

**YOUNG RYDE GIRL'S DEATH
MOTHER'S SAD DISCOVERY NEAR HOME**

The deepest sympathy is felt for Mr. and Mrs. F. P. RICHARDS, of 53 Upton-road, Ryde, in the heavy bereavement which suddenly befell them on Friday by the death of their 16-year-old daughter Sheelah, who was found lying dead in Mitchells-road, a short distance from her home. Additional sadness is given to the tragedy by the fact that the mother was among the first to make the discovery.

The poignant circumstances were investigated by the coroner (R. E. A. WEBSTER, Esq.) at the inquest at Ryde on Monday.

The mother, Mrs. Elsie Mary RICHARDS said her daughter was employed at Mr. C. W. H. SPRINGER's and on Friday appeared in her usual good health. She returned home at about 6.30p.m. to take out their two dogs, one being a terrier puppy. She returned with the greyhound at about 8.30 and was distressed because the puppy had gone into the brickyard and she could not get it out and thought she had lost it. Witness told her daughter to meet her 14-year-old brother and he would help look for it. Ten minutes later the dog was brought home. Witness went out and saw the child lying near the hedge in Mitchells-road.

Mrs. Agnes G. SLATER, widow, of 287 Upton-road, deposed that at about 8.30p.m. when passing Mitchells-road she saw a girl lying in the road. She asked "Are you playing hide and seek?" but receiving no answer touched her foot and noticed that she was lying face downwards. On turning her over she noticed a slight mark on her forehead and a little blood coming from the nostrils. A soldier came to her assistance and then Mrs. RICHARDS came towards her. She said to her "Look at this girl lying here," and when the soldier lifted the girl's head and shoulders Mrs. RICHARDS cried "Oh, it's my Sheelah."

Sylvia CRANE, aged 14, of 2 Salters-road, said that whilst standing in Upton-road she saw Sheelah running towards Mitchells-road and crying. Although witness spoke to her, she did not answer, but continued running. A few minutes later she saw the puppy running from the direction of Mitchells-road as though it was frightened.

Dr. T. SIM said he visited the house at 8.55p.m. and saw the girl lying on the kitchen floor with no sign of life. He gave an injection to try to stimulate the heart and, with the police officer, tried artificial respiration for 25 minutes without response. On making a post-mortem examination he found that death was due to asphyxiation. There were adhesions to the frontal part of the membranes and, in view of her distress at the loss of the puppy, they might have induced an epileptic type of fit. Since then he had heard that there was some disturbance to the electrical supply in Upton-road and thought possibly she might have received an electrical shock which threw her down on her face and caused a fit of unconsciousness.

P.O. BAVERSTOCK said deceased was found lying over a hydrant 10ft. inside Mitchells-road.

The Coroner said he thought it a matter for investigation and he asked P.C. BAVERSTOCK to go to the spot and make inquiries.

The father said there was no need for his daughter to be in Mitchells-road.

Dr. SIM added that he had known the girl for 10 years and except for bad teeth, which were extracted, she had been an exceptionally healthy child. There were no marks of violence or bruising on the girl's body.

On P.C. BAVERSTOCK's return he said he had interviewed the foreman, who told him there was a broken cable 25 yards from Mitchells-road in Upton-road and that the lighting and heating in the houses in Mitchells-road were not affected. The current was alternating, and if the cable was severed the supply would go to earth so that no one could get a shock.

The Coroner said it was a most unusual case and he deeply sympathised with the parents. He recorded a verdict of asphyxiation," and said there was not sufficient evidence to show how it actually occurred. He left it to the police to make inquiry as to an electric shock as they thought fit.
