

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday 30th April 1942

**SUICIDE OF BINSTEAD
RESIDENT
Obsession That Nothing Could Be
Done For Him**

The story of a Binstead resident's suicide after a period of ill-health was told to the Acting Deputy Coroner for the Island (Mr. H. R. PALMER) at the Methodist schoolroom on Friday afternoon. The deceased was **Alfred George JOHNSON**, aged 71, a retired ironmonger, who lived at 2, The Firs, Newnham Road. Inspector BUTCHER represented the police.

The widow, Mrs. Agnes JOHNSON, said her husband retired from business 20 years ago and 16 years ago they came to reside at Binstead. Her husband had not been well for some time and had an objection to doctors. However, she herself called Dr. CHURCHILL, who saw her husband on Monday and Tuesday and was coming again on Thursday. Her husband had often said to her "What's the good of my living?" On Wednesday about 9 p.m. she took her husband a cup of milk and afterwards went to bed. About 6.30 she awakened and smelt gas on the landing and immediately went for her neighbour Mrs. HAPGOOD.

Mrs. Hilda STEEL, of 106 Regent St., Shanklin, said she saw her father on Wednesday when he looked ill and was very depressed. He told her the next thing they would be wanting to do would be to operate on him. She told him she would see him again on Sunday and bring her husband, to which he replied, "It might be too late."

Mrs. HAPGOOD, a widow, of Hilary, Newnham Road, said Mrs. JOHNSON called to her at 6.45 p.m. and she went to the house. She first turned the gas off at the meter and opened all the doors. She then went into the sitting room where she saw deceased lying on the floor facing the fireplace, his head on a pillow and another partially over his face. She at once telephoned for the police and Dr. CHURCHILL.

The Coroner told Mrs. HAPGOOD she had acted very promptly.

P.c. SMITH spoke of going to the house and said that lying close to deceased's nose and mouth was a gas poker with the tap in the "on" position. As the under-part of the body was warm he commenced artificial respiration but without result.

Dr. Spencer CHURCHILL said he attended deceased in December last and again at the beginning of the week. He formed the opinion that deceased was suffering from cancer but he was not told of this. Deceased asked him to give him a tablet to send him out of life altogether as he said nothing could be done for him. Death was due to coal gas poisoning.

The Coroner returned a verdict that deceased died from coal gas poisoning self-administered at a time when the balance of his mind was disturbed.

*NB: We note that in the 4th paragraph the time should have been **6.45 a.m.** (not p.m.) as written*