

William Salter Chiverton

1901 census, 106 Pyle Street, Newport

Samuel Chiverton	Head	55	Undertaker and joiner	Newport, Isle of Wight
Amelia J Chiverton	Wife	54		Newport, Isle of Wight
<i>William S Chiverton</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Undertaker and joiner</i>	<i>Newport, Isle of Wight</i>

Isle of Wight County Press – 16 July 1904

SUICIDE IN NEWPORT MILL-POND.

UNDERTAKER'S SON SHOCKING END.

FATHER'S REMARKABLE EVIDENCE.

The .. case occurred on Wednesday morning about 6.45, when a splash was heard in Westminster Mill-pond, and on a man named Mr. Frederick Lloyd, working near, hurrying to the edge of the pond, just below the Bone-mill, he saw deceased, William Salter Chiverton, only son of Mr. S. Chiverton, lying in about 3ft. or 4 ft. of water with his feet towards the road. Lloyd secured assistance and the body was got out and artificial respiration was promptly applied by the rescuers and ambulance men, Messrs. Fleming and W. G. Denness, who came upon the scene, and medical aid was summoned, but all without avail.

An inquest was held at the Bell Inn, St. James's-square, on Thursday morning by the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.). Mr. C. H. Cave was chosen foreman of the jury. Supt. Ayres, with P.S. Sharp, were present on behalf of the police.

Robert Percy Jackman, carman, of 72 Caesar's-road, said Westminster Mill-pond was at the bottom of his garden, where he was about five minutes to 7 on the previous morning. He heard a splash in the water on the opposite side of the pond and on looking across saw a cap floating on the water towards him. He shouted to Mr. Lloyd, who was working near on the other side, that a man was in the water, and witness ran round and assisted to get deceased out of the water. Only about three minutes elapsed before they got the body out. There was about 3ft. to 4ft. of water and deceased was lying face downwards at full length out in the pond, with his feet about 2ft. from the bank. Lloyd had got into the water after deceased when witness arrived. They unbuttoned deceased's shirt and others who came quickly assisted in adopting means to restore artificial respiration. Mr. Fleming, a member of the ambulance, was one sent for for that purpose.

Frederick Lloyd, gardener, of West-street, in the employ of Mr. Ashton, said he was working in the garden near the pond when he heard the last witness call out "Man over board." He ran down to the water and saw deceased lying in the water as already described, with his feet about 3ft. from the bank. Witness rushed into the water to get him out and by the time he got him to the bank Mr. Jackman and another arrived and they got deceased out. Witness was working about 60 yds, from the water and had to get over a fence. Witness and Jackman tried to restore him, but there was no life in him. The doctor arrived in about 20 minutes or half-a-hour. The fence between the garden and the pond was 5ft. 6in. high, and witness could not see the place where deceased went into the water from where he was working.

Samuel Chiverton, undertaker and carpenter, of 106 Pyle-street, father of deceased, said deceased worked with him. He last saw deceased alive at 6.15 on the previous morning, when he heard him coming downstairs and he went and prevented him from coming down. Deceased's mother, however, was on the other side of him and she said "Let him go," and, of course, he did so. Neither of them spoke. Deceased rushed for his boots, which were underneath the table, and sat down in the chair and put them on, "but it was a terrible business," added witness "I never saw such a thing in my life. He was dreadful." – Q. Had he threatened to commit suicide? – I have heard so since and he had a mark on me as well. It is hard to say it, but it is true. – Q. What do you mean? – He was going to do something to me. – Q. Then the relationship at home between you had been bad. - Yes, it had been for some months. Oh! he had been a bad boy for some months. – Q. Has he been taking too much drink? – Yes, a great deal. That has been the bottom of it, I may say he has not been sober since Christmas, and I think I am telling the truth. –Q. Has he been attended by the doctor for delirium tremens? – No, sir; he started this d.t.'s business on Saturday. He was out all day Monday and not at work, and he did not work on Saturday. He came home late on Monday night, I don't know what time, and about half-past 12 he started. – Q. Started what? – Oh, dreadful. I could not explain it. It is beyond description, sir. We had a dreadful night. The moment he was in one side of the bed he was out the other, and sometimes on the floor. – Q. He had the d.t.'s, I suppose? – I and my wife had to get up. We had a dreadful night – dreadful! – Q. Had he been trying to escape from the house some hours before? – No, sir. He only came downstairs once on Tuesday, so I was told, and he was quiet all day and you would not have known there was any one in the house. I was not at home then.

Asked by Supt. Ayres if deceased was at the shop on Tuesday, witness said, No, not at all. I locked him out. He went to bed on Monday night and he did not get up to go out until he went out and drown himself. He could have gone out without my knowing it. Deceased started this on Friday and he did not go to the shop afterwards. He wanted to work on Saturday, but I would not allow it.

Supt. Ayres: What wages did he receive? – He received fair wages, according to what he earned. – Q. About how much? – I could not tell you. He used to be at home and he had his food and clothes. There was nothing about it. He had quite what he was worth. He had more money than he should have had. – Q. Had he sufficient money to go to this excess in drinking? – I suppose so. I don't know. He had more advantages than ever I have had. That has been the ruin of him. Of course, you will doubt my word if I tell you the truth, so it is no good my talking to you. I ran down to the sergeant of police on Wednesday morning when deceased went out as I thought he was going to the Castle to get some more beer. I begged and preyed the sergeant to try and stop him from having more beer. I was trying to restrain him from having so much drink. He was crazy when he left home.

By Supt. Ayres: When he went to the sergeant deceased, as it subsequently transpired, had drowned himself. He had made no complaint to the police about him before. He spoke to Mr. Ayres once about it.

Supt. Ayres: That was not about drinking.

Witness: Yes, it was. He has broken his mother's heart, but he can't break mine: it is too hard. – Q. You are not aware whether he was drunk or not when he came home on Monday night? – There was no doubt about it.

Mr. Stacey (a juror): Did he threaten to commit suicide before he went out on Wednesday morning? – I have heard so. He never threatened before me and he never threatened me. – Q. Then what was your idea in preventing him from going out? – I did not want him to go out because I was afraid he was going out to get more beer. I went to the police in order to stop him from getting more drink.

Dr. Thompson said he was called by Mr. Quinton, who said that he was told a man had gone for a doctor. As to the remark that it was nearly half an hour before he got there, he wished to say that he went as soon as he could get his things on, within five minutes of being called. Deceased was quite dead when he arrived. Two ambulance men who knew how artificial respiration should be performed were there, and one of them told him they had made several attempts to restore animation, but without result. A man who was under the influence of alcohol would probably live longer in the water than one who was not. He should not think that any one unless he had fainted or was unconscious on entering the water had ever been resuscitated after he had been in the water over four minutes.

By the jury: Delirium tremens generally came on after a man had left off drinking. Deceased would not have been under the influence of alcohol on Wednesday morning if he had not been out drinking since Monday night as stated. Deceased's appearance was not inconsistent with drowning. He was more than surprised to hear that deceased was addicted to drink, as he knew him some months ago as a healthy young man, for whom he had the highest respect and admiration. Some time ago deceased told him he would never be happy in the undertaking business and that he wanted to go in a cavalry regiment, and that he would not be happy till he went, but his father would not let him go.

Mr. Chiverton: It was his mother. I wanted him to go. It would have made a man of him.

The Coroner, in summing up, said deceased had evidently been drinking heavily and committed suicide whilst of unsound mind.

The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily of unsound mind."

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