

BOYS SUDDEN DEATH – SIEZURE AT THE PICTURES

The circumstance attending the death of a seven year old boy, named John Edward Knapper, were investigated by the coroner (Mr HC Yates) at an inquest held at the Town Hall Congleton on Tuesday.

Emma Rutland of 16 John Street Congleton said deceased was her Grandson. His mother died when he was six months old and on her death bed she surrendered the child to witness. The boys father James Knapper, had never contributed towards the boys maintenance. Deceased had not been strong since birth. Twelve months ago he suffered from bronchitis and pneumonia, but since then had not been medically attended. On Saturday afternoon last the boy went to the pictures accompanied by witness's daughter. He had dinner before he went and appeared quite lively. Shortly before 4 pm. he came home and she was informed by her daughter the deceased had complained of feeling unwell and had been sick. He had tea and at 9:50 pm. she took him to bed and slept with witness and her husband. They were not disturbed during the night and on Sunday morning about 8 o'clock her grandson went downstairs and had breakfast. He made no complaint of any pain, but witness kept him in the house all day. He had his meals as usual on Sunday and before he went to bed she gave him some Scotts Emulsion. About 4 o'clock on Monday morning deceased asked her for a drink of water and he then appeared rather restless. After having a drink he fell asleep. At 6:50 am she noticed a change in the deceased and thought he had had a fit. He threw his head back and his face went very pale and his lips blue. Her husband went for Dr Ingram who pronounced the boy dead when he arrived. Deceased passed away quite peacefully.

At this point of her evidence the witness collapsed and was attended by Dr Moir.

Daisy Rutland said she took deceased to the Pictures on Saturday afternoon. He complained of feeling ill while watching the pictures so she took him out. On the way home he said he was tired and sat down near the top of Little Street and her he became sick.

In answer to the coroner, witness said she had not given the deceased any sweets.

Dr Moir said he made a post mortem examination and found no marks of violence and the child was well nourished. Internally there were signs of diaphragmatic pleurisy and a post mortem rupture on the inside of the stomach. There was pleurisy on both sides of the lungs and double pneumonia.

By the Coroner: Could this have arisen since Saturday when the child said he was ill? – I should think from Friday night.

Then the child was ill on Friday? – I should say Saturday certainly. The boy was at school on the Friday.

Some children attempt to hide their ailments from their parents because they are so afraid of getting nasty medicine. Could this child have hidden the pain it must have been suffering? – I think that as the fact that he had been a delicate child they did not think much about it as he had been accustomed to ailing.

Further in answer to the coroner, Dr Moir said the child had previously had two or three attacks of pneumonia and this had left the chest weak, but the child would certainly be worse on Saturday than usual. In his (the Doctors) opinion the child died from cardiac failure due to double pneumonia which had been on since Saturday.

The Coroner: You have knowledge of this child because 12 months ago you attended him. Was this child more susceptible to catching a chill than a healthy child – Yes.

What surprises me is that the Grandmother says deceased had not wanted any medical attention from 12 months. Is that possible? my point is, if the child was so well surely it would not contract double pneumonia so readily as it was ailing – Children get pneumonia very easily.

And you are not surprised? – No.

Had the child been well cared for? – Yes. This is one of those incomprehensible cases! – The child was suffering from pneumonia and suddenly sitting up in bed, would bring on heart failure. This is

the great danger with pneumonia.

The coroner said this was a very surprising case, because he was a child which according to the grandmothers statement had not had medical attention for twelve months. Apparently deceased was not a healthy child and had suffered some time ago from bronchitis and pneumonia. It was to the grandmothers credit that she bought this child up as she had done, because, as the doctor had said, it was well nourished and had had ever care and attention. Although deceased was subject to these ailments nothing in the grandmothers opinion had taken place which necessitated her calling in a medical man until Monday. He (the coroner) returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence, adding that death was die to natural causes.

