

Harold Roy Bevis

Isle of Wight County Press - Saturday 15 March 1890

SAD DEATH OF AN INFANT AT NEWPORT.

E. F. Blake, Esq., coroner for the Island, held an inquest at the Lamb Tavern on Thursday afternoon touching the death of Harold Roy Bevis, the infant child of Mr. Joseph Bevis, jun., of the High-street. The jury having chosen Mr. Joseph Gentle as their foreman and proceeded to view the body, the following evidence was taken:

Alfred Leonard Bevis, 17, said he was the son of Mr. Joseph Bevis, jun., and the deceased was his brother and was seven months old. Yesterday morning his mother asked him to bring it down stairs and he proceeded to do so. The child was in a bassinette, and as he got to the top of the stairs his foot slipped and he fell against the wall of the staircase, letting go of one side of the bassinette, from which the child fell out and down the stairs. He called his father, who came and picked up the child, which did not then appear to have suffered any injury. Half an hour afterwards it was shaking a great deal, and witness's father sent him for Dr. Coombe. When he got back the child seemed better, and he went again to the Doctor's to tell him he need not call till he came on his regular round. About a quarter of an hour later deceased appeared to be worse, and witness went for the town nurse, who came about 9.45. Some time afterwards witness saw the child again, and it seemed to be asleep.

Joseph Bevis, jun., father of deceased and of the last witness, gave evidence as to picking up the child at the bottom of the staircase. He took it to his wife, and they did not then notice any injury. Afterwards they noticed a twitching on one side of its body, and he sent for Dr. Coombs, but the child seeming to get better he sent to tell him not to come specially. When deceased became worse he sent for the nurse, thinking the Doctor might have started on his rounds. When the nurse came she put the child in a warm bath and gave it some castor oil, wrapped it in a blanket, and placed it in its bassinette in front of the fire. About 12 o'clock Dr. Coombs came, but as the child was then apparently asleep they thought it advisable not to disturb it. About 1.30 witness's wife felt that deceased's feet were very cold, and they came to the conclusion that the child must be dead. He again sent for the Doctor, who arrived shortly after. In reply to the coroner, witness said he saw no marks on the child, nor did it cry at all.

The first witness, recalled, said he had often carried the child down stairs in the bassinette - it was his usual way of doing so.

Dr. M. L. B. Coombs corroborated the evidence as to his being sent for, and stated that when he called soon after 12 he saw deceased's father, who explained what had occurred and how the child had been treated; and as it was asleep witness thought it would not be advisable to disturb it, as sleep was the best thing for it. He said he would call again as he was passing in two and a half hours' time, but before that he was sent for, and on examining the child he found that it was dead. Rigor mortis had already set in, showing that it had been dead some hours, and probably it was dead at the time he first called. He had since made an external examination of the body, and the only outward sign of the cause of death was a slight bruise over the right eye. From the evidence he had heard he was of opinion that the child died from concussion of the brain caused by the fall. If he had seen the child earlier the result would have been the same, as everything seemed to have been done for it.

The Coroner, in summing up, said the evidence appeared clear that this was one of those unfortunate accidents in which no one is to blame, and which cannot be foreseen or prevented, and the jury, without any discussion, returned a verdict to that effect.

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