

**William Toogood died 18 February 1863 aged 5 weeks
Edith Toogood died 19 February 1863 aged 5 weeks
Children of William Toogood and his wife Edith Honeybunn**

Isle of Wight Observer - 28 February 1863

Inquest report

“Poisoning – Caution to Parents”

An inquest was held on 20 February 1863 before **Mr Coroner Blake** on the bodies of twins William and Edith Toogood aged five weeks. The article reports that the babies died as a consequence of being given too strong a dose of syrup of poppies by their mother.

The article shows that the infants had been small and sickly since birth. Mrs Toogood said that William and Edith were particularly restless at night. As both she and her husband were prevented from sleeping she sought the advice of her own mother. The grandmother (**Mrs Susan Honeybunn**) told her to get a pennyworth of syrup of poppies. Mrs Toogood's brother (probably **Charles Honeybunn**) obtained the syrup from the druggist, **Mr Smith**, in a cup. Shortly after being given half a teaspoon at 8pm little William became ill. Mrs Toogood asked her mother to fetch a surgeon. **Mr Leach**, the parish surgeon, refused to attend at such a late hour. Mrs Honeybunn then found **Dr Savage** who was prepared to visit the twins. Susan Honeybunn had never before had a surgeon visit her family. She was always had **Mrs Denness** present at her confinements. Despite Dr Savage's attention William died on the evening of the 18th February, two and a half hours after taking the syrup. Soon after midnight little Edith became unwell. As he had with her brother Dr Savage placed her in a warm bath. Edith died at 5 am on the 19th February.

Mrs Edith Toogood stated that the druggist had not given any instructions with the syrup. As she had seen her own mother give a teaspoon of her home made syrup to her brothers and sisters she thought half a teaspoon would be safe for the twins. It was concluded that the bought syrup must have been much stronger. Dr Savage stated that he thought the dose too strong for such weak babies and was sufficient to cause their deaths.

In summing up the evidence the Coroner expressed his regret that mothers were not more careful as a great number of children had been lost after being given too strong a dose of opiates. The jury gave a verdict of accidental death.

Transcribed by Sally Wills for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries
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