

Dick Linington

Isle of Wight County Press - 21 November 1896

AN OLD MANS STRANGE DEATH AT NEWPORT.

FOUND DROWNED IN A TANK.

On Monday afternoon H.R. Hooper, Esq., B.A., held an inquest touching the death of Dick Linington, aged 72, a hay trusser, lodging at Barton's-village, Newport, who was found drowned in a tank of water in a garden belonging to Mr. Percy Shepard on the previous day. - Mr. Charles Barton was chosen foreman of the jury.

Emily Jane Creighton, of Barton's-village, said the deceased was a lodger at her house. On the 15th inst. (Sunday) about 20 minutes to 12 he left the house. He seemed then in almost his usual state of health. Deceased had for some time past been suffering from cancer and it preyed on his mind. He never suggested to her that he would do any harm to himself. Something had been said about the deceased's removal to the Workhouse, and witness thought that this had upset him. Mr. Horan, the relieving officer, had been to see deceased and told him he would be removed to the Workhouse. Beyond that, witness knew of no other trouble which the deceased had.

Ernest Deacon, a storeman at Pan Mill, living at 2, Ash-road, Barton's-village, said that between half-past 11 and 12 o'clock on the previous day he was in the road near his house when his sister came running to him and asked him to assist the poor old man who had fallen down in the road. He went at once to his assistance. The deceased was deaf and almost mute, and from what witness could understand deceased said he wanted to go to the garden. Witness walked as far as the garden with him and opened the gate, and that was the last he saw of him. Witness tried to get deceased home when he picked him up, but he refused to come. If he had known that the deceased was going to do what he afterwards did in the garden, witness would sooner have carried him home. Witness had known deceased for 10 or 11 years. Did not know whether during the past 12 months he had been medically attended.

By a Juror: Witness unlocked the gate and left. Deceased could not do it himself. Witness simply turned the key and left the deceased and he saw no more of him. When he picked up deceased he found that his hands were all smothered with mud and there was mud in his mouth and on his face.

William Linington, nephew of the deceased, living at the Royal-exchange, said he went, as he usually did, to deceased's lodgings with some nourishment for him on the previous day, but found that he was out. After hunting about for deceased he was told that he had gone to Mr. Shepard's garden and before that had fallen down and Mr. Deacon had picked him up and seen to him. Witness went down to the garden, thinking deceased might be waiting there, as usual. When witness got to the tank he found deceased up to his waist in the tank, with his legs sticking out. He pulled deceased out and turned him over. He thought he was dead. It was about half-past 1 when witness found deceased. He called for Mr. Sheath, who lived near, and he came out in the garden. Witness said "Take charge of him while I run after the doctor." He fetched young Mr. Foster at once. Witness came back with the doctor, who said the deceased was dead. Witness saw deceased just before 9 the same morning at his lodgings and he was as near dead as possible. Deceased could not open his mouth to eat anything, and witness often fed him with a feeding cup. Witness asked him if he was worse, and he said he should not live more than another day or two; he was nearly dead. Deceased had not strength enough to put a piece of coal on the fire. On Friday night Mr. Horan gave witness – as the deceased was in bed and asleep – a piece

of paper (produced) to give to him which read "I shall come and take you to the infirmary to-morrow. The doctors will not operate or do anything against your will." When witness gave deceased the paper he said "I am not going to be cut about by any doctors." Pointing to his bed, deceased said "I shall lie there and die." Witness thought that the fear of being operated upon affected the deceased's mind. He always went against going to the Workhouse and would work till he dropped. He was going blind, deaf, and almost mute. On the previous Tuesday witness's mother begged him to go to the hospital, and deceased refused and bade him good-bye and said he should not be long before he died. Witness had been in the habit of communicating to deceased by means of messages written on slips of paper, and he handed a number of these to the Deputy Coroner, which showed that witness and his friends had done what they could to help the deceased. When witness saw deceased on Sunday morning he thought he would not live long, and deceased gave him a few trinkets and other things which he had had given him when his mother died, and said "You will find me dead in bed one of these mornings. I am nearly dead now, and don't let them pull me about." Witness asked him why he would not go to the Workhouse, and at the same time told him that he would go with him and explain to the authorities that he was not silly, but deaf. Deceased said "No; let me die here."

By the Jury: Deceased had been receiving parish relief for a few months.

The Acting Coroner said he was sure the witness had been very kind to the deceased, and he thanked him for giving his evidence so clearly.

Mr. Stanley Foster, surgeon, practising at Newport, said on Sunday about 20 minutes to 2 he was called to see the deceased, who he was told had drowned himself. When he arrived at the garden the deceased was stretched out on the grass quite dead. Deceased was wet right down to the waist and apparently had been in the water about half an hour. There were two tanks where he saw deceased, about 3ft. in diameter, but he could not say how deep the water was.

A Juror remarked that there was 2ft. of water in the tank in which deceased was drowned, as they had measured it.

Witness said he had seen deceased about, but he had never attended him. His father had seen deceased at the surgery and prescribed some lotion for him. Deceased presented the appearance of a man who had been drowned. It was possible that he might have lost his senses when he lost his balance and was unable to get out. Deceased could have extricated himself from the tank had he not been in such a weak state.

The witness Linington said he found a towel round the deceased when he pulled him out of the tank.

The Acting Coroner, reviewing the evidence, said it did not, to his mind, establish that the deceased met with his death at his own hands. He was evidently in a very weak state, and he thought the explanation of the occurrence was that, in leaning over the tank to wash himself, as was his custom, he lost his balance and fell forward into the water, from which position he was unable to extricate himself, in consequence of his enfeebled condition.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

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