



CORONERS INQUESTS



Inquests after the Great Flood of January 1841

Inquests held before Mr Whitmarsh.

On Monday at Laverstock, on the body of Hezekiah Collings, 35 years of age. It appeared that between 10 and 11 o'clock on the previous Saturday night, Mr Sutton and the deceased went out to see the state of the waters, which were then rising very fast. Mr Sutton preceded the deceased a few yards, with a lantern, and coming to a particular spot, said "here is the place where the chalk will be wanted" the flood was at this time flowing over the bank. Receiving no answer, he turned round, and was surprised at the absence of the deceased: he went back and procured assistance, and made search for him – but without effect. At day break on the following day, he renewed his search, when he discovered him in an eel stage, in which he must have fallen, about 3 or 4 yards from the spot when he had last saw him alive on the previous evening.

On Tuesday, at Fonthill Bishop, on the body of James Reid, aged 45. It appeared from the evidence of one of the witnesses, that about six o'clock on the previous Saturday evening, he heard a voice exclaim, "Lord have mercy upon me, do ye come and help me as fast as you can;" that shortly afterwards he heard the same voice, but in a much fainter tone, and that presently it died away: It appeared to proceed about 10 or 12 lugs from the spot where witness was standing. Another witness heard a similar exclamation; - but he went to ascertain the cause, and upon being told that a man was drowned, made search until he found the body, at 12 o'clock. The deceased, it appeared, was walking on the turnpike road towards his cottage on the above parish, when the flood, rushing down the street from Chicklade bottom, carried him off his legs, to an adjoining plantation, where he was found a corpse.

On the same day at Shrewton, on the bodies of Jos. Fulford, aged 60 – Jane his daughter, aged 18 – and Joseph Blewden, a little boy two years of age – all of whom perished during the inundation at Shrewton on Saturday evening. The particulars of each case are given in a preceding column.

Yesterday in the parish of Swindon, on the body of George Burchill, a fine young man 19 years of age. It appeared that deceased was going to his residence from the town of Swindon, between 10 and 11 on the previous Saturday evening, and when about to cross a meadow for the purpose, a gentleman who was riding up the road, told him to be careful or he would be drowned, as the waters were very high in the meadow. In this meadow he was found drowned, early on the following morning.

Verdict in each of the above cases "Accidental."

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette 21 January 1841