



Coroner's Inquest Report

Inquest Report on John Adams

Drowning Fatality at Wilton - A Dangerously Low Parapet

A sad drowning fatality occurred at Wilton on Wednesday evening. A young man named John Adams, second horseman to the Wilton Hunt was returning home to the Kennels, Netherhampton with two companions, when by some means he fell over the parapet at Bulbridge into the River Nadder. The parapet of the bridge is only about 2ft. 5ins. in height and deceased was left standing on the bridge by the two companions who were expecting him to follow them. Hearing a splash however they returned to the bridge, and one of them James Sanger, second whip to Mr. Courtenay Tracy's Otter Hounds, with commendable promptitude jumped into the river. The river was very high and there was a swift current, Sanger made a plucky attempt to save his companion and swam a good distance through a culvert before he discovered Adam's dead body.

The circumstances of the occurrence were investigated by the deputy for South Wilts, Mr. F. H. Trethowan and a jury, at the Saw Mills, Wilton on Thursday afternoon.

Captain Cartwright, Master of the Wilton Hunt stated that the deceased John Adams was employed by him as second horseman and resided at the Kennels, Netherhampton. He was an orphan, but he did not know his age, although he should think he was about 20.

Henry Ingram first whip to the Wilton Hunt stated that he was with the deceased and others on Wednesday. They left the Kennels together and went to Wilton about 7 o'clock. They spent the evening at The Greyhound Inn, Wilton, which they left about 11 o'clock. They walked towards Bulbridge, witness being in front of Adams. He last saw him standing on the bridge. Witness walked on with Sanger, expecting that the deceased would follow them. When they had gone about 20 yards by the bridge, Sanger then heard a splash. Sanger said "Jack's fallen over the bridge and he went back and jumped into the water. Witness went back to The Greyhound and returned with Mr. Harvey.

James Sanger said he was returning home from The Greyhound Inn with the deceased and Ingram about 11 o'clock on Wednesday evening and after crossing Bulbridge he heard a splash. He last saw the deceased standing on the bridge. He did not know what he was doing. When he heard the splash, he looked round but could not see Adams. He told Ingram that Adams had fallen over and he took off his coat and jumped into the river, which was very high and there was a swift current. He could see nothing and heard no cries. He swam as far as the hatches, where he struck his head against the woodwork, partially stunning himself. When he recovered, he swam further down and through the culvert and eventually found the body. He tried to get the body on land, but failed to do so. When he found the body it was a quarter of an hour after he heard the splash, there was no sign of life.

The Coroner "You had been in The Greyhound Inn for some time. Was the deceased sober when he came out?"

Witness: "Quite sober."

Coroner: "And you too."

Witness: "Yes."

In reply to jurors, witness said he last saw the deceased standing in the centre of the bridge near the wall.

Coroner: "Could he see alright?"

Witness: "He was a little short-sighted."

P.C .Pinnell stationed at Wilton said he saw deceased and his companions standing at the Four Corners at 11.10 on Wednesday evening. They were all quite sober and they went away in the direction of Bulbridge. The height of the parapet of the bridge in the centre was 2ft. 5in.

Mr. E. W. K. Straton, medical practitioner of Wilton, said he examined the body of the deceased at nine o'clock that morning. In his opinion, death was due to drowning. There were no sign of violence or any injury.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death"

The Coroner said the jury decided to add a rider, calling the attention of the proper authorities to the dangerous state of the bridge, owing to the lowness of the parapet. He thought one of the jurymen could bear testimony to having taken two children, who had fallen over the parapet, from the river, as he did in one case 10 to 15 years ago. Often children jumped on the parapet and fell over.

The Coroner said the recommendation could be sent to the proper authority.

The Foreman said the jury also wished to commend Sanger for his plucky attempt to save his companion.

The Coroner said he quite agreed with the jury in that matter.

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