

George Albert Groves

Census 1911, 1 Coopers Terrace, Hunny Hill, Newport

<i>George Albert Groves</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Cement Works Labourer</i>	<i>Carisbrooke, Hampshire</i>
Alice Ellen Groves	Wife	34		Carisbrooke, Hampshire
Ivy Louisa Groves	Daughter	10	School	Carisbrooke, Hampshire
George Albert William Groves	Son	9	School	Carisbrooke, Hampshire
Leonard Frederick Groves	Son	7	School	Newport, Hampshire

Isle of Wight County Press – 4 August 1917

DEATH FROM PNEUMONIA AFTER A FALL

STRANGE CASE OF WEST MEDINA CEMENT MILLS EMPLOYEE.

On Wednesday the Deputy Coroner (F.A. Joyce), held an inquest at the Victoria Wesleyan Schoolroom, Newport on the body of George Albert Groves, aged 48, of 140 Pyle-street, Newport, who died on the previous day just over a week after he had had an accidental fall whilst employed at the West Medina Cement Mills. Mr. J. H. Deacon, T.C., was foreman of the jury. Mr. A. F. J. Dunolly, H.M. Inspector of Factories, was present. Mr. J. L. Warsap (manager) represented the Associated Portland Cement Company, Ltd.

Edgar Groves, 67 Castle-road, labourer, identified the body as that of his brother, a miller employed at the Associates Cement Works, where he had worked for many years. Since the accident deceased told him he went up the stairs to the mill floor to examine the machinery on the evening of the 24th ult. and when coming down his foot slipped and he fell backwards down the steps. He was not carrying anything.

The Foreman: The Jury would like to know what caused him to slip.

Witness said deceased did not tell him anything more. – Q. He did not blame the staircase or hand-rail ?
– Not to my knowledge.

John Jackman, of Hunnyhill, a driver at the cement mills, said that at about 7.30 p.m. on the evening in question, when he went to the mill where deceased was, he was struck by a piece of cement which deceased had thrown to draw his attention. He went to the place and saw deceased sitting on the floor at the foot of the stairs. He asked witness to help him up, and he sat him on the seat. In reply to his inquiry deceased said he had hurt his side. He did not complain of any other injury. Witness reported the matter to the night watchman. About ten minutes later deceased was walking about the mill again. At 10 o'clock he saw deceased sitting down having some tea. Later witness and another workman (Mr. Stark) helped him home. They had a job to get him to go home, as he wanted to remain at work. – Q. Why was not an ambulance procured to take him home ? – I could not say; I was not in charge. – Q. Were you asked by anyone to take him home ? – Yes, by Mr. White, the night watchman. They walked him home Dodnor-lane way; they had no trouble in getting deceased home. He complained of his side twice on the way. They walked very slowly; deceased was leaning his arm on Stark's shoulder. They were wooden steps which deceased had been in the habit of going up and down. He did not know of any accident having happened there before; he had never heard deceased complain that they should be altered.

By the Foreman: The steps were in fairly good order; if a step was broken it was repaired. They were rather steep.

Mr. L. Warsap said there were 17 steps, the tread of which was about 8 inches, the width of the stairs being 30 inches, and there was a handrail.

By the Coroner: Before deceased started to walk home at 11.15 p.m. he vomited, after they had given him some water.

By the Factory Inspector: The steps were a bit worn.

Arthur White, 2 Vectis-terrace, Pyle-street, Newport, night-watchman at the cement mill, said the last witness reported the fall of deceased to him at about 7.35 p.m., and he went and saw him. He was sitting on a box and said he had fallen down the steps. He asked deceased if he would be able to go on working or would he go home, and he said he would be all right presently and would remain there. Later deceased was walking about the mill and doing his work, and went up the steps again. He then said he felt a bit better. Witness reported the matter to the foreman at about 8.45 p.m., and the foreman went to see deceased. Witness next saw deceased in the mess-room at 11 o'clock, and he then said "I am done. I can't carry on any longer. My right arm hurts." He did not want to go home till 6 a.m., but witness persuaded him to do so, and got Jackman and Stark to go with him. As he did not ask for a conveyance and had been working for practically three hours after the fall, he did not think it necessary to send for a carriage or ambulance.

By the Foreman: Witness often went up the steps, and noticed nothing wrong with them only fair wear and tear. None of the steps were broken.

