

## William Vinson

Hampshire Advertiser - 9 December 1874

### FATAL RESULT OF DRINKING BRANDY.

Mr. F. Blake, coroner, held an inquest at the Bedford Arms Inn, Carisbrooke-road, on Monday, on view of the body of Wm. Vinson, cellarman and porter, aged 31, who was in the employ of Messrs. H. Mew and Son, of St. James's-street, wine and spirit merchants.

Dorcas Vinson deposed,— I live at No. 1, Bedford row, near here. Deceased was my husband. On Friday, the 27th ult., he was at his work, and came home as usual to dinner, and went off again about an hour afterwards. He had complained that morning of pains in the head and back, but at dinnertime he seemed perfectly well. He was not addicted to drinking freely. On the evening of that day he did not come home at his usual time, 6 o'clock, and I saw no more of him until 10.15 that night, when he was brought home in a carriage, and I learnt that a doctor had been called to look at him on the way home. He was quite unconscious, and remained so all through the night and until 8 o'clock in the morning, when he began raving. An hour before that, he had opened his eyes. He groaned all night. About 9 o'clock he became conscious enough to know me and the child, and I then sent for a doctor, but he was out. Dr. Wilkins came that day about 12.15. Deceased complained of his throat and mouth being parched. He died last Saturday morning at 7 o'clock. Last Wednesday he appeared better, and got up and made a statement to me. He told me that on the day, Friday, the 27th ult., he went about 5.30 p.m. to lock up the beer stores, and had but one half-pint of beer. When he came down the clerk, Wm. Organ, asked him to have a drop of brandy-and-water, as he had had diarrhoea pains all the week. Then Organ took a half-pint tumbler of brandy and gave it to him. Deceased told Organ he had mixed something else with the brandy, and Organ smiled and said "No, he would not give him anything which would hurt him." Deceased told witness that he noticed that the rum tap was dripping, and that was why he thought the brandy was mixed with other liquor. Organ told him there was water in it, but deceased did not think there was. Organ said it would do him good. Deceased said that about ten minutes after he had swallowed it a cloud came over him and he knew no more. I think he said the liquor was given to him at the office. Organ, who was always very kind to deceased, every day came to see him up to the time of his death, or sent to know how he was. Organ told me deceased must have had some beer after he drank the brandy-and-water.

Wm. H. Organ, aged 21, deposed, — I am clerk to the firm of Messrs. H. Mew and Son, wine and spirit merchants. When I first saw deceased on the day in question it was about 8.15 a.m. He then appeared to be in good health. He had at times, of late, complained of pains in the heart and stomach and diarrhoea. He did not complain to me that day. He went about his usual work as cellarman and porter, and about 6.15 he came in, I think from a journey to the barracks at Parkhurst. He then said to me he had pains in the stomach and diarrhoea, and he asked me to give him a little drop of brandy. He was then in the front shop. I went to the spirit store for some brandy, leaving him in the outer office. I took a tumbler, which is commonly called half a pint, but is less than that. I went into the store in the dark and drew about one-third of the glass of British brandy, it was a little more than a large wine glass. I mixed no other liquor with the brandy, which was 17 under proof, just as it is sold. I added water to it about equal in quantity to the brandy. He drank it, and I said "Perhaps that will do you good." He then went up through the stores. He made no remark to me about it being mixed with other liquor, or that there was no water with the brandy. About 8.40 p.m. I went out and found deceased lying unconscious on some straw under some stairs in the packing room. The night was cold, and the room was open to the air at both ends. I called Dyer, the ostler, and told him deceased was lying drunk or asleep. I got a man named Denton to help him up, and I threw water on deceased's face, but without effect. We got him away in a carriage to the doctor. Deceased had no access to the spirits after he drank the brandy-and-water. He might have had some spirits or beer put away. He had access to the spirits all day. I held the glass up to the light to see the quantity before I mixed water with it. In conversation during his illness he said he thought that what I

gave him must have upset him. I told him he must have had something previous to that. There was a light in the room where I found him lying. It was his duty to put that light out when he left of an evening. Deceased was not in a position to see the rum tap.

Albert Midlane, ironmonger, deposed: I called at the office to speak to my friend, the last witness, on the evening in question. Deceased came in and asked if there were any more orders, and I noticed nothing particularly in his appearance. He asked Organ for some brandy, and said he was a little queer about the stomach. I saw Organ go out with the tumbler to the store, and he entered the office with rather more than a wine glass in the tumbler, and poured into it rather more water than there was liquor. He handed it to deceased, who drank it, I think, leisurely, and not at a draught. I do not know that deceased made any remark about its being mixed or about water. It did not appear to me to be given in a joke. Organ did not laugh. I am sure there was nothing said like what deceased's wife has related. Deceased could not see the rum tap as he stood. He was standing by me at the door of the office, and could see the water poured in.

Dr. E.P. Wilkins deposed: I was called to see deceased in a carriage at my door, about 10 o'clock on the night in question. I felt his pulse, and my impression was that he was helplessly drunk. He was quite unconscious. I suggested that they should take him to the hospital, as I was just going out to an important consultation. On the afternoon of the next day, on being sent for, I attended deceased. He was not then insensible, and he seemed to be recovering from drunkenness. I saw him every day after that. The day before he died he ate his food, and there was no reason to apprehend a fatal termination. The next day his wife came to me, and I sent him a stimulant, thinking he was faint. She soon afterwards came and said she thought he was dying, and I went immediately, and found him dead. My impression was that he died from syncope, i.e. sudden cessation of the heart's action, and, from the *post mortem* examination I made with Mr. Tuttiett, I found that this was so. I found the chest, heart, and lungs healthy. Deceased was a weakly man. Death was caused by the drink and exposure to cold.

The Coroner remarked that it was well that Mr. Midlane was present at the time deceased had the brandy and water, as there were many idle reports afloat.

Verdict - "That deceased died from syncope, caused by taking a quantity of intoxicating liquor combined with exposure to cold,"

## **Hampshire Advertiser - 26 December 1874**

### **NEWPORT**

**AN AGREEABLE SURPRISE.** - On Thursday morning a widow, named Vinson, with two young children, now living in Crocker-street, who has recently lost the bread winner, a young man in the employ of Messrs. Henry Mew and So, wine and spirit merchants, had 40? handed over to her, the amount of a subscription raised by Mr. R. Roche, of High-street.