

The Bowood Tragedy

Their final resting place at Curzon Street Cemetery

By Calne resident John Osborne

The following accounts have been taken directly from newspapers from 1898 held at the
Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre.



GRAVE READS:

OUR DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER MARY JANE & RICHARD LINFORD

WHO DIED MAY 22nd 1898 AGED 47 YEARS

THE PAINS OF DEATH ARE PASSED

LABOUR AND SORROW CEASED

AND LIFE LONG WARFARE CLOSED AT LAST

THEIR SOULS ARE FOUND IN PEACE

26th May 1898 - A man and his wife found dead in Bowood Park.

One of the most shocking tragedies that have ever been recorded in the annuals of Calne was discovered last Wednesday evening, when it was found that a man had brutally murdered his wife in Bowood Park, and afterwards committed suicide by drowning himself in a stream a few yards from where the murder took place.

The murderer, Richard Linford, aged 48 years, was a smith by trade, and resided at Bedford, from which place he arrived at Calne on Friday last with his wife, who is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Angell, who reside in North Street. About two months ago Linford underwent an operation at one of the London hospitals for a fistula in his back, and his object in coming to Calne was to recoup his strength before resuming his laborious occupation. Mrs. Linford is two years younger than her husband and their relatives state their 26 years of married life had been very happy, and that they were extremely fond of each other. Both were of a most cheerful disposition, and were total abstainers. They had arranged to return to Bedford on Tuesday in the week; and the time at their disposal being short they made the most of it by visiting their friends, and enjoying walks together in the country.

On Saturday night there was a family supper at John Angell's house, brother to the deceased woman, and Linford then was in his usual pleasant mood. On Sunday morning after breakfast Mr. and Mrs. Linford arranged to go for a walk and before leaving the house at 10 o'clock they intimated their intention of calling upon Mrs. Weston, aunt to Mrs. Linford, who resides in the Quarry, and after that she said they might probably look in at the Salvation Army barracks. They were asked when they might be expected home for dinner, and Mrs. Linford said they would not be later than between quarter and half past twelve. They went the back way out of the house, and at the entrance Mrs. Linford was heard to remark, " Which way shall we go ? " and the husband replied " Oh, let us go round by the big house " (meaning Bowood House).

When the dinner hour arrived and nothing was heard of them, Mr. and Mrs. Angell waited for some time in the hope of their return, but to their great surprise they did not put in an appearance, and the question was where had they gone to. Enquiries were made everywhere, but no one had seen anything of the missing couple, and Mrs. Linford's aged father and mother who, as can be imagined, were greatly disconcerted, did not retire to rest till 3 o'clock on Monday morning. The surmises as to the whereabouts of the missing couple were innumerable, but the last thing that was thought of was that they had met the fete they did meet.

At about 4 o'clock on Wednesday a mole catcher named George Simpkins, who is employed on the Bowood estate, observed the body of a man in the stream at Scoff's corner, near to Pontail lodge, and he at once sent for that smart young officer, Police Constable Winchcombe, stationed at Sandy Lane. On his arrival he discovered the body of Linford in three feet of water, and on bringing it to terra firma it was found that a case of determined suicide had occurred, as the deceased had tied his legs tightly together with his pocket handkerchief. A cart was at once procured from Mr. Barton's farm and the body was conveyed to the Police Station at Calne, where the news of the recovery of one of the missing couple soon spread. The cart passed through the entrance leading to the wharf, the gates of which were at once closed to those whose curiosity had attracted them to the spot.

26th May 1898

Subsequently Inspector Cross gave directions for the body to be removed to the White Hart, where it was placed in what is known as the old tap facing the Green. The deceased's watch, it was observed, had stopped at 20 minutes to three o' clock, and in connection with subsequent events this is very important. In his pockets he had about 15s. in money, a penknife, and, strange to say, a photo of his wife which was evidently taken some years ago.

Between four and five o'clock P.C. Yates, acting under instruction from Inspector Cross, who was then ignorant of the finding of the body of Linford, organised a search party to find out if Mr. and Mrs. Linford had accidentally lost their lives in the lake, and on his arrival at Scoff's Corner he was in time to see P.C. Winchcombe take Linford's body out of the water.

