

Henry Whitbread

1901 census, 12 St. Albans Road. Ilford

Henry Whitbread	Head	62	Marine Insurance Broker	St Albans, Hertfordshire
Harriet Whitbread	Wife	65		St Pancras, London

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CARISBROOKE

LONELY DEATH UNDER HERMIT-LIKE CONDITIONS. - On Tuesday the Deputy Coroner (F.A. Joyce, Esq.), held an inquest at the Working Men's Club on the body of Henry Whitbread, 77, of Osborne View. - Mrs. H. Scott, of Lyndhurst, Gunville-road, said that deceased had lived next door to them for some years, and had been a clerk on trading vessels. He had an income of about £40 per annum from the Provident Clerks Association. Deceased lived by himself; in fact he would not allow anyone in if he could help it. She did a little washing for him. Last November a relative called, and he would scarcely ask her in. She last saw deceased about 6.30 p.m. on Friday, when he asked if one of her children would fetch him some groceries. He seemed very feeble, and she helped him back to the door. He had a splendid fire indoors. On Saturday, finding that he did not take the milk in, and seeing there was no smoke coming from the chimney, her child knocked at the door, but they could get no reply, and he went for P.C. Bungey, who forced an entrance, and found deceased lying on the floor of the bedroom dead. Deceased's relatives had tried to induce him to go and live with them, but he refused. Inspector H. Sibbeck said a letter from a relative to that effect was found at deceased's home. Witness said deceased recently complained of shortness of breath, and she tried to persuade him to have a doctor, but he would not. P.C. F. Bungey deposed to finding deceased lying face downwards in the bedroom with his leg under the bed, and his arms folded under his head which was inside the fender. There had been no fire in the room for some time. Deceased had sufficient clothing on the bed, and plenty of food in the house, where some £6 was also found. The house was in a dirty condition.

A nephew from London had arranged for the funeral. His nephew came down last summer, but deceased would not let him in the house for some time. The Coroner said deceased was evidently more or less a hermit. There was, of course, no power to prevent a person from living alone in this way, although it was undesirable. But for that fact an inquest would not have been necessary. Dr Thompson said he attended deceased's wife some years ago, but had not since seen deceased. He had made a post mortem examination and found the lungs, liver, and kidneys intensely congested, and also disease of the heart. He thought deceased was getting out of bed and fell, and that the struggle to get up probably caused heart failure. The Coroner said that deceased had had enough for his needs, but unfortunately preferred to live alone. The Jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence, and the Foreman (Mr. T. Spooner) said they wished to thank Mrs. Scott for her praiseworthy efforts on deceased's behalf. The Coroner agreed, saying she had looked after him as well as deceased would allow.

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