



SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORONER'S INQUESTS



Codford

Newspaper Reports

William Miles 21st January, 1888

Supposed Suicide in the Railway.-

What appears to be a most determined suicide was committed on the railway on Thursday afternoon between Upton Lovell crossing and Codford station, by an old man named William Miles, a pensioner and labourer, of Corton whose body was cut to pieces by the 4.9 train from Heytesbury. It appears Miles left his home at Corton early on Thursday afternoon to do some errands at Codford, and about four o'clock he was seen by a porter at Codford station returning home by the path on the side of the line. He was carrying a fancy basket in his hand and seemed sober. Nothing more was heard or seen of him until the driver of the passenger train which left Heytesbury at 4.9, saw shortly after passing the Upton crossing something across the metals. He blew the whistle two or three times, but it never moved. He then pulled up, but could not stop the train before it had run over the man cutting him completely in two. When the train was brought to a standstill the driver and fireman, the guard and several of the passengers alighted, and proceeded up the line, when a horrible scene presented itself, the body being severed and the remains horribly mutilated. Meanwhile a messenger had been dispatched to Codford Station, and the porters and packers at once started for the scene, taking with them a trolley and several tar sheets. The remains were gathered together, brought to Codford Station and deposited in the goods shed, to await the inquest. This seems a rather unfortunate spot, as an old shepherd was found frozen to death just below, some seven or eight years ago, and a little higher up, at Corton Crossing, an old deaf postman was accidentally killed by a passing train, somewhere about the same time.- On Saturday, Mr Coroner Sylvester held an inquest on the body at Codford. It appeared that deceased lived in a neighbouring village, and was sent to obtain some medicine at Codford for a gentleman. He was walking on what is known as a "sufferance" footpath by the side of the railway, and must have left the path and placed himself, on the metals. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from injuries sustained by being run over by a train," and were of opinion that no blame could be attached to anyone.

(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 26th January, 1888)