14th January 2005

Points arising from this report –

- 1) John Edward Knapper's mother's maiden name was Ellen Newbold. She died of Bronco Pneumonia 21 April 1917 at 16 John Street Congleton.
- 2) Ellen's father was John Newbold, a birth reference from Free BMD is Wolstanton 1894 Vol 6b page 110.
- 3) No detail of John Newbold's marriage or death has yet been found.
- 4) There was a marriage of Alexander Rutland and Emma Newbold in 1903 at St Lawrence Biddulph. The same reference has Alexander Rutland marrying Emma Triner. In other words it was Emma Newbold formerly Triner, she remarried following the death of John Newbold.
- 5) Daisy Rutland was born on 2nd April 1912 at 16 John Street the daughter of Alexander and Emma (nee Triner). Alexander was an Ironworker.
- 6) Daisy had taken John to the pictures on Saturday 29th March, he died on Monday 31st March. The inquest was the day after on the Tuesday 1st April – following a post mortem! Daisy had her 12th birthday the following day Wednesday 2nd April. Things happened quickly in 1924.

Front Page Congleton Chronicle 7th May 1947

Died by his Fireside – 39-years-old Mans Collapse

A 39 years old fitters sudden death as he sat by his fireside reading and smoking his pipe was described at the inquest on Saturday on Edward Knapper of 15 Rood Hill Congleton.

His wife Mrs May Knapper told the coroner (Alder.R.A.Daniel) – that her husband was medically treated some time ago for pains in the chest. He had kept on working until the electricity cut, as a result of which he had been home about a fortnight. On Wednesday February 26th he again complained of chest pains and a feeling of tightness and about 9:30 p.m. as he sat in front of the fire reading and smoking he said the pains were more severe. He asked for Brandy which she gave him, and later for a glass of water. As he began to drink this his head fell on one side and he collapsed in his chair. Believing he had fainted she undid his shirt and ran for help. Later it was found that he was dead.

Dr P.G. Leese Congleton said a post mortem examination revealed an enlarged heart and extensive degeneration of the arteries. Sudden death was liable to have occurred at any time.

The coroner asked if the deceased was not rather young to have a heart condition described and witness replied that a child who had suffered from rheumatic fever might have a deposits in the arteries similar to those he had found.

Eric Knapper Bricklayer 12 Victoria Street who gave evidence of identification said to his knowledge deceased (his brother) had never had rheumatic fever.

Returning a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence the coroner said that death had been due to perfectly natural causes.

The Funeral was at St Peters Church on Monday, the Vicar (Conon WR Johnson) performed the last rites. Mourners were Mrs M Knapper (widow), Mrs H Knapper (mother), Mr E Knapper (brother) Mr & Mrs J Farr, sister and brother in law, Mr & Mrs Malkin, Mr & Mrs Walker, Mrs Redfern, Mr & Mrs H Mountfield, Mr S Hughes, and Mrs Gaskell. Messrs E Blease, H Brocklehurst, N. Kennerly, Ed & Eric Porter, and H. Mansfield acted as bearers. Messrs TE Cooke Park Street had charge of funeral arrangements.

From Congleton Chronicle 23 July 1910 page 5 left had column.

SAD DEATH AT BUGLAWTON –

On Tuesday afternoon , Mr HC Yates and a jury with the Rev H Gardner as Foreman, held an inquiry into the circumstance attending the death of Harriet Ann Knapper, (27) of 9 William Street, Buglawton. Emily Knapper wife of George Knapper said the deceased was her daughter. On Tuesday last week she became suddenly ill at Mr Hopkins Mill where she was employed, but from this attack she recovered. She appeared alright on the Friday and Saturday in the following week, and on Sunday morning came down for breakfast apparently in her usual health. Deceased had just sat down to the table when witness noticed she became pale and her breathing heavy. Witness immediately rendered assistance and gave her brandy but the deceased never recovered and passed peacefully away – Mary Elizabeth Owen of William Street Buglawton spoke to finding deceased in the position stated by the last witness – Reviewing the evidence the coroner said Dr Watt was called to see the deceased on Sunday, but he arrived after death had taken place. The girl had been an invalid from birth , and had suffered from attacks of Asthma, which as was generally the case put a severe strain on the heart. She had been attended to for this complaint two years ago by Dr Furness and recovered, but since she had not been medically attended. There was not suggestion of foul play and as they knew to ascertain the precise cause of death, there was only one way and that was by post-mortem, but to this he (the coroner) had a strong objection unless it was absolutely necessary and in his opinion it was unnecessary in this case. He suggested a verdict of death by cardiac failure due to natural causes. The jury concurred in this view, and a verdict was returned accordingly.

Also in the same paper under Deaths:

KNAPPER – on July 17th at William Street Buglawton Harriett Ann daughter of George Knapper aged 27 years.