



# SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORONER'S INQUESTS



## Durrington

**Freedom JENNINGS**

**2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1915**

### **Well-known Roundabout Proprietor's Wife's Sad End**

An inquest was held at the Infirmary on Monday evening by the City Coroner (Mr S. Buchanan Smith) respecting the death of Mrs Freedom Jennings, aged 42, wife of a roundabout proprietor living at Durrington. Mrs Jennings was inhaling chloroform for the purposes of an operation on Sunday afternoon, when her heart suddenly failed.

Mr C. Scamell was foreman of the jury.

John Jennings, the husband, said his wife had been suffering from some internal complaint for several years. In May, 1913, she went into Savernake Hospital, but she left two days after admission because she did not wish to undergo an operation. She had since been attended by Dr Jones, of Ludgershall. She visited Salisbury about a fortnight ago to be examined by Dr Kempe, and arrangements were made for her admission to the Infirmary to undergo an operation, and he took her to the Infirmary on Friday. On Sunday he received a telegram telling him to come immediately. On his arrival he was told his wife was dead.

Mr John S. Savage, acting house surgeon at the Infirmary, said it was considered necessary to perform an operation on Sunday. He examined the patient before the anaesthetic was administered. She had taken only a few inhalations of chloroform – she never got under the influence of it – when her breathing became laboured. Her heart had stopped, but her breathing continued for some time. Dr Kempe, Dr Black and himself tried artificial respiration and oxygen and electric batteries were utilized, but the patient did not revive. She died from syncope during the administration of the chloroform. The anaesthetic was properly administered.

The Coroner said that Dr Kempe, who was to have performed the operation, was present to answer any questions.

Dr Kempe said the patient was suffering from an internal tumour. She appeared to be very nervous about an operation. When he went into her history he found that she had previously been to a hospital near Marlborough, but left because she was afraid to undergo an operation. He examined her on Sunday and he considered that she was in a fit condition for the administration of the anaesthetic. There was so little chloroform that it would not kill an ordinary person who swallowed it. The patient must have had a special susceptibility to chloroform poisoning. When her heart failed she was not under the influence of the drug.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence, and found that the anaesthetic was properly administered.

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