

Susan Hare

1901 Census – 1 Burnt House, Arreton

Levi Eldridge	Head	76	Labourer on Farm	Arreton, Isle of Wight
Fanny Eldridge	Daughter	47	Housekeeper	Arreton, Isle of Wight
Kate Eldridge	Daughter	24	Draper's Assistant	Arreton, Isle of Wight
<i>Susan Hare</i>	<i>Visitor</i>	<i>53</i>		<i>Gosberton Cheal, Lincs</i>

Isle of Wight County Press 10 October 1908

FATAL FALL DOWNSTAIRS AT NEWPORT.

WIDOW'S MELANCHOLY END.

The death occurred early on Sunday morning, after falling downstairs at No. 5 Trafalgar-road, Newport, of Susan Hare, aged 62, widow of the late Mr. Samuel Knight Hare, a former well-known cattle dealer, of Long-lane, Staplers, who it will be remembered was found dead in bed some years ago [*June 1898, buried at Arreton*]. P.S. Foyle visited the house after the occurrence and made the necessary inquiries for the Deputy Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.), who held an inquest at the Gospel-hall, Union-street, on Tuesday morning. Mr. George M. Smith was foreman of the jury. Insp. Cass, with P.S. Foyle, were present on behalf of the police.

JOSEPH CORNELIUS DUNFORD, salesman, living with his wife at 5 Trafalgar-road, Newport, gave evidence of identification. He said deceased had no permanent home, but went from one place to another, lodging for a short time here and there, as she would not stay anywhere long. She had been staying at witness's house off and on for the last six years. About 11 o'clock on Saturday morning she came into Newport, intending to return to Mr. Eldridge's at Down-end in the evening. She afterwards left and went to the Post-office to get her money. She was not drunk, but she had had some drink. About 8 o'clock in the evening deceased returned to witness's house unexpectedly and arranged to stay for the night. She was the worse for drink, but was able to walk upstairs. She had been somewhat irregular in her habits for some time, particularly when she drew her money, but she had not complained of her heart being bad or of her health. They all went to bed about 11 p.m., witness and his wife sleeping in the room opposite to that occupied by deceased. About 4 o'clock next morning he heard deceased walking about in her room, and he did not notice anything more until he heard a heavy fall down the stairs. He ran out and saw deceased lying head downwards at the bottom of the stairs. Her head was on the floor, close to the wall, and her feet partly up the staircase. Deceased never spoke afterwards. She looked up at witness and died about three minutes after he picked her up and removed her to the sitting-room. She never had any drink upstairs.

By the jury: Deceased was fully dressed, excepting her hat. She was in the habit of sleeping with her clothes on when she had these attacks. She had been lying on her bed. They were all on very good terms. She had never had a fall downstairs before when in that condition. Deceased was in the habit of getting about early in the morning – between 1 and 6 o'clock – when she had those attacks, which lasted for about a fortnight or three weeks. She would then go for three months at a stretch without taking intoxicating drinks.

Dr. CHARLES J. THOMPSON said that at 5.30 on Sunday morning he was called to see the deceased, whose body was then lying in the back sitting-room of the last witness. Deceased was fully dressed, except her boots. He saw three abrasions – two on her face and one on the temple – on the right side, in a direct line with one other, and higher up on the head and a little further back with a contusion. The wound on the head was from the impact, but the others were not, and they were not severe enough to have been caused by a fall downstairs. The wound on the head was not such as would be caused by pitching from the top to the bottom of the stairs. The bones were not broken, but there was a little blood between the scalp and the skull. He did not think that injury on the head was sufficient to cause death by itself. Those were the only external marks of violence. On making a post-mortem examination he found no sign of injury which might have been caused by the fall – no fracture in the vault or the base of the skull and no injury to the brain. From that he concluded that deceased did not die as the result of the injuries already described. Her heart was small, flabby and empty, with very marked fatty degeneration. The left lung was slightly congested, the right lung intensely so. That was of recent date and might have arisen from drinking habits. The liver was markedly cirrhotic. The condition of her heart was such as to account for the probability of an attack of syncope, to which he attributed death. That condition might have been accelerated by the shock of the fall.

The CORONER said no doubt deceased had been indulging in drinking habits, though they were not entitled to say on the evidence that her death arose from them. Having regard to the sort of staircase it was, one would conclude that any one falling head-long down it in a drunken condition would sustain a broken neck or fractured skull, but the evidence of the doctor, which was very clear and appeared to be established by the post-mortem, was that death was not due to the injuries received in the fall. They had therefore to fall back on the evidence as to the heart being in a very bad state.

The jury returned a verdict to the effect that death was due to syncope, accelerated by shock caused by the fall.

Transcribed by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2024
<https://www.foncc.org.uk>