He assisted in having the body placed in the cart, and afterwards he instituted his search in company with Mr. Forbes, the estate bailiff, and Henry Lane, gamekeeper, for the body of Mrs. Linford, who was found shortly afterwards about three yards from the stream. The woman was lying on her back and her face presented a horrible spectacle. The face could scarcely be recognised for blood, and decomposition had set in. On examination it was found that she had been brutally murdered, and that the poor woman must have had a severe struggle for her life. On each side of her head were several deep punctured wounds penetrating into the skull, her cape, on which were blood stains, was found under a beech tree, a distance of 22 yards from where she was found, but the bonnet which she wore has not yet been recovered. The marks on her right hand showed that she endeavoured to save herself from the murderous attacks made upon her, but the wounds she received must have soon disabled her.

The wounds on the body could not have been inflicted with the penknife which was found in Linford's pocket; it must have been of a heavier description, and is probably lying in the bed of the stream. Close to the body was found a piece of walking stick, and one of her earrings was found on her dishevelled hair. P.C. Yates at once sent for Inspector Cross and Dr. Batten, and on their arrival the body was placed in a cart and conveyed to the White Hart, in front of which there was a large crowd of persons.

Within 200 yards from where the body of Mrs. Linford was found there is a farm house, the occupants of which, on Sunday, heard nothing to attract their attention and the public road from Sandy Lane to Calne is only a short distance off. The whole of the circumstances go to show that Linford murdered his wife and then committed suicide, and considering the affectionate feeling that had always existed between them, the only conclusion that can be come to is that owing to the weak state of his health consequent on the operation that had recently been performed upon him, his mind suddenly became deranged and impelled him to commit the rash act.

The deceased leaves two sons, 24 and 21 respectively, and one daughter aged 19, and the oldest son, who was telegraphed for, arrived at Calne by the last train last evening.

There is much sympathy shown for Mrs. Linford's aged parents and her relatives, who are greatly respected by all who know them, and who are much afflicted by their terrible and sudden bereavement. The necessary information has been forwarded by Inspector Cross to Mr. Cue, the Coroner's officer, and an inquest will be held in due course.

The Bowood Tragedy - Inquest and verdict - 1

Thursday June 2nd 1898

At 3 o'clock on Thursday afternoon an inquest on the bodies of Richard Henry Linford and Mary Jane Linford, whose bodies was found in Bowood Park under circumstances already narrated, was held at the White Hart Hotel, Calne, before Mr. A. Barnes, deputy coroner. The following comprised the jury :-Messrs. Noah Webb, J.G. Barnes, William Bush, C. Hawkins, Charles Drew, John Pedwell, T. Trotman, S. Beazley, Benjamin Hunt, George Pullen, and John Gale,- N. Webb was chosen foreman of the jury.

The jury having been sworn, the coroner said before they proceeded to view the body he dared say there had been a good deal of gossip about this matter, and they might also have read something about the deaths of those two persons, but he must ask them to put aside everything they had heard and everything they had read, and to consider solely what evidence was put before them that day. That enquiry was one to which they must give their serious attention. It appeared that these two persons went for a walk to Bowood, and were not afterwards seen until their bodies were discovered yesterday - one, the woman, with serious wounds upon her head, and the man in a pond some little distance away, presumably drowned. Of course they had to consider how the wounds on the woman's head were caused, and who caused them. He would, after they had heard the evidence, direct them as to the law on the subject. The following evidence was then taken :-

Richard Henry Linford said :- I am son of the deceased, and I reside at 17, Farrar Street, Bedford. The male deceased is my father, whose name is also Richard Henry Linford, and he was 47 years of age and resided at the same address. His occupation was a blacksmith's hammerman. The female deceased is my mother, Mary Jane Lineford, and she was the same age as my father, I last saw them alive on Friday morning last, at the London and North Western Station, Bedford, when they took an excursion to Bath, and from there they proposed to go to Calne. There was no other member of the family with them, and their luggage consisted only of a light bag and an umbrella. I did not notice whether my father had a stick with him; he generally carried a stick. My father had two sticks with hooks to them to hang on the arm. I noticed one in the home after he left, but I did not see the other. I carried the light bag to the station, and put it in the carriage for them. The bag was not very heavy and was packed by my mother before leaving the house. They only intended to spend a few hours in Bath, and then go on to Calne to visit my mother's mother.

