

**Sarah Ward**

**Hampshire Telegraph**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 1866**

**Newport**

**FATAL EFFECTS OF DRUKENNESS** — An inquest was held on Wednesday last at the Guildhall, Newport, before Frederick Blake, Esq., Coroner upon the body of Sarah Ward, widow of the late Huge Ward, who was found dead that morning under the circumstances detailed in the evidence. The first witness called was an aged woman named Mary Ann Allington, who was not sober, who deposed that she was the wife of John Allington, a chair-bottomer. She had known the deceased for twelve years. She was a widow and lived alone in Wells-yard, South-street, where the body had been viewed by the jury. She generally enjoyed good health, but had a bad foot. Now and then she would take her “drops,” but not often, but some people said she was addicted to drink. She saw her at the “Valiant Soldier” public house, in South-street, on the previous day, and had left there at dinner time, and saw her again at seven in the evening, when she was perfectly sober, and deceased was then smoking her pipe. She was not drinking, at least in her presence. She helped her home on account of her having a bad foot. When she got home she lighted her fire, and was blowing it up to get the kettle to boil to make herself some tea, and witness left after sitting there about ten minutes. When she went away deceased was to all appearance in good health. Deceased had had a “drop” during the day, but was not the worse for drink. She went that morning at seven o’clock to do some washing for deceased by engagement, and found her door locked, and a girl named Taylor, a next door neighbour, said she thought she heard deceased fall downstairs, and had not heard her since. She (witness) opened the window and got into the room down stairs. Witness ran off for Mr. Wells, Mr. Carley, and Dr. Foster, and then to Mr. Grapes, the superintendent of police, and when she returned to the house deceased had been removed. Witness was quite sober on the previous day.— Robert Abbot, landlord of the “Valiant Soldier,” public house, South-street, said that previous day was the first time he had seen deceased for three months. She came in at half-past eight o’clock in the morning. She might have had some drink then, and she remained there up to nearly nine o’clock at night. She first had a pint of beer, and during the day might have spent 2s. She also partook of beer from others, the party altogether having about 18 quarts of beer during the day, when she left. He helped to set her upon her legs, and told the last witness to assist her home, and saw them out of the passage. He must say deceased was more drunk than sober; she could not get home without assistance. The last witness, who remained at his house all day, had as much to drink or more than deceased. — Mary Ann Allington, recalled said: Some time on the previous day she saw deceased, while she standing in Mr. Well’s shop, go up her yard towards her home. She was not at “The Valiant Soldier” above an hour all day. Deceased fell while she was getting her home, and she was quite sure she herself did not. — Rosina Tayler, about 15 years old, said she lived next door to deceased. She did not see her on the previous day. She went to bed about seven in the evening, and was awoke by the noise of Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Allington coming home, and shortly after heard Allington go away, and Ward shut the door. She did not hear Mrs. Ward go up stairs. She heard her go to the cupboard, and then blow her fire, and about half-an-hour afterwards she heard something fall as if it were a dish, and not heavy enough for it to be the deceased. She saw Mrs. Allington that morning about seven o’clock. She also saw her on the previous day about dinner time, and she was then nearly drunk. — George Carley, of South-street, labourer, said that Allington went to him that morning, and told him to come to Mrs. Ward’s. He went there and found her lying at the foot of the stairs, her head against the door and her heels upwards — she was dead and cold, and her face, which was pressed against the stair-foot door, appeared to be bruised. He moved her and laid her on

the floor. — Mr. William Frederic Foster, surgeon, stated that he had attended deceased occasionally for three or four years, she had some diseased bones in her foot, but was not otherwise ill. He had not seen her for the last two or three months, when he did see her it was early in the morning, and then she was always sober. He was sent for that morning, and found deceased lying on the floor dressed. Her arms and legs were very much contracted. She must have been dead for several hours. Her face was livid and bloated, and a little blood fluid was oozing from one ear. He considered that death was caused by apoplexy, brought on by the position in which she was laid and enhanced by excessive drinking. He went upstairs, and found she had been lying on the bed. A candlestick was placed on a chair, and the candle burnt out. Deceased's cap was on the bed-post at the foot of the bed. Deceased had no bruises on her; only congestive marks. — The jury returned a verdict "That deceased accidentally fell down stairs, and died from congestive apoplexy."

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