



# CORONERS INQUESTS



*Seend*

## *Inquest of John Downing 1864*

A youth named John Downing, aged 15, an in-patient of the United Hospital, died on Saturday while under the influence of chloroform, which had been administered to him with a view to a surgical operation. An inquest was held at the Guildhall last night, before Mr A H English, Coroner.

From the evidence of Mr R T Gore, surgeon, it appeared that the deceased, who was the son of a small farmer at Seend, near Melksham, was admitted to the hospital about a month ago with a crippled leg, with which he had been afflicted from his birth. It was found that nothing could be done for his benefit but amputation.

This was communicated to deceased's friends, who consented to that step being taken, and he himself expressed his willingness thereto, and also a wish that chloroform should be given him while the operation was being performed. Mr Gore having minutely examined him, and found that he could bear it, arrangements were made for the administration of chloroform, and a smaller dose than usual was skilfully applied by Mr Gaine, surgeon dentist of the hospital, who is not only a skilful operator but accustomed to the administration of the drug.

The application had the desired effect, and the operation went on well, and was to all intents over, when it was discovered that deceased's circulation had stopped. Every restorative remedy was promptly applied, but without avail, and deceased died in about ten minutes.

Mr Teale, the house surgeon, having corroborated the evidence of Mr Gore, and stated the result of a post mortem examination he had made, the jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased died from chloroform causing an arrest of circulation, through misadventure.

**Western Daily Press Tuesday 27 September 1864**