The coroner :-How did they live at home ? - They lived very happily together. I never knew them to have a cross word for some time, and when they had words they were not high words. On Thursday morning, the day before my father left home, he seemed very low and depressed.

What about ? - He underwent an operation some six or seven weeks ago, and three weeks ago he did not seem so well. He underwent an operation at St. Mark's Hospital, London, for fistula.

You say he was low and depressed ; in what way did he show it ? - As he was about to go out in the morning he said to my mother, " if I think I am going to be bad long, I do not wish to be a trouble to anyone, I wish I was out of it."

You overheard him say so ? - No, I did not hear him say so, my mother told me that.

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That is hardly evidence, it is evidence so far as the death of your mother is concerned. Under what circumstances did she tell it to you ? - She told me because he seemed so low. I was employed all night, and was in bed in the morning when my mother came upstairs crying, and I asked her what was the matter.

When did she come to you ? - On the Thursday, the day before they came to Calne. What did your mother tell you ? - She told me my father wanted to go out, because he was so low spirited and miserable. He said if he thought he was going to have a long illness he did not want to be a trouble to anybody.

Anything else ? - No sir, not then. He came in late at dinner time, and I was up then, I asked him where he had been to, and he said he did not know where he had been, he felt as if he could go and do away with himself. My father then began to cry, and he asked my mother to forgive him for the worry he had caused her, and said he would try and be all right. He seemed quite cheerful after that and went down to the station to enquire about the tickets. I got the tickets on Friday morning.

Was there any other conversation ? - On Friday I said to him before going by train, " I hope you will cheer up and not get so low spirited and try to get on all right."

I want to know what your father meant when he asked your mother to forgive him ? - She told me that he had said cruel things to her, that he had no business to.

What was your mother crying about on Thursday ? - I expect he was threatening something.

She did not tell you ? - She was a woman who would not let anything out between my father and herself.

You say that your mother said your father had said something cruel to her. I want to know the exact words of that conversation ? - She did not tell me what he said.

But you said he had said something cruel to her. Just think for a minute, it is rather important. (A pause). Can you remember now what your mother said to you ? - She said " He has been cruel to me, accusing me of things I had never thought of doing."

Can you remember any other conversation on this subject between yourself and your mother. Have you seen her cry on any other occasion ? - She cried during the week the operation was being performed on my father.

Do you remember her crying on account of anything your father might of said to her ? - She never cried the last week, but she seemed very worried all the time.

Had she been worried before this last week she was at home ? - The last three weeks she seemed sort of strange in her actions; he was quiet and if you spoke to him he would not take any notice of you. Did you notice any change in the last three weeks to what he was before ? - Oh, yes, he was always cheerful, before he went through the operation he was quite cheerful.

In what way did he seem strange ? - He would sit down and stare at us one after the other without

saying anything, and he would sit and watch my mother for half-an-hour at a time. I spoke to him about it, and he said he did not know he had done so.

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How many brothers and sisters have you ? - I have one brother and one sister, both younger than I am. My brother is 22 and my sister is 18.

Have you ever seen your sister crying ? - Only when father had been like that. What do you mean ? - I have seen her cry when my mother told her what father had said to her. Well, you have seen your mother and your sister crying about things father had said. - When I woke up on the Thursday morning they were both crying. My father wanted to go out and they did not want him to go, and they cried when he did not arrive in time for his meals, as he was always very punctual at meals.

Have you seen your mother crying on account of your father before the last three weeks ? - Only about the illness he had to go through. There is not much in that. How long has your father been out of employ ? - He has only been out of employ during the ten or eleven weeks of his illness. He said on the Thursday when I spoke to him about being so low spirited, that his head was so bad that he did not know what to do with himself at times.

