

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday Nov 7<sup>th</sup> 1963, page 4.

### **FOUND DEAD AFTER HUSBAND'S FUNERAL**

Early on the morning after her husband's funeral, Mrs. **Alice Maud Mary GIBSON**, 67 of "Marigold," Mayfield-road, Ryde, was found dead in her kitchen on Friday.

Her husband, Mr. Thomas Ernest GIBSON, 58, died at his home the previous Monday (as reported last week). He was interred at Ryde Cemetery, after a service at All Saints' Parish Church, on Thursday.

The inquest on Mr. GIBSON was opened at Ryde Town Hall on Monday by the Island Coroner, Mr. James BULLIN, and adjourned for a week after evidence of identification by Det. constable Leslie TAYLOR, a neighbour.

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ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 1963, page 3,

### **KILLED HERSELF AFTER DEATH OF HUSBAND**

#### **Inquest on Ryde Woman**

As they entered the church for her husband's funeral service, a woman told her sister that she would be "with" the dead man in a few days time. The following morning she was found dead in her kitchen.

At the resumed inquest at Ryde Town Hall on Monday on Mrs. **Alice Maud Mary GIBSON**, 67, of "Marigold," Mayfield-road, Ryde, the Island Coroner Mr. James BULLIN, recorded a verdict that she killed herself while the balance of her mind was disturbed.

Evidence of identification was given by Det. Constable Leslie TAYLOR, a neighbour, on Monday last week.

Dr. Thomas SIM, of John-street, Ryde, told the Coroner that Mrs. GIBSON had been his patient for many years. On November 1 he was called to her home at 6.30 a.m. and found her lying dead on the kitchen floor.

#### **Fits of Depression**

He said that Mrs. GIBSON suffered fits of depression, and although admitted twice to Whitecroft Hospital, Newport during 1956-57, she discharged herself on both occasions.

In 1962 Mrs. GIBSON entered Whitecroft again, and when she left later in the year it was suggested she should have the drug sodium amytal at night.

Dr. SIM said that Mrs. GIBSON's husband died on the Monday before her death, and he saw her on that day. She was very distressed, but on the day before the funeral seemed to have recovered.

He added that Mrs. GIBSON had made two previous attempts to end her life and the second visit to Whitecroft was as a result of one of these.

The Island Pathologist, Dr. Peter SWINSTEAD, said Mrs. GIBSON appeared to have taken 26 Sodium amytal tablets, causing death by barbiturate poisoning.

### **Sister's Evidence**

Mrs. Margaret TUCKER, of Christchurch, Hants, sister of Mrs. GIBSON, told the Coroner that she came to Ryde to be with her sister on the Wednesday after her brother-in-law's death.

The following day on entering the church for his funeral Mrs. GIBSON told her sister that she would soon be with her husband. That night they slept together because Mrs. TUCKER was anxious about her sister.

"When I woke early the next morning I found her gone" said Mrs. TUCKER. "She was not in the toilet so I raced downstairs into the hall and saw paper jammed in the kitchen door sealing it. I ran for help."

Mr. William George STEER, a baker's roundsman, of 28a High-street, Ryde, said he was delivering bread in Mayfield-road when Mrs. TUCKER asked for his help. He rushed into the house and saw paper wedged in the kitchen door. He pushed the door open gently and saw Mrs. GIBSON lying on the floor. The gas jets of the stove were alight and the oven was on, but not alight. Feeling no heart or pulse beat coming from Mrs. GIBSON, he tried mouth-to-mouth breathing but to no avail.

Det. constable Leslie TAYLOR said he was called to the house and saw Mr. STEER there. Mrs. GIBSON was lying on the floor with her head resting on the oven door. The gas was off by then but the room was very hot. It appeared the gas had been ignited by a water heater pilot jet, the flashback making some plastic curtains in the window smoulder.

### **Pills and Note**

A pill bottle produced by the Coroner was identified by Det. constable TAYLOR as that he had found on the draining board of the kitchen with its top off. He said that the drug was not usually given in such large doses and he had been unable to trace where it came from.

He added that he found a note from Mrs. GIBSON on a tea trolley in the kitchen.

Recording his verdict, Mr. BULLIN praised the prompt action of Mr. STEER in entering the kitchen and doing what he could.

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