

William Chiverton

Isle of Wight Observer – Saturday 18 March 1905

FATAL FALL FROM A LADDER AT NEWPORT.

On Friday evening, the Deputy-Coroner for the Island (Mr. F.A. Joyce) held an inquest at Barton Village Mission Room, Newport, touching the death of William J.N. Cheverton [sic], age 54, of No. 1, John Street, Barton's Village, who succumbed on the previous day to injuries received by falling from a ladder at the Newport Gas Works, where he was employed as a labourer on January 6th.

Samuel N. Cheverton, brother of the deceased, said when brought home, on January 6th, suffering from injuries about the head, deceased told him, he fell from a ladder, but did not know how,

Ellis Orchard, labourer, at the Gas Works, said at one o'clock, on the afternoon of January 6th. he saw the deceased staggering by the engine room at the works, covered in blood. Deceased told him he had fallen off the ladder, which was just round the corner, and was used by the men at work on the retorts. Deceased said he was hurt, and must go home. Deceased had often used the same ladder, but that was the first accident he had known. The ladder was not fixed, and was only about 12ft. to the top. Witness said the ladder did not fall down; if it had done so he must have seen it.

A juror said he thought the ladder must have come away at the top, and he considered it would have been more satisfactory if the foreman had been present to have given evidence on the point.

Dr. Foster said the deceased was brought to his surgery on the afternoon of the accident, suffering from a scalp wound on the side of his head. Deceased went on very well, except for complaining of great pain in the head. Eventually paralysis of the brain set in, from which deceased succumbed.

Mr. H.J. Ibbotson (manager of the Gas Company) said the ladder referred to was a heavy wooden one, standing in the yard, which had been used for a long time by the workmen engaged on the beds of the retorts. They preferred that ladder to a vertical iron ladder which was bolted to the wall, because they thought it was much safer and easier to set up. He had not heard of the ladder having fallen down, and if it had the witness Orchard must have seen it. To his knowledge there had never been any other accident over using the wooden ladder.

The Deputy-Coroner, in summing up, said he did not think they could do anything else but accept the statement that deceased was going up the ladder, and, coming over "queer," happened to fall off. It seemed perfectly clear that death resulted from an accident, for which nobody was to blame.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death," and after some deliberation, the jury made a recommendation to the Gas Company that the wooden ladder should be fixed.

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