

**Thomas Baker Punter**

**Isle of Wight County Press**

**4 March 1944**

**NEWPORT**

**Mr. T. B. Punter's Tragic Death.**- Much regret is felt by his numerous friends at the tragic death on Wednesday morning of Mr. Thomas B. Punter, manager of Messrs. Jordan and Stanley's St. James's-square grocery store, as the result of an accident while he was cycling to business. Mr. Punter was on his way from his home in College-road when, as he turned into Medina-avenue, there was a collision between his cycle and a car coming from the direction of Shide, driven by Mr. T. M. Fletcher, of 25 High-street, Shanklin. Mr. Punter received such severe injuries to the head that he died before he could be removed to hospital. First-aid was rendered by Police Inspector Lock and P.C. Chandler, and Dr. Slater was soon in attendance. Mr. Punter, who was 70, was very well known by reason of his business activities and as a former enthusiastic hon. secretary of the branch of the League of Nations Union. He took a lively interest in politics, particularly in its social implications, and had often ably dealt with such problems in letters to the "County Press." With one short break he had been in the employ of Messrs. Jordan and Stanley for about 30 years, and had been manager of their St. James's-square branch for many years. He leaves a widow (his second wife) and two daughters, with whom much sympathy is felt in their tragic bereavement. An inquest was held yesterday (Friday) afternoon.

**Isle of Wight County Press**

**11 March 1944**

**CYCLIST FATALLY INJURED AT NEWPORT.**

The circumstances surrounding the sad death by accident of Mr. Thomas Punter, aged 70, of 24 College-road, Newport, which occurred last week, were described to a Coroner's jury on Friday of last week at the Guildhall, Newport. The deputy-Coroner (Capt. R. E. A. Webster) conducted the inquiry, Insp. A. E. Lock represented the police, and Mr. F. W. H. Cool watched the case on behalf of the driver of the car involved. Mr. A. O. Purdy, T.C., was foreman of the jury.

Thomas Daniel Mills, a supply assistant in the Royal Navy, of 39 Carisbrooke-road, Newport, identified the body as that of his father-in-law, Thomas Punter, aged 70. He suffered from increasing deafness. He was an alert business man, but liable to be absorbed in his plans instead of what he was doing.- By the Foreman: He was not stone deaf, but hard of hearing.

Thomas McDonald Fletcher, 25 High-street, Shanklin, fruiterer and green-grocer, said that at about 9 a.m. on March 1st he was driving his car in Medina-avenue from Shide towards Newport. There was no other traffic on the road. He was travelling at about 20 miles an hour on his proper side. As he passed Cypress-road he did not see anyone. He did not slow down: there was no reason for him to do so. Just as he got across to the opposite corner he saw someone on a bicycle coming into the car. He did not see the deceased until a split

second before he hit the car near the wind screen. Directly he saw him he pulled the wheel round, put the brakes on, and stopped almost immediately. The car had actually stopped before he had crossed the entrance to Cypress-road. When he picked the injured man up he was by the rear wheel of the car. He made him as comfortable as possible. Someone came out of a shop and he asked them to phone for the police and a doctor, who arrived in a few minutes. The road was wet as it had been raining, but it was very good weather and visibility was good. No damage was done to the car. - The Deputy-Coroner said he had inspected the car and there were no marks in it. - Witness added that he heard no bicycle bell or hooter. - The Foreman: Is the witness satisfied that he was only doing 20 miles an hour, seeing that there was a skid mark 17ft. long? - Yes.- In answer to Mr. Cool, witness said he left Shanklin at about 8.15.a.m., stopped for a few seconds to pick up some wreaths in Wilton-road, and then carried on to the scene of the accident, where he arrived in about 45 minutes. That would be a distance of about 12 miles.

Dr. John McDonald Scott Slater said that when he arrived the police had rendered first-aid. The injured man was in a coma, which pointed to a fractured base of the skull. The most likely theory was that he fell on his head after hitting the car. There were no marks of bruising on the body.

