



CORONERS INQUESTS



Warminster

Mr. James Charlton 1872

Warminster

Death under Painful Circumstances

It is our melancholy duty to record the untimely death of Mr. James Charlton, wholesale tea dealer, on Sunday evening last. Mr. Charlton went to Westbury on Saturday evening, in order to pay a visit to his friend, Mr. Martin Meaden, of Penleigh House. On the Sunday he attended Divine Service at Westbury Church, and after partaking of tea at Penleigh House, expressed his anxiety to return home. A few minutes before seven o'clock Mr. Meaden and Mr. Charlton set out to walk to the Westbury station. It may be observed that Mr. Meaden's house is about half a mile from the station, and the two gentlemen determined to walk along the line, and ascended the embankment near Penleigh for the purpose of so doing. When they were within a few hundred yards of the station it came on to rain, and there was every appearance of a boisterous night. Mr. Charlton declined to allow Mr. Meaden to proceed farther with him because he would have to go back in the wet. They accordingly wished each other goodbye at this point, and Mr. Charlton was not seen afterwards alive. At about twenty minutes to seven o'clock on Monday morning, William Papps, labourer, of Westbury, went to the station for a load of sand, and in passing down the line near the coal depots, about fifty yards the Warminster side of Westbury station, he saw the body of a man lying transversely on his back on the rails. He satisfied himself that life was extinct, and then ran to the station and called assistance. The police were also apprised of the discovery, and Sergeant Wheeler was quickly in attendance, and took the usual precautions. Up to this time, however, the deceased was not identified, but on the arrival of Dr. Shorland he at once recognised the corpse as that of Mr. Charlton. The body was quite cold, and life must have been extinct for some hours. There were no marks of any injury on any part of the body, and his purse, watch, and other effects were found on the deceased. The body was removed to a room at the Westbury station, and in the afternoon an inquest was held by Mr. Sylvester, coroner, when Dr. Shorland stated that he believed that disease of the heart was the cause of death, and the jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes."

The news of Mr. Charlton's death created a very painful sensation in this town, where he was held in great esteem. His remains were interred yesterday, (Friday), in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends, and blinds were drawn and shutters put up throughout the town.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Saturday, 16 November 1872