



CORONERS INQUESTS



Unknown Baby - 14th September 1906

City Coroner: Mr. S. Buchanan Smith

Foreman: Mr. S. Deall

William George Giles a gardener of 90, Gigant Street stated at 6.20 p.m. on Thursday he was going along the road at East Harnham. When he got near to Mr. Bedford's nursery, he noticed a piece of paper covered in blood. It looked like it was covering something. It was on the bank by the side of the road about 100 yards to the east side of the nursery. He went to the nursery, where he met Mr. Bedford's man, Arthur Francis and told him what he had seen. Giles then said "Let's go and see what it is". When they got to the spot where it was, a man named Holloway was there. He carried a prong so they asked him to hook it about. Holloway did so and then undid the parcel which contained a dead baby.

On discovering this they put a sack over it and sent for the police. George Holloway stated that he did not know if the body was warm as he did not touch it.

Inspector Stroud stated that he had received information on Thursday at 6.45 p.m. that a dead baby had been found at East Harnham. He went and found the dead body of a male child. It was wrapped in bloodstained calico, apparently part of a child's nightdress. On examining the hedge he found a piece of string and brown paper at the spot where the witness Giles said he first saw the parcel. He conveyed the body to the City Police Station and Dr. Armitage was sent for. On the paper there was just a little writing but it was torn in half and he could not read it. There were no bloodstains on the paper and no marks.

Dr. John James Armitage, surgeon of Salisbury examined the body and found a slight abrasion on the left corner of the mouth. He made a further post mortem examination. The face and lips were deeply congested and there was a slight abrasion at the angle of the lips on the left side. The abrasion had apparently taken place before death. The child was well developed and recently born and the organs were perfectly healthy but the brain was deeply congested. The lungs were expanded showing that the child had breathed. At which the Coroner asked, can the lungs be expanded in any way except by breathing. Armitage responded not to the extent these were.

The coroner in summing up said the evidence was not strong enough for him to return a verdict of murder against person or persons unknown. He advised returning an open verdict and leave it to the police to follow the matter up. The foreman said it is quite possible that the baby might have died at birth and the struggle of being born might have expanded his lungs.

The jury returned an open verdict of "Found dead."

A juror said I think the police should make careful enquiries into the matter and the chief constable responded, there is not much doubt about that.

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