

Simeon Smith

1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census Chillerton, Newport, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England

Name	Relationship	Status	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
George Smith	Head	Married	64	Carter on farm	Brading, Isle of Wight
Anna Smith	Wife	Married	62		Brading, Isle of Wight
Jack Smith	Son	Single	16	Carters Mate on farm	Shanklin, Isle of Wight
<i>Simeon Smith</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Carters Mate on farm</i>	<i>Shanklin, Isle of Wight</i>

Evening News 7 Jan 1920

Chillerton

SOLDIER'S TRAGIC DEATH – The Island Deputy Coroner (Mr. Francis A. Joyce) held an inquest at the Wesleyan Chapel, Chillerton, near Newport, On Tuesday, touching the death of Pte. Simeon Smith, 22, of the 2nd Hants Regiment, son of George Smith, retired carter, of Chillerton-green, who was found dead on Sunday morning lying with his head and shoulders in a spring dip well, only 2 ½ feet deep, in the garden of his home. His mother said her son had been home on leave for two months and was due to return to his regiment in Ireland on the morning following his death. On Sunday morning, about 11 o'clock, he took two buckets to fetch her water from the well, and after about ten minutes, seeing that he had not returned, she went into the garden and saw him lying with his head and shoulders under the water. One bucket was floating, half full, in the pool, and the other was lying nearby. As she was unable to pull him out alone she called Mr. Niblett, a neighbour, who came immediately and pulled him out. Artificial respiration was performed by another soldier living near, but without result. Her son had been in excellent health since he returned from Russia two months ago, was quite cheerful, and had said nothing about objecting to returning to his regiment. — Mr. Niblett, who also gave evidence, said the deceased was the most cheerful fellow in the village; he was always whistling and singing.—Dr. J. Erskine, Medical Superintendent of the County Mental Hospital, said the deceased was dead when he arrived, and his appearance was consistent with death from drowning. There were no external signs of injury, but it was possible that the deceased may have slipped on the stones surrounding the well and fallen, and have been rendered unconscious without any external evidence of the fall being apparent.—The Coroner said there was insufficient evidence to warrant him saying conclusively that the death was due to an accident, and he returned a verdict that “Deceased was found drowned, probably the result of an accident”.

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Isle of Wight County Press

10 January 1920

CHILLERTON SOLDIER'S TRAGIC DEATH.

On Sunday morning Pte. Simeon Smith, 2nd Hants. Regiment, a young soldier spending a furlough at his home, Chillerton-green, met his death under extraordinary circumstances. Whilst dipping a bucket of water from a spring pool in the garden he apparently either slipped on the frosty stones surrounding it or had a seizure and fell, for on noticing his long absence, his mother found him lying with his head and shoulders immersed in the pool. Life was extinct when he was pulled out.

The Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquiry into the distressing occurrence at the Wesleyan Chapel, Chillerton, on Tuesday.

Hannah Smith, wife of George Smith, retired carter, of Chillerton-green, said the deceased was her son, 22 years of age. He came home from Russia about 2 months ago and was due to return to his regiment in Ireland on the morning following his death. He had been on furlough since returning from Russia and had enjoyed good health. He had not complained at all and had not suggested that he did not wish to go back to his regiment. At about 11 a.m. on Sunday he took two buckets to fetch water for her, out of the dip well in the garden, an open pool about 2^{1/2} feet deep. After some 10 minutes had passed without his return, witness went into the garden and saw him lying across the well with his head and shoulders under water. She was unable to move him, and immediately ran across the green to Mr. Niblett, who came immediately with Mr. Draper, and they pulled the deceased out of the water. One bucket was floating on the surface of the pool about half filled with water and the other lying empty near it. Deceased had often fetched water from the well. He had never suffered from fits.

Mr. Louis Niblett, carpenter, of Chillerton-green, said he was called by the last witness, who shouted "Tim is in the water." He at once ran to the spot, and Mr. Draper, to whom he beckoned as he ran, arrived at the same time. They immediately pulled deceased out. Witness thought life was extinct then, but he sent for a soldier named George Robins, living near, and he applied artificial respiration for about 10 minutes without result; then Dr. Erskine arrived and pronounced life extinct. Witness had seen deceased almost every day since he came home. He was the most cheerful chap in the village; always happy and bright, whistling and singing the whole day long. Witness was of opinion that deceased slipped on the frosty stones surrounding the pool and fell, striking his head, and becoming unconscious.

The Coroner: There is no evidence to support that theory.

Witness: When I prepared him for burial I noticed a large bruise on his right arm, extending from the elbow to the shoulder joint.

The Coroner: That would not render him unconscious, although it may be evidence of a fall. It is possible that the sudden immersion in cold water may have caused heart failure.

Dr. Erskine said such a fall might result in concussion without external evidence of injury.

Witness added that there were no other bruises. He was certain that the bruise on the arm was not caused when they pulled deceased out of the well.

Dr. William John Adams Erskine, medical superintendent of the County Mental Hospital, Whitecroft, said the deceased was dead when he arrived, and his appearance was consistent with death from drowning. He could find no trace of a bruise on the head. The soldier Robins, who tried artificial respiration, told him that he had seen so many dead men that he was certain deceased was dead when he first saw him.

The Coroner said it was an extraordinary thing for a young man in perfect health to be drowned in that way, unless he did it with an object, but the presence of the bucket half filled in the pool, and the other lying near, strongly suggested that deceased was taken by surprise in some way. He might have slipped and sustained some injury, which prevented him saving himself from drowning, or he might have had a fit. He felt that deceased probably met his death by accident, but on the evidence he did not feel inclined to commit himself definitely to that opinion. He therefore returned a verdict that deceased was found drowned, probably as a result of an accident.

The funeral took place with military honours at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Thursday. The band of the Royal Irish Rifles from Parkhurst, accompanied the remains from Chillerton to the cemetery, as well as a firing party of the Hampshire Regiment from Portsmouth, and the buglers of the Royal Irish Rifles sounded the last post. The Rev. T. Letcher (United Methodist) officiated. Mr. L. C. Niblett carried out the funeral.

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