

### FATAL FALL DOWNSTAIRS.

An inquest was held by Mr E. F. BLAKE, Coroner for the Island, at the Royal Isle of Wight Infirmary, on Thursday evening, on the body of Harry PERKIS, of Warwick Street, who died on Wednesday. Mr E. T. MINTER was the foreman of the jury. The following was the evidence:

Emma PERKIS said she was the wife of the deceased, who was 66 years of age. He had at one time used to go in a yacht, but had recently got his living by painting. They lived at 10, Warwick Street. On Saturday evening they retired to rest about 11 o'clock. About 1 o'clock deceased got out of bed, and said he was going to get a drink of cold water. To get the water he had to go to the back room downstairs.. he went towards the stairs, and then she heard him fall down. There was a little landing at the top of the stairs, and he must have missed the top step. She at once went down to him, and found him at the bottom of the stairs. Asked him if he was hurt, and he said "Yes." She put her clothes on and ran at once for her youngest son, who lived opposite. He came at once and went for Dr WOODWARD who came directly, and they had to get him upstairs. Deceased was moved to the Infirmary on Wednesday afternoon. Dr WOODWARD thought he would be more comfortable at the Infirmary. He was conscious when he was brought there. He said he could not think what made him fall. She believed it must have been a fit, but he had never had a fit before. He had enjoyed good health, and was a wonderfully strong and healthy man considering his age.

Mr Alfred WOODWARD, surgeon, practising at Ryde, deposed that he had known the deceased for a great many years, and had attended him. Early on Sunday morning he was sent for, and found deceased lying at full length, wrapped in a blanket, in a little room at the foot of the stairs. He was rational and conscious enough. he said he had fallen downstairs, and that he could not move either his legs or his arms. he could not grasp witness's hand, or close his hand at all. Directed him to lie still two or three hours before they attempted to move him. About two or three hours afterwards he had him taken upstairs, and he made an external examination. There were no external injuries but, from general symptoms, he came to the conclusion that deceased had injured the upper part of his spine. He showed signs of rallying so far as consciousness and freedom from pain were concerned. His friends first broached the idea of removing him to the Infirmary, and witness thought it expedient to do so. He was brought to the Infirmary on Wednesday. Did not think the case would terminate fatally. Thought deceased might possibly recover. Was at the Infirmary when deceased was brought there. That was about half-past three in the afternoon. He got rapidly worse.

The Coroner.- Do you think moving him had anything to do with it? - I can't say whether it had or not. It might have been only a question of time. He died within half-an-hour afterwards. I have been told he said, before he started, "I am dying."

You did not think it unwise to move him? - No, at the time I thought it would be wise, and that he would get better attention in the Infirmary.

Now you consider it was not wise.- I can't explain it. It happened so.

At all events he died quicker than you anticipated.- He did.

The Coroner asked Mrs PERKIS if it was not an unusual thing for deceased to get up and go for water.- Mrs PERKIS: No, he often did it. He would drink out of the teapot, or else get a glass of water.

Did he have a candle? - No, but I had a lamp burning, and he knew where to put his hand on it.

Dr WOODWARD explained that he stayed with the deceased till he died, as it was his week at the Infirmary and his case.

The Coroner said it was a very unfortunate case. The widow had given her evidence very clearly. The only thing he thought peculiar about the case was that the deceased should have gone down in the night for a drink. It seemed, however, it was not an uncommon thing for him to do so. He thought it was a pure accident, and that no blame attached to anyone. It was

unfortunate, under the circumstances, that this poor man was sent to the Infirmary. Although Dr WOODWARD did not exactly say so, he gathered from the tenour of his remarks that he did think it possible it might have accelerated death. He could understand that he thought the step would be for the man's benefit, as he would be in a place where every attention would be given him. Dr WOODWARD evidently had no idea the man was so ill as he was. The great thing for them to consider was whether any blame attached to anyone, but as the poor man's removal was done with a good intention, he did not think there was.

Deceased's son said it was the general wish of the family that deceased should be moved. It was all done for his good.

A verdict of accidental death was returned.

---

Researched & typed by  
Ann Barrett  
Kate MacDonell