

Arthur Webb

Isle of Wight County Press - 28th June 1958

NEWPORT MAN FOUND IN GAS-FILLED ROOM

COMMITTED SUICIDE WHEN HE WENT BLIND

The Deputy Coroner (Mr. H. H. Johnson) was told at an inquest at the County Hall, Newport, yesterday, how a well-known Newport business man, worried by the loss of sight in his remaining eye, took his life in a gas-filled bedroom.

The inquest was on Arthur Webb (aged 68), of 89 High Street. He was an Island man and at one time had a leather and fancy goods business at Cowes. He had had a confectionery and tobacco shop at 89 High Street since 1945, adjoining premises where his wife is in practice as a chiropodist. During the war he was a sheet metal worker at Messrs. Saunders- Roe, Ltd.

May Clara Webb said that her husband had been blind in one eye, his left, ever since she had known him. Until recently he had had no trouble with the other. Then on April 30th the other failed quite suddenly. A detached retina was diagnosed. He went to a hospital Southampton and remained there until June 22nd. He had two operations on his eye. The first appeared to be successful and then broke down again. The second was not successful. Since he came home he was very depressed by his loss of sight. He thought that there was no chance of recovery, although he had been told there was a 50 per cent chance of attachment.

Witness added that at 11 p.m. on Wednesday she took him to bed to make him comfortable for the night. He had been home from hospital for three days. She did not retire but went to do other work. At midnight he was sleeping and she did not disturb him. Early in the morning he was found lying on the floor of the bed-room. The gas fire was on. She had never heard her husband say that he would take his own life. He faced up to his affliction bravely. A few years ago he had a breakdown, but recovered from that.

Joyce Ruby Ball, Mr. Webb's daughter, who lives at 89 High Street, said that she was awake at about 5.30 a.m. on Thursday, when she smelt gas and went to her father's room. She found him lying with his face near the gas jet. He had a red cardigan and a small hand towel over his head.

Witness said that her father had been most depressed after his operation. She had never heard him speak of taking his own life.

Dr. A. A. Heathcote, of Millbrook House, Carisbrooke Road, said that he arrived within 15 minutes of being called, but Mr. Webb was dead. Death was due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Witness had known him for 20 years. The blindness in one eye had been an affliction since birth. The operations were only partially successful, and when witness saw him on his return from hospital, although he was very depressed, he did not consider he was likely to take his own life. He had been more depressed when he had his breakdown.

P.C. C. G. Scott said that he searched without success for a note or message.

The Coroner, recording a verdict that he took his own life while the balance of his mind was disturbed, said that Mr. Webb had been convinced that he would not recover his sight, and

the shock unbalanced his mind. He expressed sympathy with the family.—Mr. Webb, eldest son, expressed gratitude for the extreme courtesy of the police.

Isle of Wight County Press - 5th July 1958

NEWPORT

The Late Mr. A. Webb. — The funeral took place at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Monday of Mr. Arthur Webb, of 89 High Street. The service in the cemetery chapel was conducted by the Rev. Dr. W. H. Mildon. The mourners were Mrs. M. C. Webb (widow), Mr. and Mrs. R. Webb and Mr. I. Webb (sons and daughter-in-law), Mr. W. Ball (son-in-law), Stuart Webb (grandson), Messrs. B., R., and H. Webb (brothers), Mesdames Hendy and Poole (sisters-in-law), Mesdames Mariner and Henstridge (nieces), Messrs L, and M. Wray (nephews), Mrs. Owen, Mrs. S. Morgan (also representing Mr. S. Morgan and Mr. D. Marshall), and Miss A. Jones. Mrs. J. Ball (daughter), Mrs. I. Webb (daughter-in-law), and Mr. Owen were unable to attend. The many floral tributes included those from Osborne Cottage Guest Home and the old folk at Elmdon.

Transcribed by Roger O’Nions for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries

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