



CORONERS INQUESTS



Inquest

The discovery of a Box school teacher's body on the canal bank near Seend on Friday was the subject of an inquiry by the Wiltshire Coroner (Mr Harold Dale) at a Melksham inquest on Saturday evening. A note found in her handbag was not read.

The dead woman was Miss Florence Camille Ludgate, aged 33, whose home was at 44 The Causeway, Chippenham, but who had been staying at Seend.

Mr Ivan Keir, Melksham, said he saw Miss Ludgate's body on the towpath near Seend at 11.15am on Friday.

The woman's lips and chin were stained by a corrosive fluid, and the tongue and inside of her mouth were also stained. She smelt very strongly of Lysol. A large partly empty bottle was lying by her side and he formed the opinion the woman had died from lysol poisoning. He did not know her.

Raymond Milsom Ludgate, a brother, said his sister had been in very poor health and had been away from her school duties for three weeks.

Arthur George Perry, Lock Cottage, Seend, said that on Friday morning he found a young woman lying straight in the towpath some 400 yards from the road. She was dead. He noticed stains round the woman's mouth and saw a bottle by the body. It was a new bottle and there was a cardboard carton there from which the bottle had been taken. The stopper was not in the bottle.

A large bottle that had contained Lysol was produced. Witness said the bottle was close to the woman's right foot. There were no signs of a struggle or any marks of violence.

The Coroner recorded a verdict that "Miss Ludgate died from poisoning self-administered during a mental disturbance"

Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette Saturday 11 February 1939

(Additional information)

Two years ago Miss Ludgate was one of two woman teachers in Wilts who went to Australia under an exchange of teachers, and taught in that country for a year.

The evidence showed that for three weeks deceased had suffered from nervous depression and had been in hospital. She had worried as to whether she would be able to do her work. Last Sunday she left Chippenham on a visit to her brother, Mr H F Ludgate, station master, of Seend, and during the week seemed to be fairly cheerful.

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