

Harold Gordon Vessey

1911 census – 54 Orchard Street, Newport, Isle of Wight

William Henry Wheeler	Head	40	Carman	Gatcombe, Isle of Wight
Emily Wheeler	Wife	38		Newport, Isle of Wight
<i>Harold Gordon Vessey</i>	<i>Nephew</i>	<i>3</i>		<i>Newport, Isle of Wight</i>

Portsmouth Evening News 13 June 1914

DEADLY DISEASE GERM

Island Boy's Death from Lockjaw

Last evening an inquest was held by the Deputy Coroner of the island. Mr. F. A. Joyce, on the body of Harold Gordon Vessey, aged 6. who, whilst living with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Wheeler at 54, Orchard-street, Newport, fell in the garden path last Thursday week, cutting his knee, dying a week later from lockjaw.

The Coroner questioned Mrs. Wheeler as to the effect that the boy apparently kicked over a stone and fell, cutting his knee rather badly. She tied his handkerchief round the knee and took deceased to Dr. McKay, who properly washed and cleansed, and dressed the wound, stitched it up and bandaged it and put the leg in splints, giving instructions that deceased should be kept quiet. On Wednesday last deceased first showed signs of illness, and they sent for Dr. McKay, who came at once, and said he was afraid it was a hopeless case. The child died next day from lockjaw.

Dr. McKay said the boy was brought to him with a wound 2in. long on the knee, and he thoroughly cleansed it with the strongest antiseptic solutions that he could use, using Lysol, carbolic, and tincture of iodine. He then dressed and bandaged the wound and put the leg in splints, to prevent the knee from being moved so as to hinder primary union of the wound. No surgeon interfered with such a wound after dressing for eight days, unless something was wrong. When he was called on Wednesday he found that tetanus had developed, but the wound had healed perfectly and there was no inflammation or discharge, showing that his work had been efficient. There was no septic poisoning. The germ of tetanus, which was usually in garden or road dirt. was very resistant—it was almost beyond killing—and it required boiling for five minutes to kill the spores of the germ, which would withstand a solution of carbolic 1 in 20 for a considerable time. It was not necessary for him to visit the case again after he had dressed the wound unless he was sent for. It was really a trivial wound.

The Coroner said that the evidence showed no blame attached to Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, nor to the doctor, who had done all that could be expected of him.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death from tetanus."

Originally transcribed by Tony Bevis for the Isle of Wight Family History Society © 2020, reproduced here with permission.

Addition research (census information) by Tony Barton, FoNCC.

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