David White

Isle of Wight County Press – 15 February 1898

A PARKHURST CONVICT'S DEATH.

JUROR THREATENED WITH COMMITTAL

On Monday afternoon Edward F. Blake, Esq., held an inquest at H.M. Convict Prison at Parkhurst, on the body of David White, aged 65, a convict undergoing twelve years' penal servitude. According to medical and other evidence deceased was admitted from Portland about a year ago and was then suffering from chronic bronchitis. He had several times been in the infirmary consequent on that disease, from which he died on the previous Saturday.

A juror, named Cogger, of Newport, who adopted a somewhat extraordinary style of questioning, asked why deceased was brought from Portland to the Island to die.

The Surgeon explained that prisoner was brought there for his own benefit, being a chronic invalid.

Cogger then objected to the burial of convicts at Carisbrooke Cemetery, but the Coroner told him they had nothing to do with that there.

Cogger added that there should be a burial-ground at the Prison.

The Coroner: I have nothing to do with that. You can write to the proper authorities and they can pay attention to it or not, as they please.

Cogger repeated his contention, adding that a man should be buried where he lived (laughter).

The Coroner said according to the law of the country a man was entitled to be buried in the parish.

Cogger made further remarks on the Subject. After being told to be quiet, he contended that he was entitled to "have a word" (laughter).

The Coroner: Let it be a sensible one, then.

In the course of further remarks, Cogger proceeded to express agreement with what the papers said that jurors should have a "bob" for attending inquests (laughter).

The Coroner: Will you be quiet. I shall commit you if you are not quiet. Take your hat off.

Cogger: My cap.

The Coroner (to the police officer): Keep him quiet or I shall have him locked up. I won't give him another caution.

In summing up, the Coroner remarked that having regard to the fact that there were nearly 1000 convicts there and about three-quarters of them were invalids, the number of deaths was marvellously small, as on the average there were no more than twelve a year.

A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was re-returned.

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