

Alfred Wendes

Isle of Wight County Press – 27 August 1935

ELDERLY MAN'S SUICIDE AT NEWPORT.

The body of Alfred Wendes, aged 69, a bricklayer's labourer, of Prospect Cottage, Staplers, Newport, who was reported to the police as missing earlier in the day, was found by P.C. Whillier shortly before midnight on Friday week lying dead in a field near his home. Deceased was well known in the district and was a member of the local tent of Rechabites. The Deputy Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquiry into the circumstances of his death at the Guildhall, Newport, on Monday. The police were represented by Inspector H. Randall and the Coroner sat without a jury.

William W. C. Wendes, of 21 Coppins-bridge, Newport, deceased's son, said the deceased had worked for the firm of Quintons of Newport for 48 years, but was a patient at the County Mental Hospital from November, 1919, to March, 1922, after which he returned to work. He was taken ill in March last and was attended by Dr. Foster until the commencement of the present month, since when he had apparently been in good health. Witness received a message that his father was missing on the 15th inst. and, assisted by P.C. Whillier, made a search, which resulted in the finding of his body. The deceased was depressed at not going back to work.

Mrs. Elizabeth Wendes, the widow, said that deceased retired to bed after dinner saying he felt unwell. A little later he came downstairs, stated that he felt better, and went out. As he did not return witness sent for her son after searching for him. About 10 p.m. she discovered that a bottle of lysol was missing from the kitchen and informed the police. She thought her husband became depressed because he had lost his work. He passed a new building on which his mates were working and it hurt his feelings because he was not with them.

P.C. Whillier described the finding of the body at about 11.20 p.m. on August 15th in a field some 200 yards from deceased's home. A rope round the neck was attached to a small withy tree in the hedge and the body was lying in a shallow ditch in such a way that the rope supported the weight of the head but not that of the body. It was tied with a slip-knot round the neck. There were no signs of a struggle.

Dr J. J. Dowdall, of Newport, who performed a post mortem examination, stated that generally speaking the organs were in good condition for a man of the deceased's age. He formed the opinion that death was due to comatose asphyxia. Deceased would rapidly become unconscious owing to the impeded circulation caused by the pressure of the rope on the artery of the neck, and asphyxia would gradually follow. It was not the ordinary violent asphyxia usually associated with hanging. An adhesion between the brain and the lining of the skull was probably the cause of deceased's mental affliction.

The Coroner said it was his duty to record a verdict of suicide by hanging and that deceased was of unsound mind at the time. It was one of those cases where the man was getting old and his employers found that the time had come for a separation between him and his employment. He seemed to have taken the matter to heart and it should be remembered that he had also been the victim of unsoundness of mind, which unfortunately necessitated his removal to the County Mental Hospital for two years. "One must not be censorious as to his

natural reaction at losing his work." He expressed every sympathy with Mrs. Wendes and the family.

THE FUNERAL

took place on Tuesday, the first part of the service being at the Quay-street Methodist Church and the interment at the St. Paul's Cemetery. The Rev. J. Matthewman officiated. The mourners were Mrs. Wendes (widow), Messrs. W. and H. Wendes (sons), Mr. W. Attrill (brother), Mrs. W. Wendes (daughter-in-law), and Mr. W. Wendes (grandson). There were also present Messrs. A. Buckett, B. Downer, G. Bullock, and J. Norris, deceased's workmates of the firm of Quintons, Newport. The many wreaths included those from Messrs. Quintons and Mr. R. P. Mew, deceased's nearest neighbour. Mrs. M. Symes (daughter) was unable to be present owing to indisposition.

Mrs. Wendes and the members of the family wish to express their sincere thanks to Drs. Dowdall and Foster and to P.C. Whillier, and also to all friends sending messages of sympathy and beautiful floral tributes. Will friends please accept this as the only intimation.

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