

**Emma Matilda Lett**

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS  
25 December 1937**

**FORMER WORKHOUSE MATRON'S DEATH**

**THE INQUEST**

Yesterday (Thursday) afternoon the Deputy Coroner (F.A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquiry at the High-street Methodist School, Ryde, into the death of Mrs. Emma Matilda Lett, which occurred at the County Hospital on Tuesday, following a fall at her home, 52 Union-street, Ryde, on the previous day. She was the widow of Mr. Evans Lett, formerly master of the Parkhurst Poor Law Institution, where for a number of years she held the position of matron. She was 82 years of age. Mr. H.E. Stratton, who watched the proceedings for the executors, said her relatives were abroad and her son, who was in Burma, had been cabled to.

Mrs. Lilian Cass, of 1 Albert-street, Ryde, said the deceased had a flat at 52 Union-street. Her only living relatives were her son and a brother in Canada. She had known the deceased for some years and had worked for her. For three years deceased had suffered from arthritis, but had not been attended by a doctor and had been away for treatment. Apart from that her health was good, and she was in possession of all her faculties. She got about with a stick. Deceased was of a very independent disposition, and refused to allow anyone to live with her, and except for the domestic work, which witness did, she attended to herself. At 8.15 a.m. on Monday she found the deceased on the floor by the side of her bed, covered with an eiderdown. She said she was very cold, had got out of bed, and had slipped down and could not get up. She thought she had been there two or three hours. Witness said deceased seemed stupefied by the cold; there was no fire. The other flats were not occupied and she would have no immediate communication. Witness put her back into bed and tried to get her warm with hot water bottles and brandy and milk.

The Coroner: Why do these old ladies refuse to see a doctor? I think that in 10 days I must have had inquiries on six old ladies who have fallen by the side of their beds, and the history is that none of them would call in a doctor.

Mr. Stratton said she was very particular about her appearance, and would want to make herself presentable. They were all a little vain even in old age.

Witness said the deceased seemed comfortable, and she went home to do her work. On leaving she asked Mr. Sheppard, of Fowler's, to see that she was all right. She returned to the flat at 1 p.m. and found the deceased lying on the floor in practically the same position as previously. Witness thought she had injured her leg and persuaded her to have a doctor. Dr. Pridmore was called in, and ordered her removal to the County Hospital for an X-ray examination, and witness accompanied her there and remained until she had settled down.

Reginald Arthur Sheppard, assistant employed by Mr. H.C. Fowler, living at 35 Prince-street, Ryde, said he had known the deceased a good many years. Her son was a deputy commissioner in Burma.

Dr. Gwenda Muriel Francis, house surgeon at the hospital, said she examined deceased on admission and found a fracture of her left thigh bone. Deceased complained of vomiting and was suffering from shock. The X-ray examination confirmed her opinion. Her leg was put into a good position and Dr. Liesching examined it. She died at 5.50 p.m. on Tuesday from shock and heart failure, following a fracture of the left femur.

The Coroner returned a verdict accordingly, saying it was one of those cases which was quite inevitable. If a doctor had been called in at once he could only have sent her to the hospital a little earlier.

Mr. Stratton said Mr. and Mrs. Lett were for many years master and matron of the Public Assistance Committee's Institution at Parkhurst. They were highly respected and much beloved. Mr. Lett died in 1908, and she left 29 years ago. The old Board of Guardians looked upon her as an efficient and capable official, and lost her services with very much regret. - The funeral takes place to-day (Friday) at Carisbrooke Cemetery at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. A.G. Harrison, of Newport, formerly clerk to the I.W. Guardians, writes regretting that absence from the Island will prevent him attending the funeral and adds: "Mrs. Lett possessed all the attributes essential for the important post she occupied, ever regarding as a most sacred charge the interests of those committed to her care and oversight, and never failing to safeguard with scrupulous devotion the interests of the general public."

**THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE  
A Vote of Condolence**

The Chairman requested the members to stand in silence as a mark of respect on the passing at Ryde of Mrs. Emma Lett, a former matron of the Institution, who would be remembered by the older members of the committee. She was an excellent matron and had done a wonderful work there. He thought it would be fitting if they sent a letter of sympathy to her only son, who was in the Indian Civil Service. The vote was passed in the usual way.

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**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS  
1 January 1938**

**NEWPORT**

**The Late Mrs. E.M. Lett** - The funeral of Mrs. E.M. Lett, formerly matron of the I.W. Workhouse, whose death at Ryde was recorded last week, took place at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Christmas-eve, the Vicar of St Paul's, Barton (the Rev. H.G. Kelsey) officiating. Those attending were Messrs. H.P. Chiverton, H.S. Hayoo, and H.B. Fowler, of Ryde (the last named also representing Mr. H.C. Fowler), Mr. H.E. Stratton (formerly assistant clerk to the I.W. Guardians), Mrs. Bee, Miss Parker, and Mr. J. McKeown and Mrs. Lance (master and matron of the Parkhurst Institution).

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