



SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORONER'S INQUESTS



Durrington

George ROBINSON

21st March, 1919

Well Sinker's Fate

An unusual accident at Durrington last week resulted in the death of Mr George Robinson, of Bulford Road, at the age of 63 years. He was sinking a well and while he was being hoisted to the top the rope broke and he fell to the bottom, and sustained serious injuries, from which he died in the Salisbury Infirmary. An inquest was held by the City Coroner (Mr A. M. Wilson) at the Infirmary on Tuesday evening.

Herbert Rose, a well-sinker, living at Avon Cottage, Durrington, said that Robinson had no relations, and was a single man, and had been living at Durrington for eight or nine years. They were well sinking on Wednesday, March 12th, at premises in Bulford Road, and had been at work about three weeks and had reached a depth of about 50 feet. Robinson was at the bottom of the well and he was at the top and pulled up the buckets as Robinson filled them. They began work on Wednesday morning about 8.30, and the first thing he did was to let Robinson down. About 12 o'clock Robinson looked up and asked what time it was. He replied that it was dinner time and let the bucket down to haul Robinson up. Robinson got into the bucket and shouted "Right," and he started winding. When about half-way up witness went over the handle-bars of the windlass, as the rope had broken. He looked down the well, and saw Robinson lying at the bottom and groaning. He shouted to him but got no answer, and he then went as quick as he could for help. Two men who were boring a well nearby went down and got Robinson to the top in a chair. Dr March was phoned for and arrived before Robinson was out of the well. The rope was made of wire, and was examined every morning to see if it was capable of bearing the weight of a man. There was a piece of hemp bound to the rope with steel wire and fastening the bucket to the rope. The rope had broken where the hemp was joined to it. The hemp had been in use about six or eight weeks. In his years of experience as well-sinker he had never known a rope to break in that manner before. He had sunk between 40 and 50 wells with Robinson and they had always been the best of friends.

Dr Yahilevitz, house surgeon of the Infirmary, said that Robinson was admitted on the day the accident occurred. He was suffering from a fracture of the spine in about the middle of his back, involving the spinal cord, and causing complete paralysis of the body below the level of the injury. There were three fractured ribs on the right side, and he was also suffering from profound shock, which became more severe and he died on Sunday at 7pm.

The Coroner returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence. There was nothing to lead him to think it was anything but an accident, but he must add that he could not help feeling that there seemed to be insufficient means of testing the rope, and it was unfortunate, to say the least of it. He did not want it to appear as a censure upon Rose, but he hoped in the future a bit more satisfactory means of testing the rope would be taken, because, after all, a man's life depended on it.

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