Is your father in any Friendly Society ? - Yes, in the Oddfellows. And he has been receiving sick pay ? - Yes. Had he any other means ? - Only what we brought in - myself, my brother and my sister. Was there plenty to live on ? - Oh, Yes; there were no money difficulties. My father had got an idea that he had lost his situation.

A Juryman - What did your father come to Calne for. Because he was ill ? - Yes, he came there to see if a change would do him any good. He said if it did him good he would go to work after the holidays. He was in the hospital for four weeks.

The Foreman - Did you notice anything strange in his manner before he went to the hospital ? - No, he was quite cheerful, my mother and father have always lived happily together. Your father was not a drunken man ? - No, he had been a total abstainer for 16 years.

Mr. Hunt - Did your father propose to go to Calne ? - My mother asked him to go in the hope that the change would do him good. He would not go any where without mother; at the hospital he wanted her there.

The Foreman - Is your mother a native of Calne ? - Yes, her maiden name was Angell.

Mr. Hawkins - Did they intend staying long here ? - They came by a week-end trip to Bath. They thought it would be cheaper to go that way.

Inspector Cross - Return tickets were found on the body of the male deceased.

The Foreman - When did they arrive at your grandfather's ? - On Friday night.

The Coroner - That is what you have heard. - They wrote and told me they had arrived. Have you any other evidence to give ? - They always seemed so happy together.

John Angell deposed - I live at Brown's Pike, Wood Street, Calne. I am the father of the deceased female. She and her husband came to my house last Friday night at 9 o'clock. They left my house together after they had breakfast at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning to go to Aunt Martha's (Mrs. Weston), who resides in the Quarry, and to go from there to the Salvation Army barracks, promising to return for dinner at half-past 12 o'clock, but I have not seen them since.

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The Coroner - When they arrived at your house did they seem happy ? - Yes, happy all the time they were there. They went away in the morning as good friends in the world. I have not a word to say against the man. I did not know they were going anywhere else but where I have told you. When they left on Sunday morning to go and visit aunt Martha's, who made the arrangement ? - Both. My daughter (addressing her mother) said " We are going up to aunt Martha's, and we might go into the Army. " Did your daughter seem at all afraid of her husband ? - Bless you, no; they were as good friends as were to be found in the world; always so fond of each other. They have been in my house several times before.

Was Linford cheerful when he was with you ? - He seemed right enough; I did not see anything the matter with him. Did he sit in the chair and stare at people ? - Well, my eyesight is not very good; he left the house quite cheerful. When they were in your house did you all sit in the same room ? - Yes, I have only one room - the kitchen and two rooms upstairs, one of which was occupied by the deceased. Had your son-in-law a stick with him ? - Yes, a light stick. Did you know what it was made of, - No. [A piece of walking stick was here produced, and the Coroner asked if the stick that Linford had with him was anything like that ? It was a light stick with a hook to it.] Was it anything like the one produced in colour ? - I could not swear.

The previous witness was re-called and was asked - Is that part of the stick your father had ? - It looked exactly like that.

[The stick was handed to Dr. Batten, who detected several blood stains upon it, and a black thread, probably from the jacket of the married woman.]

Angell, proceeding, said; They never went to Aunt Martha's. From what I can make out they went Buckhill way to Bowood.

Richard Henry Linford, again re-called, said; My father's stick had no ferrule to it; it was worn off. [There was no ferrule on the piece of stick found near the murdered woman.]

Richard Gingell, residing at North Street, Calne, deposed :- The Coroner - On Sunday morning did you hear any conversation pass between the two deceased persons ? - Yes, sir. Were you present at the time ? - I was going along the road ? What road ? - North Street - from the blacksmith's shop up to my own house. What time in the day ? - About 10 o'clock on Sunday morning. I saw them coming out of Brown's Pike, where they were staying. When they got to the bottom of the lane, the man was in front and the woman was behind him pulling on her gloves. When she came up to her husband she said " Which way shall we go, Dick; shall we go up Lickhill Road ? " He said " No, we will go towards the big house." She said " What big house ? Do you mean Bowood ? " and he replies "

Yes." They then walked down towards the top of the town in the direction of Bowood.

