



Death of a Baby 1851

On Tuesday at the Calne Union Workhouse at an adjourned inquest on the body of a new born male child, who was found dead in a brook in the same parish.

Peter Moore deposed that it was about eleven o'clock in the morning of Tuesday the 18th inst, when he was tending some sheep in a meadow at Leabridge, and as he was looking into the brook which separates that parish from Bremhill, he found the deceased naked and lying at the bottom of the water. On taking deceased out, there did not appear to be any bruises on the body, and having informed a policeman of what he had discovered, it was conveyed by him to the Calne Union Workhouse.

Edgar Rawlings of Calne, deposed that on the above day, whilst going out at ten o'clock in the morning, with a basket of meat to Bremhill, he met three men and three women with children. The first person he met was a young man crying followed by an old woman, also crying; and next came another woman who said, "Don't cry, old woman, - tis gone, and can't be helped". This witness passed the same party at Lyneham a little before four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day.

William Turner, No 91, of the Wilts Constabulary, deposed that on the 18th inst, in consequence of a child having been found dead, and through information that a party of Irish vagrants had slept in a stable at Hazeland Farm, he went with Inspector Bowns to the farm house, and learnt that a party of men, women and children, nine in number, had slept there the two previous nights. He then traced them through the villages to Clack, in the parish of Lyneham, and took them into custody, and having taken the women before a medical man for examination, it was found that there was no foundation for

any suspicion against them. Whilst on their way to the doctor, this witness asked the elderly woman what they were crying for at Leabridge, when she told him that they were then parting till the wheat harvest.

Mr Langley, surgeon of Calne, deposed that he had made a post mortem examination of the body, and was of opinion that the child was born alive, but was unable to say whether it might have survived the birth. There were no external marks of violence on the body, and it appeared to have been immersed in water four or five hours.

Verdict - the deceased child was found dead, but when, how and by what means it came by its death there was no evidence before the jury to show.

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