

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February 1926

A FATAL FALL. – The Deputy Coroner (F. A. JOYCE, Esq.) held an inquest at the County Hospital on Saturday on the body of **George Henry ELDRIDGE**, 55, a gardener, whose death followed a fall in the snow.

Jane SHEATH, of 2 Butts-road, Haylands, said the deceased had been lodging with her for 12 years. He had not enjoyed good health for three years, and during the previous 12 months had been medically attended for debility. He often complained of his heart, which was the cause of his giving up work. He was a bachelor, and had no relations that she knew of. On January 18<sup>th</sup> witness advised him not to go out, owing to the slippery state of the roads, but he left to go to the West-street Post-office. Later she heard that he had had an accident and had been removed to the hospital. She visited him twice, but he never told her what had occurred.

William John WHITE, retired house agent, of Fairmont, Ryde, said that between 12 and 1 p.m. on the day in question he was sweeping snow from the front of a neighbour's house when he heard the exclamation "Oh" from the roadway, and saw that ELDRIDGE had fallen down exactly opposite witness's gate. He ran to his aid, and, with the assistance of Mr. HAPGOOD, attempted to lift the man to his feet, but he could not stand. A chair was procured, and the injured man was placed on it, and Dr. CHURCHILL was summoned. He recommended his removal to hospital, and this was done by car. At the time of the accident deceased was apparently by himself. The roads were very slippery. Witness attended the same Sunday-school as deceased about 50 years before.

Dr. Agnes Bryce SMITH, house surgeon at the hospital, said ELDRIDGE on his arrival was suffering from a fracture of the left leg. As far as the fracture was concerned, deceased progressed satisfactorily, but he was also suffering from heart disease of long standing, and diabetes was known to have existed six months before. ELDRIDGE, whose general condition was very poor, recovered from the shock, but gradually sank, and died on February 14<sup>th</sup>. His injury was consistent with a fall as described.

The Coroner found that death was due to heart disease and diabetes, accelerated by an accidental fall.

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*NB: We note the discrepancy in the death date above, which should have been February 4<sup>th</sup>.*