Did they appear happy ? Oh, yes ! the woman seemed to be very happy. The man had a walking-stick in his hand. Could you recognise the walking-stick if you saw it again ? Yes, it was an ordinary walking-stick like the piece of one produced. I was only four yards from them going along the road, and had no difficulty in hearing their conversation.

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In answer to a Juryman, the witness said he did not speak to them, and did not see them afterwards. When he went in doors he told his missus where they had agreed to go. When the man suggested going to Bowood, the woman seemed quite agreeable to go there.

David Simpkins, of Forest Gate, Pewsham, deposed:- I am a molecatcher, employed on the Bowood estate. On Wednesday afternoon at ten minutes to three, I was going round by the pond near the cascade bridge, when I saw the body of a man in the water about three or four yards from the edge of the bank. The water at that spot is about three or four feet deep. There was an iron fence between five and six feet high, and the man had to get over that to get to the water. His hat was lying close to the water, and appeared as if it had been put down. The hat was surrounded with nettles, so that it could not of blown to where it was. Was there any sign of a struggle on the bank ? - No, there was only the track made by the man after he got over the fence, and walked to the edge of the bank.

In what position was he lying ? - He was lying on his face. You could only see his shoulders and the back of his head out of the water. I went for a policeman and I helped him to get the body out. The man's legs were tied with a white pocket handkerchief. Was a search being made for the woman ? - As soon as we got the man out of the water we then thought the woman was also in the pond.

By Supt. Barrett - The man's body was found about six yards from his hat, as the stream was flowing in that direction.

The Foreman - Was there any stick there ? - No, I searched all round but found nothing else.

P.C. Winchcombe, stationed at Sandy Lane, stated:- I received information from the previous witness at half past 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, that the body of a man was in the pond, and I at once proceeded to Bowood pond and saw a hat by the water's edge, apparently having been placed there. About six yards further I found the body of the man in the water about three or four yards from the bank. I could see the crown of his head and the shoulders to the small of his back above water. With the assistance of the previous witness, myself, and the other men the body was got out of the water. On searching the deceased I found a watch and chain, 15s. 10d. in money, a man's pair of kid gloves, an envelope bearing the address, " R.H. Linford, 17 Farrar Street, Bedford, " in which was the photo of a female (the photo of his wife before she was married), also two excursion tickets dated 20th May, from Bath to Bedford via Oxford, also a membership card in connection with the Primitive Methodist Pleasant Sunday Afternoons.

The Coroner - Was the watch going ? - No sir, it stopped at 25 minutes to 3. What sort of watch is it ?

- It is a nickel Geneva. One likely to stop under water ? I should think so. Any experiment of that kind been tried with it ? No, sir. What about the woman, did you see anything of her ? - No sir, I obtained a horse and cart and took the body of the man to Calne. Did you examine the clothes to see if there were any blood marks ? - Yes, there were no blood marks. His arms when found were extended, his fist were tightly clenched, and his legs were tied with a pocket handkerchief just above the ankles. Whose handkerchief was it ? - I do not know, there is no name on it. Did you notice any signs of a struggle ? - There was none whatever. There is a high fence close by ? - Yes, eight feet high. And the man was obliged to get over that fence to get to the water ? - Yes. Did you notice any marks where the man had got over the fence ? - I looked for them but could see none. There were marks from the railings to the water's edge. That was where the hat was found ? - Yes.

