

Inquest - Sarah Ann Lawes 1901

Woman's Determined Suicide



The Coroner for the district, Mr R A Wilson, held an inquest in this parish on Tuesday respecting the death of Sarah Ann Lawes, aged 52 years, who drowned herself in a galvanised tub full of water early on the previous morning.

Frederick George Lawes, labourer of Gutch Common, and husband of deceased, stated that he and his wife slept together on Sunday night. They had not quarreled. He woke up about seven the following morning, and found that his wife was already up. As she was in the habit of rising before him, he concluded that she had got up to prepare breakfast, but soon afterwards he was called by his son, who said that his mother had drowned herself in an outhouse.

Witness went down stairs immediately and found his wife on the floor of the outhouse with her hands and head in a galvanised tub full of water. The tub was about a foot deep, and there was about seven inches of water in it. Around his wife's neck was a rope, with a weight attached, which was inside the tub. She was fully dressed.

In reply to questions, witness said that his wife's general health was good. She suffered from rheumatism in the hands and also from hysteria. He knew of no reason why she should take her life but she was worried over money difficulties at times. Witness had worked as a rabbit catcher during the last few months.

Sarah Jane Gray, of Gutch Common, said she had lived close to Mr and Mrs Lawes for seven years and constantly saw deceased. She seemed to be much worried at times, and she was often depressed. She was not strongly nerved, and little troubles used to vex her considerably.

Witness knew no cause why deceased should take her life, and she never said anything which led witness to think that she would do such a thing. Some weeks ago, however, she was very much depressed, and she then said her troubles were more than she could bear. She added that if it was not for her children, she would wish to be with her father, who was dead.

The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst of unsound mind".

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