

Coroner's Inquest Report



Inquest on Donald John Ridgwell 1940

The death of a seven year old boy, Donald John Ridgwell, (*son of Charles Ridgwell of the Cottage, Bremhill, near Calne, an engine room attendant at Harris's, Calne – added in the Bath Chronicle*) after an operation at the Bath Royal United Hospital on Sunday was investigated by the Bath city coroner (Mr C S Elwell) yesterday.

A verdict "That death was due to heart failure following the shock of an operation" was recorded.

Mrs Dorothy Ridgwell, of the Cottage, Bremhill near Calne, said her seven year old boy complained of pains and sickness on Friday last. A doctor was called and he was ordered to the Royal United Hospital.

Dr J E P Kelly, house surgeon of the hospital, said that when the boy was admitted on Sunday his condition was toxic. An immediate operation was decided upon to remove the appendix. The usual pre-operative measures were administered. The operation was performed, and when in process it was discovered that the appendix had been perforated. The appendix was removed and the abdomen closed when the patient collapsed. Artificial respiration was resorted to, but the child died.

Major H J Heathcote, pathologist at the hospital, said the post mortem examination showed that the thymus gland was more enlarged than usual, the heart was dilated, and there was a toxic condition owing to appendicitis. The doctor said that the operation had been skilfully performed.

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