

John Edward Stark

Isle of Wight County Press
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NEWPORT

An Unexplained Suicide.—The Deputy Coroner (R. E. A. Webster, Esq.) held an inquest at the Guildhall on Thursday into the death of John Edward Stark, aged 40, an employee of the Forestry Commission, who was found dead, hanging in a store at the Medina Cement Works on Monday morning, after he had been missing from his home at Jocelyn, Albany-road, since the previous afternoon. Police Inspector A. R. Bird was present. The deceased man's father, Arthur Frederick Stark, a pensioner, said that his son had not been in good health for the last three months, and had been rather depressed. He was very reserved but was a good worker. He had never threatened to take his life. On returning from work on Friday evening he was sick and he had his breakfast in bed on Saturday and Sunday morning. He had a good dinner on Sunday and then went out and did not return. As this was most unusual witness informed the police at about 10 p.m. Witness lived at the Cement Mills for 34 years and the deceased worked there until about 10 years ago. He could think of no reason why his son should take his life. Jack Clare Cross, of Fernleigh, Buckberry-lane, Staplers, described how on Monday morning he went into a darkened store at the Cement Works to switch on an electric motor, when he bumped into Stark's body, which was hanging from a girder. He did not know it was a body until he got a torch and he then untied the rope round the neck and lowered the body to the floor. The man was dead and stiff. P.C. King said the deceased had obviously climbed onto a bench to fasten the rope round his neck and then jumped off. There was about 10s. in money in his pockets and some cigarettes and matches. Major Douglas Gordon Evans, R.A.M.C., who examined the body said death was due to a fracture of the spinal column, which would have caused immediate death. From the condition of the body he was of opinion that death occurred on Sunday. The Deputy Coroner said it was rather a puzzling case as there was no apparent reason for the man's action, except that he was reserved and somewhat eccentric. He returned a verdict of suicide while the balance of the mind was deranged.

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