P.C. Chandler said he was called by telephone and found Mr. Punter lying on the road. He was 5ft. from the kerb and 15ft. from the north corner of Cypress-road. He was unconscious. The driver of the car was doing what he could and was being assisted by people from nearby houses. There was a skid mark about 17ft. long, apparently caused by the car. There were no marks on the car and the brakes were in good order. Very little damage had been done to the pedal cycle, but the handle-bars were slightly twisted and the wheel was slightly buckled. Both brakes were in good order. While they were waiting the arrival of the ambulance the deceased died. In Cypress-road there was a "Go Slow" sign. He had known deceased for some time, and he had always considered him very unsafe on a bicycle. He was very deaf, and one had to shout to make him understand. - By the Foreman: He felt satisfied that the driver had done what he possibly could to avoid the accident.

Inspector Lock said that from his examination of the brake marks and the position of the body he was satisfied that no blame attached to the driver of the car from the police point of view.

The Coroner said that if the jury looked at the plan they could more or less visualise what happened. The driver saw nobody as his front wheel came level with the south corner of Cypress-road, but, when he got to the other corner he had a fleeting glimpse of someone coming into him. The evidence was that the driver pulled out a little in an endeavour to avoid the man, and also put his brakes on. The condition of the cycle seemed to show that the car had been struck a glancing blow, and deceased had been probably knocked off his bicycle by the car touching his handle-bar.

The jury found that deceased struck the car a glancing blow, was thrown off, and fractured his skull. Death was accidental and they exonerated the driver from blame. They expressed their sympathy with the relatives, and the Deputy-Coroner, Mr. Cool (on behalf of the driver), and Inspector Lock associated themselves with this.

Mr. Mills thanked him and everyone who had helped, and thought he might say, on behalf of the relatives, that they felt that the driver need have nothing on his conscience.

The funeral took place on Saturday, a service being held in the Castlehold Baptist Church and the interment being in his first wife's grave at Newport Cemetery. The Rev. G. Barry Morgan, who officiated, referred to Mr. Punter's devoted interest in the church. Among the numerous ways in which he had given willing help was in painting scenery for concerts and plays, which were examples of his artistic sense. He had heard people say to him "He was absolutely mad about the League of Nations." That was because he hoped and believed that it would bring a new spirit of international co-operation which would ensure peace. It would be a good thing if more people were "mad" about the things that made for international brotherhood. The hymns "Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round" and "In heavenly love abiding" were sung, and the organist (Mrs. W. Pilcher) played "O rest in the Lord" at the close. The chief mourners were Mrs. Punter, Supply Assistant T. D. Mills, R.N., and Mrs. Mills (son-in-law and daughter), Miss Goffe, Mr. W. Hayles, and Mr. and Mrs. J. Brown (brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law), Mrs. Lakeman, Mr. D. R. Mills, Mr. W. and Miss Yelf, Miss Hendy, and Mr. J. W. Gibbs. Mr. L. Jordan, J.P., and Mrs. and Miss Jordan were present with the following representatives of the past and present staff of Messrs. Jordan and Stanley, Messrs. B. B. Urry and O. E. Long (former colleagues of Mr. Punter), Mr. F. H. Gwilliam, Miss Chandler, Mrs. Brown, and Miss Attrill (office staff) Mr. H. C. Harbourne (traveller), and Messrs. W. H. Cousins, K. E. Miller, A. W. Woodford, G. Russell, P. Groves, F. W. Dukes, A. V. Hale, D. Crawford, and M. Hayward, the Misses Urry, Jolliffe, and Read and Mesdames Dukes, Wyatt, and Noy (shop staff). The branch of the League of Nations Union was represented by Capt. J. S. Brown, T.C. (president), G. Norman (chairman), W. G. Cooper (hon. secretary), and A. G. Harrison (hon. treasurer), and others attending were Mrs. J. S. Brown, Mrs. Dove, Mrs. L. E. Dore, Mrs. Hunt, the Misses Buck and Morris, and Saunders, and Messrs. F. Chiverton (representing the I.W. Grocers' Council and Messrs. Upward and Rich), A. L. Hayles, G. C. Russell, J.P., C.C., S. F. Holmes, F. A. Piper, H. W. Lincoln, J. F. Launder, L. G. Upward, and W. H. Croucher. Among the floral tributes were those from the High-street and office staff of Messrs. Jordan and Stanley; the staff at 19 St. James's-square; the branch of the League of Nations Union; and the Castlehold Baptist church. Messrs. H. and F. Damp made the arrangements.

Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,

© 2020

<https://www.foncc.org.uk>