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Thomas Lane, residing at the Boat House, Bowood, deposed:- Yesterday evening about 5 o'clock I was asked to bring a punt to Pontail and drag the hole for a woman that was lost. I went there and dragged the holes and could not find the body. The man was lying on the bank at the time. We formed a search party. I think I had better start there. You dragged the pond for the deceased woman, you assisted ? - Oh no, I did it myself. As we could not find the body there we searched on the land part, and I found the body of the woman at a place called Rushy Bottom, about 150 yards from what we call Scoff's Corner and 500 yards from Pontail. Was she against the tree ? - No, she was about 20 yards from the tree. Was the ground very soft where you found her ? - Yes. Is there a path anywhere near ? - There is one within 150 yards or perhaps more. I saw she was quite dead and went at once for the policeman, who was with another search party. The policeman came and examined the body. Did you examine the body ? - I went with the police. How was the body lying ? - On its back. Were there any signs of a struggle ? - I should think not. She seemed to have been taken up by someone and laid out in a very neat state. Her clothes were in proper order and her hands in a nice position, one stretched from the body and the other across her breast. She was evidently laid out by someone ? - That is the opinion I formed. Did you notice any marks on her face ? - She was wounded about the head and face, and her hands were also bruised. Do you know anything else about this matter ? - No, that is all. Did the body look as if it had been dragged any distance ? - It had evidently not been dragged. It appeared as if someone had taken it up in their arms, and carried it to where I found it. Did you search the spot where the injuries were received. Did you find any spot where there were any marks ? - No, the cattle were there, they got under the trees, no doubt attracted by the corpse and the jacket stained with blood. Did you find anything else besides the body ? - The woman's cloak was underneath the beech tree. Did you find the cloak ? - No, one of my party. How far is the beech tree away ? - About 20 yards from the body. Where there any marks of persons trampling round the cloak ? - It was difficult to say owing to the marks of the feet of the cattle. Was the cloak folded up ? - It was trampled on and loose, and the cattle may have done that. There were beech leaves and nuts upon it. Did you find a broken stick ? - No, that was picked up by one of the party, close by where the body was found.

Supt. Barrett - Evidence will be given as to the cloak.

P.C. Yates stated:- About half past 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, I formed one of the search party with the last witness, who when he found the body of the woman called to me, and I was to the spot. I found her lying on her back and a number of incised wounds about her head and temple. I also

found the earring (produced) out of her ear lying on her hair about two inches from the ear, which had evidently received a blow. The earring was twisted as if it had received a blow. The earring was twisted as if it had received a blow, but the earring on the other ear had not been disturbed. She was lying in the valley, and 22 yards away on the level ground I found the cape produced, which was covered with blood stains in the front. I also found the piece of stick produced about three yards from the cape. There appeared to be blood stains on the stick. [The Coroner examined the stick and then passed it on to the jury to inspect]. I made a careful search all round the locality to see if I could find any other weapon, but could not find any. Did you find any marks of a scuffle ? - No, sir, it would be impossible to do so, there were so many marks of cattle about. A cape like that would attract cattle and they would trample over and about it. From where the cape was found, to the spot where the male deceased was found is some little distance ? 500 yards.

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Mr. Beazley - Were the wounds on the head likely to have been inflicted by a stick ?

The Coroner - You must ask the doctor that question.

Dr. Smith Batten deposed - I was sent for about 6.30 yesterday evening to view the body of a man at the White Hart Hotel. I went after that with Inspector Cross to Bowood, where I examined the body of a woman who I found lying on her back in a kind of ditch with bog surrounding. The right arm was extended, and the left was across her chest.

The Coroner - Did the body look as if it had been laid down ? - Yes, the clothing was in order. As if the body was placed there by someone ? - Yes, there was a small patch of blood on the grass by her head. The head appeared to be dreadfully battered, and putrefaction had already commenced. Her hair was full of maggots. The body was taken to the White Hart Hotel, where I examined it. It appeared that of a well nourished woman between 40 and 50 years. The head as I said before was fearfully battered, and had eleven incised wounds upon it, reaching down to the sculp, each wound being an inch and a quarter in length, and all made probably by the same instrument. There were three wounds over the left temple, two on the left parital bone, three over the right eyelid, two on the right parital bone, and one on the right occipital bone near to its right angle. The right ear was almost severed from the head, only hanging by a small piece of skin. Ecchymosed (contused) on the right eyelid, and contused patches on both hands, and a wound on the fore finger of the left hand; also ecchymosed on the left side of the upper lip, which was punctured by a front tooth, and ecchymosed patches on the right side of the neck. All these wounds must of been caused during life.

