

Cornelius Kearley

Hampshire Advertiser - 21 March 1868

AN AWFUL RESULT EXCESSIVE DRINKING. — On Wednesday morning Cornelius Kearley, a pork butcher, in business at the bottom of High-street, came home drunk and was laid on his bed, and there, about three hours afterward, he was found dead. On Thursday Mr. E. F. Blake held a coroner's inquest at the Swan Inn, on view of the body. Mary Ann Kearley, widow of the deceased, said he was 54 years of age. She last saw him alive on his bed at 12.15p.m. on Tuesday. That morning he rose between ten and eleven o'clock, took no breakfast, and went away over Coppin's Bridge to the White Lion publichouse. About 11.30 he came home in a state of intoxication, and attempted to go upstairs; his son John help him up a little way and then left him. Deceased slipped down a few steps and his sons carried him up and laid him on his bed. About half an hour afterwards she went up to him and found him lying on his left side, and she asked him what he had been doing. He attempted to reply, but his speech was thick, and she could not tell what he muttered. Her daughter went up after that, and came down and said he was asleep and warm. Witness went up to him again about 3 p.m., and found him dead but not cold. He was lying in the same position as before, and there was no clothes about his mouth to prevent his breathing freely. She could not say he was sober when he went away to the publichouse that morning. He had not been sober during the last five weeks. She thought he had been drinking spirits that morning. His drink was gin, beer, and porter. — Fanny Kearley, youngest daughter of deceased, corroborated in every particular her mother's statement. Deceased, as usual when in these drunken fits of about five weeks' duration, spoke to no one when he came down stairs that morning, and went away to the publichouse. He was shaky when he went out, but more so when he came in. He went to bed about 8.30 on Tuesday evening. — John Kearley, deceased's son, gave evidence which went to corroborate the above statements. Deceased did not appear to have sustained any injury by slipping down on his face on the stairs. The awkward construction of the stairs prevented his being helped all the way up. Deceased had no neck tie on, and his shirt front was unbuttoned. He had often seen him in the same state of drunkenness. Deceased, when they found him dead, it appeared had not moved hand or foot since he was laid down. — Henry Roff, the landlord of the White Lion publichouse, saw deceased last in his taproom, between 11 and 12 o'clock on Tuesday morning. Deceased had two half-noggins of gin (quarter of a pint), and then went home. Deceased frequently came in and had a half noggin, and perhaps, half an hour afterwards, he would come in and have another. Deceased was not a bit drunk that morning, for witness conversed with him and found him all right and reasonable enough. Had often seen him drunk. Deceased had been to his house for drink at 2 o'clock in the morning, and they could not keep him out; he would get in somehow. — Dr. Henry Castle saw the dead body lying on the bed, as described, about 4 p.m. on Tuesday. He appeared to have been dead about one or two hours. A careful external examination of the body discovered no marks of violence. He was lying in a very awkward position. Believed he was suffocated by lying face downwards on the pillow. The nose and lips appeared slightly flattened, and there was mucus and saliva on the pillow. Probably he was in a state of semi-apoplexy when laid on the bed. Verdict — "Accidentally Suffocated."

Transcribed by Roger O'Nions for Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries. 2018

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