

## Robert James Denyer

1861 Census, 47 Pyle Street, Newport

*Robert J Denyer Unmarried 59 Printer, master employing 2 men Newport, Hampshire*

Isle of Wight Observer – 1 February 1862

### A SINGULAR SUDDEN DEATH.

Our town was thrown into considerable excitement on Sunday last by the sudden death of a respectable tradesman of Pyle-street, Mr. Robert James Denyer, printer, 51 years of age, who was a single man, living alone in the house. On Saturday Mr. Denyer appeared in good health, but expressed himself in distress about a little Scotch terrier bitch, fearing it would die. On Sunday morning no admission could be obtained into the house, nor were repeated knocks at the door answered; the house was then entered through a fan-light over the door, and upon going into the back room, which he occupied, deceased was found in a kneeling position by the side of the sofa, with his arms on it and his head rested on his arms. He was quite dead, as was also his favourite dog, which was on the sofa about a yard from him.

A coroner's inquest was held on the body of Mr. Denyer, on Monday, at the Guildhall, before Frederick Blake, esq., coroner for the Isle of Wight. The jury having viewed the body, then returned to the hall, and the following evidence was taken:--

Samuel James Goodwin, being sworn, said - I live in Lugley street, and am an innkeeper, keeping the Railway tavern. I know the deceased, who was in the habit of frequenting my house most evenings. He was at my house on Saturday evening last about half-past 9 o'clock, which is rather later than his usual time, and he left about half-past 11 or 20 minutes to 12. He at first called for a pint of ale, and remained about half-an-hour, during which time he drank half of it, and then left to see how his dog was, which he said was very bad. He was away about half-an-hour, and when he came back he said his little Granny (alluding to the dog) was very ill, and he had twopennyworth of rum. He said he must have it, as he required it, and he drank the rum, which was an uncommon thing for him to take. He then called for a pint of beer, and he and Mr. Cheverton drank it between them. He did not enter into the conversation of the evening, but spoke much of his dog, and got me to make some gruel for it. About half-an-hour afterwards the deceased and Mr. Cheverton left together and took the gruel with them, wishing me "goodnight." The deceased generally coughed when he came amongst tobacco smoke. I knew he was subject to gout. He lived quite alone. He had the little dog for some years.

Thomas Cheverton, of Crocker-street, said - I knew the deceased very well indeed. I was with him at the Railway tavern on Saturday evening. He was much concerned about his little dog, but appeared in good health. I left the tavern with deceased, and I delivered the bitch of a dead pup and gave her some castor oil, and about half-past 9 we went back to Mr. Goodwin's. The deceased had some rum, and I had a pint of ale, of which he partook. At half-past 11, deceased and I left, and I carried the gruel and gave the bitch about half of it, and I left deceased's house about quarter-past 12. Deceased appeared very well and seemed pleased, but was still very anxious about the dog. On being questioned by the jury, the witness added - There was no fire in the room, but deceased said he should light one and stop up, and said I was to come up the next morning, which I said I would do about 10 o'clock. I accordingly went and found the outer door fast. The latch was down. I knocked several times, but received no answer. I then went to be shaved, and upon going back I found deceased's nephew at the door, where we waited half-an-hour. Mr. Henry Frampton then came up the street, but he had not as usual got the latch key with him. Deceased's nephew then got in through the fan-light over the door, opened the door, and let Mr. Frampton and me in. We went to the back room and found the latch of the door was down there also, and Mr. Frampton went in at the window and called to us that Mr. Denyer was dead. I went in and saw deceased kneeling down, with his chin bearing on the sofa. He was dressed, but his trowsers were partly down. He was rather warm. The dog was dead also, and lying on the sofa. There was neither fire nor gas burning.

Henry Frampton, nurseryman, said - I last saw deceased alive between 5 and 6 o'clock on Saturday evening. I had not seen him more cheerful for the last fortnight. He had been very poorly with the gout. I had

my meals with him, and while at tea on Saturday I told him not to distress himself so much about the dog, I could easily get him another. I did not see him again alive. About half-past 10 o'clock the next morning I went to the house, and found deceased's nephew standing at the door. I rapped, when Thomas Cheverton came up and informed me they had been rapping but had received no answer. Deceased's nephew then got through the fan-light, opened the front door, and went on to the back room, the door of which was fastened. I went into the yard and opened the window, which was not fastened, and found deceased kneeling, with his hands resting on the sofa, and his head upon them. He was quite dead, and the little dog likewise, which was lying on the sofa. There was neither light nor fire in the room. I directly called to Cheverton and deceased's nephew to go for Mr. Tuttiett, as I believed Mr. Denyer was dead.

Robert James Denyer, the nephew of deceased, said - I lodge on the Mall, but I have been in the habit of having my meals with the deceased. The last meal I had with him was tea on Saturday evening. I last saw him alive about half-past 8 in the printing office. He then complained of being in pain and in low spirits. He was frightened about his dog, and I told him not to fret. I went the next morning to breakfast, and found the door fastened. I knocked, but received no answer. Upon gaining admission, as before stated, we found deceased as described by the two last witnesses. Questioned by the jury - I got through the fan-light before on the previous Friday morning and found my uncle in bed. He appeared very well, and said it was the best night's rest he had had for a long time. I had waited outside that morning from 8 to 9 o'clock.

The Superintendent of Police, George Grapes, said - I went to deceased's house at 20 minutes to 11 o'clock, and found deceased in the position before described. He was dead and cold. I supposed he had been dead for two or three hours. I saw a candlestick that had had a candle in it, which was quite burnt out, as was also the fire in the grate. I saw a phial on the mantle-piece which contained the castor oil, the vessel in which the gruel was carried by Cheverton for the dog, and 2s.8d. in deceased's pocket. I made particular search for any drug or phial, but could find nothing, it being a very striking matter that both him and his dog should be both found dead together. Deceased had no neckerchief on, and his trowsers were partly down.

Mr. F. B. Tuttiett, surgeon, said - I have been in the habit of attending deceased for several years. He was a very gouty subject, and had several attacks in the course of the winter. I have known him complain of giddiness and occasionally of rheumatism, and he might have had a disease of the heart. I have not attended him this winter. I went to the house on Sunday morning, and found deceased as described by the witnesses. He was quite dead, and had been so for some time. There were no marks of violence or struggling. He appeared to have died calmly and quietly. A sudden shock, with his habit of body, was likely to have been the cause of death by apoplexy or disease of the heart; and there is no doubt but that he died from natural causes.

The Coroner then summed up the evidence, shewing the jury the principal features of the case; and a verdict was returned of "Died by the visitation of God."

*Research and transcriptions by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries, © 2018 <https://www.foncc.org.uk>*