

Archibald Dunford

Isle of Wight County Press – 29 November 1890

NEWPORT

SALVATION ARMY FUNERAL – The funeral of little Archie Dunford, which was conducted by the officers of the Salvation Army, attracted a considerable number of persons to Carisbrooke Cemetery last. The coffin was covered with beautiful floral wreaths and crosses sent by members of the family, the schoolfellows of the deceased, the teachers of the Newport National School (infants), and many other sympathising friends. The burial service was impressively carried out by Major Rapkins, assisted by Capt. Birkenshaw (children's special), Lieut. Robinson, Lieut. Griffiths, and other officers. The parents of the deceased (Mr. and Mrs. G.H.Dunford. 2, New-street) desire through our columns to thank all friends who have shown them sympathy in their bereavement. A letter relating to the death of this child, from the head mistress of the Newport National Infants' School, will be found in another column. [below]

Isle of Wight County Press – 29 November 1890

Letter to Editor

THE DEATH OF A NATIONAL SCHOOL INFANT AT NEWPORT

To the Editor.

Sir, - Kindly allow me through the medium of your paper to correct the rumours that are float around the town relating to the recent death of one of my pupils. I refer to the sad case of Archie Dunford, New-street, Newport. About five weeks ago he received a blow on the head (unknown to any of the teachers or to myself, and after school hours) from one of the school children. He was absent the whole of the next week, "ill with a bad cold" was the answer of his little sister. He attended school the week after, and although I had passed his home four times a day for a week, the fact of his having suffered from the blow was kept back until he returned to school again. Of course I made the strictest inquiries into the matter. When the little one fell ill again we were all exceedingly sorry to hear of it, and assured his parents of our sincerest sympathy in their trouble and anxiety. At the same time I wish to state that I did *not* "knock the child about until he dropped down dead," that I did *not* "lock him up in a cupboard until he died of fright," neither did I "make his nose bleed to such a frightful extent as to cause his death through loss of blood." The only time I ever touched the child was to help him on with his coat. Neither my teachers nor myself ever dream of punishing a child by boxing its ears. We are able to control them by a look or a word, without resorting to so dangerous a practice as the above. If the circulators of the above rumours had first taken the trouble to inquire from me at the schools (any time between 9 and 12 – 2 and 4) I should have been happy to give them the required information, and as some people are terribly hard to convince of the truth (being gifted with an excitable and fervid imagination, which does not hesitate to lay grave charges against innocent persons), I shall not object to see them on Monday if they care to call. Apologising for using so much of your valuable space, - I am yours truly, E.FISH

Head Mistress, Newport National Infant School.

Isle of Wight County Press – 6 December 1890

NEWPORT

THE DEATH OF A NATIONAL INFANT SCHOOLBOY. – Mr. George R. Dunford, father of Archie Dunford, whose death was recorded in our last week's issue, writes us a letter respecting his child's treatment at the National Infant School. He says the public ought to know the facts, which are that one of the teachers put little Archie, who was only four years old, into a portion of the school called the "cottage," where he was left from about 4 o'clock to 4.30, and while he was there a much older child (a girl) went into the room, tied his hands behind him, marched him round on the forms, boxed his ears, and hit him about the head. "This and the confinement," says the father, "nearly drove the little fellow frantic, and if it did not actually cause his death, it gave him great suffering."

(Apparently, the death certificate states a bowel complaint and a coma.)

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