Brynteg, Albany Road, Newport, who died in St. Mary's Hospital on December 10th, following an accident at Hunnyhill on December 8th. After hearing the evidence of police and other witnesses about the bad visibility due to the poor street lighting, the jury (the foreman of which was Mr. R. Jones) returned a verdict of accidental death, but asked the Coroner to write to the Town Council, pointing out how bad the lighting was, and stating that this was largely to blame for the old lady's death.

William Spencer Perry, motor mechanic, of 40 Lugley Street, repeated the evidence he gave when the inquest was opened a week earlier, and added that when he saw his mother on the night before the accident she was happy and contented; her hearing was quite good, but her sight was failing. - Replying to Mr. P. H. Rolf (for the motor-cyclist), witness said that his mother had a cataract extracted in 1949, and her condition had deteriorated since then. She might not have been able to see so well in the half light.

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, DIABETES AND FAILING SIGHT**

Dr. John Anthony Charlton Terry, casualty officer at St. Mary's Hospital, said that in addition to a broken leg and collar bone, Mrs. Perry had a suspected fracture of the skull. Her son told him of a history of high blood pressure and diabetes. Although she appeared to improve slightly, the diabetes was a serious complication. The first cause of death was pneumonia, but her injuries, the diabetes, and blood pressure were contributory causes.

Sergeant John William Spencer, of Albany Barracks, Parkhurst, said he was making towards Newport as the motor-cycle ridden by Streeter passed him. It was being driven carefully and at a reasonable speed. The weather was bad - there was a high wind, and it began to rain. He was pulling up his collar when he looked up and saw the woman in front of the motor-cycle, which was only about 50 yards away, almost opposite the Castle and Banner public-house. The lighting was poor, and the old lady suddenly appeared in the middle of the road. He arrived at the accident at the same time as two prison officers, and pillows and blankets were obtained from a nearby house. She was not moved, apart from being made comfortable, until the ambulance arrived. The motor-cyclist, immediately after the crash, was lying near the kerb.

## LIGHTING COVERED ONLY HALF THE ROAD

P.C. George Simpson said that Mrs. Perry was lying in the road about six feet from the near-side kerb. Ten feet farther on the motor-cycle was lying at right angles to the road, with its front wheel in the gutter. Eighteen feet back from the machine there was a double scratch mark on the road, 1ft. 9in. out from the kerb and five feet long, where the motor-cycle had gone over on its side. There was one street gas lamp almost opposite the point of impact. It illuminated only a small part of the road. A person crossing the road would be in shadow until about half-way across. There was not another street lamp for 100 yards. The lighting on this part of the hill was extremely poor. Mrs. Perry's clothing was also dark.

Eric James Streeter, of Veyers Farm, Gatcombe, said that he had been helping a friend with his pigs, and was riding home. His machine was a 1950 model and in excellent condition. He had no windscreen or goggles. Although he was only a learner-driver, he had been riding since 1954, but because of two years' military service intervening, had been unable to take his test. As he approached the concrete section of the road he suddenly saw an elderly lady in the middle of the road. She had come from his right-hand side. He was 15 yards from her when he saw her for the first time, tried to get into a lower gear to brake his machine, which was going from 20-25 miles an hour, turned into the side to try and get by, but the crash bar of his machine must have caught her. He did everything he could to avoid her.

The Coroner said it was unfortunate that there were no independent witnesses. It seemed apparent that the poor lighting was one of the reasons for the accident.

The jury reached their verdict without retiring, and recommended that the town Council should be asked to do something with the street lighting to avoid further accidents.

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