The Coroner - Were any of them caused by a fist ? - The blow on the right eye and left upper lip might have been. Do you think this stick with a bent round handle would of caused the wounds ? - I think the wounds on the eye and lip were most probably caused by such a stick. There is no doubt that the marks on the finger were caused by her trying to protect herself from the stick. No fracture could be detected in the skull. Would any one of the wounds be fatal ? - It might have been. If we had had a post mortem examination we might have found some extravasation of blood. There is no doubt she was stunned in the first instance, and from what I can make out all these cuts on the head were done while she lay on the ground. In your opinion she was subject to two attacks; she must

have been attacked with a stick or a lighter weapon while standing up trying to defend herself ? - Yes. And another attack with an instrument as she was down on the ground ? - Yes. Was the instrument with which she was attacked on the ground in your opinion a heavy one ? - I should say so. Were they deep wounds ? - Yes, you could put your finger down in any of them. Can you say whether the wounds were caused by a metal weapon ? - It must have been metal. Would a big stick have done them ? - No, the cuts were too long and deep for a stick. It must have been something that penetrated deep down between the scalp and the skull. Some of the wounds would have caused unconsciousness ? - Undoubtedly. The wounds could not have been self inflicted ? - No. She must have been subject to a very brutal and violent assault ? - Yes. The wounds were sufficient to cause death ? - The cause of death was shock, loss of blood, and exposure. You do not think the wounds must have been immediately fatal ? - No, she must have lived some few hours after the attack. She must have lived three hours ? - I should say probably. I suppose that the attack she was subjected to must have been with the intention of killing her ? - There is no doubt about it.

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It was something more than a mere savage assault by a man in anger; it was a murderous assault ? - There is no doubt about it that the assault was with a murderous intention. With regard to the man, he died from drowning ? - Yes. Have you anything else to say ? - His legs were tied when I saw him.

The Foreman - You noticed the leg of the woman ? - That is from exposure. She never recovered consciousness before she died.

Supt. Barrett - The public would no doubt like to hear that the woman was searched, and on her was found a watch and a sum of money, so that there was no robbery.

The Coroner - We have direct evidence that they were not in want of money.

This concluded the evidence, and the Coroner, in summing up, said he thought the enquiry could now close, as they had sufficient materials to arrive at a verdict. He desired to call their attention to one or two facts in the case as disclosed by the evidence. It seemed that the man had been operated upon for fistula and that seemed to have affected his disposition in some way. Of course it was for the jury to say whether they were quite satisfied with that portion of the evidence respecting his disposition. The son stated that up till the time of the operation his father and mother had lived happily together; and after that he saw his father, mother and sister crying; that his father told him that he felt low and miserable, and that he did not want to be a trouble to anyone. That was one point. The son further stated that when his father cried he asked his wife to forgive him for the worry he had caused her, and said he would try to be all right. He mentioned that because it seemed to bear upon the state of the man's mind at the time. It might be very slight, but it was something that they might consider. He must, however, tell them that the state of the man's mind had nothing whatever to do with the question of the death of this woman. Even supposing they considered that he committed the assault, they might take it into consideration when considering the cause of his own death, being perhaps that of suicide. The remaining facts of the case were that the couple appeared to be very happy during the time they were in Calne, that they went for a walk on Sunday morning, intending to go to Mrs. Linford's aunt's home. They were rather fortunate in getting

evidence as to what took place immediately after they left the house, because it explained why they did not go to the aunt's. They seemed to have amicably settled between themselves that they would go to Bowood, instead of going to the aunt's in the Quarry. That evidence they had from William Gingell, who met them on the road after leaving Angell's house, and who saw them go in the direction of Bowood. Then came the dreadful tragedy which took place in the wood. Nothing more was heard of them until the bodies were found on Wednesday afternoon. The woman was found lying on her back as if having been placed on the ground by someone. Her head was battered about, evidently done by someone with a murderous intention. It was for them to say who caused those injuries. There had been produced a stick which was found close by. They had heard what the son said with regard to the stick, and the opinion of the father of the woman. Although they both did not absolutely identify the stick as the one they saw Linford with yet they both said it was like it. The stick had been broken with considerable violence, and they had the doctor's evidence that some of the wounds on the face and hands might have been caused by a similar stick to the one produced. Well, it was for them as reasonable men to judge from the probabilities as to whether the deceased man did not attack first of all his wife with a stick, and that she tried to defend herself with her hands. That might have led up to an assault with a heavier weapon, and as the doctor said the instrument used while the woman lay on the ground. They could not carry it further than that. Then so far as the man was concerned his body was found in the water with his legs tied together. There were no signs of a struggle.

