

THE BOURNEMOUTH GRAPHIC : April 1<sup>st</sup> 1915

Soldier's Sad Death after Fatal Fall Downstairs.

An inquest was held by the Borough Coroner on Tuesday on the body of Sergt. John Wardrope, of the Shropshire Light Infantry, who met his death through falling downstairs at his billet at 14, Woodend-road, on Saturday. Evidence of identification was given by Anna Wardrope, wife of the deceased, of Little Common, St. Martin's, Oswestry, Shropshire, who stated that her husband was about 41 years of age. Corpl. Henry Reed, of the same regiment as deceased, and also billeted at 14, Woodend-road, said that on Saturday evening he returned home with deceased about 9.20 p.m. About 10.15 p.m. he (witness) went upstairs to bed, leaving deceased drinking a cup of cocoa downstairs. He wills followed shortly afterwards by deceased who wished him " good-night." That was the last he saw of him until after the fall. The Foreman : Were there any other people in the house at the time ? - Witness : There was another man in with me. The landlord was downstairs.

Deceased was quite all right when he last saw him and perfectly sober.

Thomas Hardiman of 14 Woodenhall road (where deceased was billeted) stated that he found deceased at the foot of the stairs about 10.30 on Saturday night . He was unconscious . Asked if there was any light on the stairs the witness replied there was a light in the passage.

The Foreman: Was the bedroom of the previous witness close to the top of the stairs? The doorway goes of the landing. Did you hear any disturbance on the top of the stairs None whatsoever.

There was no obstruction to fall Nothing whats so ever Evidence was given by Dr A Heygate Vernon who said deceased was admitted to Boscoombs Hospital on Sunday suffering from concussion of the brain and a fractured skull. The cause of death was due to concussion of the brain and the injury received were consistent with his having fallen downstairs.

A verdict was returned by the jury to the effect that deceased met his death accidentally buy falling down stairs.