

Thomas Edward Denyer

Census 1881 – Britannia Inn, Hunnyhill, Carisbrooke

Thomas Edwd. Denyer	Head	60	Licensed Victualler	Newport, Isle of Wight
Ann Harriet Denyer	Wife	58		Newport, Isle of Wight
Richard Turner Wooldridge	Lodger	45	Retired Corn Merchant	Newport, Isle of Wight

Isle of Wight Observer - Saturday 16 April 1881

NEWPORT.

SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. T.E. DENYER

An inquest was held at the Britannia Inn, Hunny Hill, on Monday afternoon, by Mr F. Blake, coroner for the Island, on the body of Mr Thos. Edward Denyer, who expired suddenly on Saturday night at his own house, The Britannia, where he had resided for many years.

Mr J. Golden was elected foreman of the jury, and Superintendent Ross watched the case on behalf of the police.

Mrs Denyer, widow of the deceased, was the first witness. She said latterly her husband had been in fair health. He had been subject to giddiness in the head, and had complained of pain in the heart. He was a very excitable person. Dr Tuttiett had advised her to keep him as free as possible from excitement. He attended him last summer. On Saturday last he appeared in better health than she had known him in for a long time. About half-past 9 o'clock that evening two soldiers of the 66th Regiment came into the bar. Witness was in the passage. One soldier was intoxicated. They called for two glasses of whisky. Her husband declined to serve them, telling them that one was intoxicated, and ordered them to leave the bar. The one that was drunk said he would smash him. Her husband asked her to go for a policeman, when the drunken soldier used abusive language. Mr Denyer then went round to the front of the bar, and again ordered them out. They went out, and when outside threw stones at the house. The other soldier tried to get the drunken one away. She then called to her husband to come away, and he came round into the house by the side door. As he was coming round the drunken soldier ran at him and hit him under the ear with his fist. The blow was a violent one, and for an instant he seemed unconscious. Her husband said, "Give me a stick." While she was going up the stairs to get one her husband took a chair up and said he would throw it at him (the soldier) to keep him away. He put it down directly after, put on his hat, and said he would follow them. The soldiers went away as soon as her husband had been struck. The sober one dragged the other away. Her husband went up the road towards the barracks. He could not walk very fast, he was so excited. In from five to ten minutes, as near as she could tell, he returned, and she heard Mr Wooldridge, a lodger, speak to him. She then went into the room where he was, and found him sitting with his hand to his forehead, leaning back in the easy chair. She asked him how he succeeded. He replied that he could not go far as his head was bad. She was then called away into the bar. About a minute after Mr Wooldridge called her into the room again. She went in and found her husband dying. He lived only three minutes afterwards. - In reply to a juror, she said he left with the intention of going to the barracks and reporting the men who struck him.

Mr Richard Turner Wooldridge said he had lived at the house nearly 13 years as a lodger. Last Saturday evening early he was in the house, but up stairs; when he came down Mrs Denyer told him her husband had gone towards the barracks after two soldiers. Deceased came in about a minute afterwards. He appeared to be very much agitated. Witness asked him what was the matter. His reply

was "Don't speak to me now; I'll tell you all about it presently." He sat in the chair for about five minutes, with his head resting in his hand, during which time he did not speak. Quite suddenly he stretched out his arms and said to witness, "Come to me, come to me." He went to him and loosened his collar and necktie, and supported him in his chair. He made two or three respirations and died in about three minutes. Deceased was always of a very nervous and irritable temperament. He had often complained of pains in the head.

John Condon, a private in the 66th Regiment, said on Saturday evening he was in several public houses in the town. The last one he remembered being in was the Prince of Wales, in South-st. Private Samuel Jones was with him. About ten minutes past 9 o'clock they left the town for the barracks. He did not remember coming into the Britannia; he had been trying to get Jones home, as he was very drunk. He did not believe either of them went into the Britannia. He was obliged to leave Jones lying in the road. The picquet took Jones to the guard room.

Mr Ross said the reason these two soldiers had been arrested was because they were the only ones on the road at that time.

Mrs Denyer said the witness looked like the one who pulled the drunken soldier away.

Mr Robert Bird Wilkins, surgeon, said he was sent for on Saturday night, about ten minutes past 10. He found deceased lying on his back, on the sofa, quite dead. His features appeared quite natural. He made an examination of his head, but found no bruises. His opinion was that he died of apoplexy, produced by over exertion of the heart from what he had heard, probably produced by running after the men. He carefully examined his head and found no marks of any blow.

By the Foreman. - A blow might have been struck on the head without leaving any bruise. A blow under the ear would not be more dangerous than on any other part of the head.

The Coroner, in summing up, said he thought it a very clear case. The opinion of Dr Wilkins was that the blow had nothing to do with the death, but that apoplexy alone was the cause. The question was whether the man who struck the blow was criminally responsible for the death. He was, no doubt, morally responsible. There was no evidence, however, to show who the soldier was.

After some little consideration the jury returned a verdict that the deceased died of apoplexy, caused by excitement arising from the provoking behaviour of a soldier, to the jurors unknown.

On the proposition of Mr J. Golden, the coroner was requested to convey to Mrs Denyer an expression of their sympathy with her in her bereavement.

Mr Denyer, who was 60 years of age, was well known in Newport, where he took great interest and a very active part in all political matters. He was a Liberal of very extreme views.

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