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The deceased had to climb over a high fence and there were tracks from the fence to the edge of the bank where the hat was found. Had there been any foul play it would have required a very strong man to have lifted the deceased over the fence, tied his legs together, and put him into the water. They could not entertain that idea, and he thought they might reasonably come to the conclusion that Richard Henry Linford committed suicide. They must exercise their discretion as to the balance of probability that the man committed first of all the murderous assault upon the woman, and afterwards drowned himself. He would ask them in the first place to say whether they considered that the woman died from the injuries found on her head after death, and secondly who it was who caused those injuries.

Mr. C.T. Hawkins - Were there any marks of blood found on the man's clothes.

The Coroner - There is no evidence of that. Two witnesses have stated that they found none, and their evidence is corroborated by the doctor. There would not be much blood splashed about in an assault taking place in such a manner.

Mr. Pullein - A heavy weapon has not been found.

The Coroner - He had many opportunities of throwing it away.

The Foreman - Do you think the stick caused the wounds ?

Dr. Smith Batten - The stick could not do it.

Mr. Hawkins - Not a boot.

Dr. Smith Batten - No, a boot would have grazed the head.

The Coroner said the doctor was of opinion that the wounds were caused by a " heavy metal weapon. " You can answer seriatim the question I have put to you. Did the woman die from the wounds.

The Jury - We agree to that.

The Coroner - Well now, who caused those wounds.

The Foreman - During a period of weak -

The Coroner (interrupting)- Are the jury agreed that Richard Henry Linford caused his wife's death ?

The Jury - Yes.

The Coroner - You do not take into consideration the state of the man's mind. And your finding is that Richard Henry Linford committed the murder. Do you say whether it was premeditated or accidental.

The Jury - Premeditated.

The Coroner - You say that he did it intentionally. That is a verdict of " Wilful Murder " against Richard Henry Linford. What do you find with regard to Linford's own death ?

The Jury - That he committed suicide.

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The Coroner - Can you say what was the state of his mind when he committed suicide.

Mr. Hawkins - He was temporarily insane.

The Coroner pointed out that Mr. Justice Hawkins in one of his charges expressed the opinion that juries too frequently found a man insane when he committed a rash act like this. It did not follow that a man must be considered insane when he did something which other people would not do, and which other people could not account for. They had certain evidence that he was depressed, but that was not a sufficient cause of insanity. Supposing the man had not drowned himself and he had committed this fatal assault, would the man have been punished or would he not ?

A Juryman - No doubt he would.

The Foreman - I think there were indications that the state of his mind previously was not satisfactory. The deceased's son at this stage entered the room and asked to be allowed to make a statement, but the Coroner refused, remarking that he had every opportunity given him of saying what he had to say. The son informed our representative at the close of the inquest that what he wished to tell the jury was that a brother of his father was now and had been for the last 15 years an

inmate of a lunatic asylum.

The Coroner said he must leave the matter entirely to the jury, who must use their best judgment with regard to the state of Linford's mind. He has not before them what the son had stated with regard to his father's disposition during the last three weeks.

The Foreman thought there was very strong evidence that the man's mind was somewhat unhinged, and no doubt in a weak moment he gave way and murdered his wife and drowned himself. That was his opinion.

Mr. C.T. Hawkins - That is my opinion too. The son said his father remarked that if he thought he was going to be any trouble he would do away with himself.

The Coroner - He suffered from a fistula, but that is not insanity. Linford said if he thought he was going to have a long illness he would not want to be a trouble to anyone.

A Juryman - There is no insanity about that-

The Coroner - If you have any doubt as to the state of his mind you can say that you have no evidence of the state of his mind before you. You ought not to do that, there is some little evidence you know.

The jury eventually returned a verdict that Mary Jane Linford was wilfully murdered by Richard Henry Linford, her husband, who afterwards committed suicide by throwing himself in Bowood pond, but there was no evidence to show the state of his mind at the time of the act.

This concluded the enquiry, which lasted nearly three hours.