William John Lloyd, foreman at the cement works, living at Dodnor Cottage, said when he went with the last witness to see deceased at 8.45 p.m. he was doing his work. In reply to his question deceased said "I have got a pain in my right side a bit, but it will be all right presently." Witness asked if he had better have some advice, and he replied "No, I don't think so, I shall be all right presently." He saw the deceased again at 9.20 p.m., when he said he felt a bit better. Witness said "Do you think you will be able to carry on?" and he replied "I am going to try and stick it." Deceased appeared quite rational and natural. Witness thought he had been shaken by the fall, but as he went on with his work again he did not think it was for him (witness) to intervene. It was quite optional with him whether he went on or decided to stop. One could not form an opinion as to how another man felt. If he had thought there had been anything serious he should have gone to the manager.

The Coroner said he had asked those questions as he wanted to see whether the employees were properly looked after. He was quite satisfied that everything that could reasonably be expected was done. The evidence proved that any injury deceased had sustained did not appear important in character, and therefore the foreman was justified in not thinking to intervene further.

Replying to the Coroner, Mr. Stark said that they got home with deceased at about 1 o'clock in the morning.

Dr. C. J. Thompson said he was sent for whilst away at hospital, and he saw deceased at about one p.m. on the 25th. Deceased said he had had a fall and complained of pain in the side. He examined him but could find no sign of fractured ribs. They were absolutely intact and there was no bruising. He ordered deceased to bed so that he should be kept absolutely quiet. He saw him again later in the day, when he found that he had been vomiting continuously. He gave him a prescription to stop this. When he saw deceased next day he presented the appearance of a man with bronchitis, and on further examination he found signs pointing to his having pneumonia. Deceased gradually got worse, and died on the 31st ult. He made a post-mortem, Dr. Buckell, representing the company, helping him to make it. They found absolutely no signs of any injury to his ribs, and, except for some congestion, probably due to the pneumonia, the organs of the abdomen and the liver, kidneys, and spleen were quite normal. Dr. Buckell would confirm him in that. As far as their examination was concerned they could only state that death was due to double pneumonia. Deceased's right lung was practically solid. Witness attended deceased about three years ago for pneumonia, and he found old adhesions between the lung and the wall of the chest, and between the lung and the diaphragm. The causes which produced the pneumonia were open to doubt. It was not at all unlikely that he suffered from some concussion. The sickness caused him to think that deceased was probably suffering from delayed concussion.

The Foreman: Do you think that the man's health was in a very bad way before the accident?

Dr. Thompson: I should not think so. He was very thin and emaciated, but wiry. I should not say he was a robust man.

By the Foreman: I cannot say that his death was directly due to the accident; it might have been indirectly due to it.

Mr. White said that in the week previous to the accident deceased complained of having a cold and was

short of breath.

The Coroner said the Jury were under no obligation to fit their verdict to meet the exigencies of any insurance liability. Perhaps it was best to bring in a verdict of a careful character. If any question arose as to insurance that must be dealt with by some other authority. The evidence showed that deceased met with an accident and fell down the steps, but there did not appear to be any one to blame for that. Deceased made no complaint against anyone or as to the condition the steps were in, and he appeared very reluctant to go home. No injury of any importance seemed to have been sustained by him except the shaking of the fall. There was the moot point, which they were not called upon to decide, as to whether the pneumonia was caused by the accident. He thought the Jury should simply state that he died from pneumonia following a fall, and leave it entirely open as to whether it was due to the fall or not. He did not think that they had evidence to show that the fall produced the pneumonia, which might have been caused by a variety of circumstances, exposure, &c.

The Foreman said the jury found that the deceased died from pneumonia, and that it was accelerated by the fall.

The Coroner: You had better say it was probably accelerated by it.

The Jury agreed and the verdict was entered accordingly.

Mr. J. L. Warsap, on behalf of the directors of the Company, expresses deepest regret at the loss of an old and valued servant such as Groves had been, and their deep sympathy with the widow and children in their bereavement.

The Foreman said the Jury joined in that expression.

Isle of Wight County Press - 11 August 1917

NEWPORT

THE FUNERAL - took place at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Saturday of Mr. George Albert Groves, aged 43, of Lower Pyle-street, who died on the previous Thursday from pneumonia after an accidental fall at the West Medina Cement Mills. Mr. J. Peters and Mr. R. J. Martin, of the Brethren, officiated. Messrs. Carter, Bull, Jackman, and Stark, deceased's fellow employees, were the bearers. There were a large number of floral tributes, one being from his fellow workmen, and another from Mr. J. L. Warsap (manager) and staff.

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