

## **Sidney Ablitt**

**Sidney Ablitt**, aged 58, a quarryman at the Shide chalk pit who lived at 23, Drillhall Road, Newport, committed suicide on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 1927. The inquest was held the following day at the Primitive Methodist School, Ryde by F. A. Joyce (Deputy Coroner). Mr. H. R. Palmer attended on behalf of the employers, the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturing Company, and evidence was given by Dr. George Raymond of Newport (the deceased's family doctor), Dr. Annah M. V. Bonhote (house surgeon at the County Hospital), James Hansford (quarryman) of 2, Midland Terrace, Abingdon Road, Carisbrooke, as well as members of Sidney Ablitt's family: Fanny Jane (his wife), Lilian Martha (his daughter), and Walter William (his son, a grocer's assistant).

Mrs. Ablitt said that her husband had been employed by the company for 31 years, mostly at the Shide chalk pit. On April 28<sup>th</sup> he had been hit on the head by a piece of chalk and had a lump the size of an egg and an abrasion. The company were not informed of an accident. He couldn't eat or sleep but went to work as normal until May 4<sup>th</sup> when he had to be helped back to bed and Dr. Raymond called. The previous September he had had another accident breaking his big toe – he was then off work for ten weeks and had not been well since. On the Monday morning at about 5am she had given her husband a sleeping draught as prescribed by the doctor – he woke about 7:30 and seemed alright. She went downstairs and about 10 minutes later sent her daughter up with some tea. Lilian screamed when she found her father lying on his bed with a deep gash to his throat and a razor in his hand. Dr. Raymond was summoned and Sidney was taken to the County Hospital where Dr. Bonhote attended him and Dr. Underhill administered an anaesthetic to stitch up the wound but Sidney had lost too much blood and died at 11:55 am that morning.

Dr. Raymond gave evidence that he had not attached much importance to the blow to the head, finding only a superficial bruise the size of the palm of his hand. Sidney had been very depressed but had seemed better on the Sunday afternoon when he went out for a walk with his son. He had previously attended Sidney in March 1925 for a scalded face and arms due to gunpowder blasting and then in September 1926 for a crushed big toe but had not attended him for depression until the latest accident.

James Hansford said that he had worked with the deceased for four years. At the time of the accident they were cleaning out a manhole. Sidney and another man were passing up pieces of chalk which were loaded into the trucks. A piece broke off and fell back about a foot hitting Sidney on the head but when asked if he was hurt he said "no" and carried on working. Hansford thought that Sidney had been depressed for a long time before the accident – he was very quiet but never complained.

Following "continual interruptions" by Mrs. Ablitt who stated that her husband had sustained a broken skull in a previous accident at the pit 27 years before, Christopher Warne of Ryde, Sidney's brother-in-law, requested an adjournment to permit a post-mortem examination. This was carried out by Dr. Raymond and Dr. Bonhote who could find no evidence of any injury to the skull, including the recent blow, despite Walter Ablitt saying he had seen the bruise only the day before. The Coroner considered that Dr. Bonhote was an impartial witness and confirmed Dr. Raymond's opinion that there was no serious injury

from the chalk. He therefore found a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind. [IWCP 14  
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