

William Wagstaff

Isle of Wight County Press – 25 January 1941

Parkhurst Convict's Death During Air Raid Alert.

At an inquest at the Parkhurst Prison on Monday on William Wagstaff, aged 65, a convict undergoing four years' penal servitude, who was found dead in his cell during an air raid alert one night last week, Dr. J. L. Walker, one of the Prison medical officers, stated that the deceased's man's heart weighed 23 ½ ozs, twice the normal weight, and that it was badly diseased in the muscles and valves. He expressed the opinion that the excitement of hearing the anti-aircraft guns, which were very active that evening, might have brought on the fatal attack. Death was primarily due to valvular disease, and a verdict was returned accordingly.

The Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.) conducted the inquiry, Mr. J. B. Sims was foreman of the jury, and P. S. Barber was the police officer in attendance.--Chief Officer Bovingdon said the deceased was convicted at Manchester Quarter Sessions in September 1938, and had been at Parkhurst since the following November. As he was known to have a weak heart he had been employed on light labour.--Alfred Llewellyn, a convict, whose cell was next to that occupied by Wagstaff, said he and the deceased were friends and had been playing games together in the Association-hall until 7 p.m. It was their practice to shout "good-night," and at 7.45 p.m., while an air raid alert was in progress, witness shouted but got no reply. He then went to Wagstaff's cell and found him lying on the floor. He called the officer in charge of the block, and the medical officer was quickly in attendance, but Wagstaff was dead. He had not complained of anything worse than a slight cold. Witness was able to enter the cell as cells were unlocked during alerts.

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