



Coroner's Inquest Report Oaksey

Arthur James Jolley

The theory that a young Oaksey ex-soldier became exhausted while looking for work, got into the shelter of a thick hedge and died from exposure, was advanced at an inquest held at Stroud Magistrate's Court on Wednesday afternoon.

The inquiry, conducted by the Divisional Coroner (Mr Herbert House), concerned the death of Albert James Jolley (26), a labourer, of 11 The Street, Oaksey, near Malmesbury, who disappeared from his home on March 17 and was found dead in a hedge at Horsepools Hill on Sunday morning.

A verdict of death by misadventure was recorded.

His father, Albert Edward Jolley, a roadman, said his son was demobilised from the army in September last and had not had regular employment since. His health appeared to be fair, but at times, he had been a little depressed, but at no time had he suggested that he might take his life. He had been seen once by a doctor who advised him to get a job and "buck himself up". Since then he had been looking for work.

Asked by the Coroner if his son had ever gone off before, Mr Jolley replied that early in March his son cycled to the Malmesbury Employment Exchange, and when trying to get home through the snow became exhausted and spent the night in a little wood at Five Lanes. He returned home the next day and had to stay in bed for two days with a cold.

Asked if he knew of any reason for his son to be in the Stroud neighbourhood, Mr Jolley replied that he knew an Army friend of his son's lived at Stroud and it was possible that he had decided to visit him.

Continuing, witness said his son left home to go to Cirencester Employment Exchange on March 17 and told his mother that he would be home in time for dinner. He never returned.

Miss Muriel Joan Bird, a domestic worker, of Pike House, Horsepools Hill, near Stroud, said on Sunday morning she was walking with her sister gathering flowers and wood and she went through a gap in the hedge into an orchard adjacent to Harescombe Grange. Glancing along a thick holly hedge dividing the

orchard from the main road she saw the body of a man lying face downwards. She told her father who, after inspecting the body, called the police.

P C Barker said the body was taken to the Stroud Mortuary and the following day the County Pathologist (Dr E N Davey) performed a post mortem examination.

In his certificate, Dr Davey stated that in the absence of concrete evidence to the contrary and considering the weather and place of discovery, he considered it was justifiable to assume that Jolley died from exposure at least a month previously.

The Coroner said the evidence given suggested that Jolley might have brooded over his position. It was clear that he was looking for work. His movements after he left home had not been traced, but it was possible that he went to Gloucester to look for a job and it could only be assumed that he became exhausted and, finding himself some distance from his home, decided to spend the night out of doors as he had done once before, got into the shelter of the hedge and died from exposure.

The Coroner and Inspector H A Thomas, on behalf of the police, expressed sympathy with Mr Jolley.

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