

1901 CENSUS: RG13/187. folio 101. page 25.
Abode: 41 Ecclesbourne-road, Islington, London.

John H. FRAY. Head. M. 41. Sorter G.P.O. London City.

Jessie S. FRAY. Wife. M. 37. Paddington, London.

Reginald J. FRAY. Son. 8. Islington, London.

Leonard J. FRAY. Son. 1. Islington, London.

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday June 20th 1929, page 3.

HEAD IN A GAS OVEN – The Inquest

The inquest on the body of Mrs. **Jessie Sarah FRAY** (65), was held by the Deputy Coroner (W. H. P. F. THIRKELL, Esq.), at “Home Lodge,” (the deceased’s late residence) on Thursday forenoon.

Leslie Jesse FRAY (solicitor’s clerk) son of the deceased with whom he resided, identified the body and said his mother was 65 years of age. She was the widow of John Henry FRAY, retired postal official who died on May last. They occupied the lower portion of “Home Lodge” the upper portion being let to Mr. BRUNT and his wife. His mother’s health had not been good since her husband’s death and she had a nervous breakdown which had continued more or less up to the time of her death. She was not attended by a doctor. Prior to that she was in normal physical health but since had been very depressed. He heard no suggestion from her that she was about to take her life. He last saw her alive on Tuesday morning at 9.25 when he left for business and noticed nothing unusual about her. She did complain at breakfast that she had not slept well the previous night. There was packing round the gas stove which he had seen.

William Albert E. Webster BRUNT, retired jeweller, who resides with his wife in the upper part of the house, stated that on Tuesday, 11th inst about 10.30 a.m. he heard deceased singing about the house and appeared to be quite happy. He knew she had been depressed since her husband’s death and he was in the habit of conversing with her daily. He therefore thought she must be feeling better. An hour later he and his wife were preparing to go out when it struck them they had not heard any movement downstairs for some little time. He went and entered the scullery and found Mrs. FRAY in a crouching position with her head in a gas oven and her shoulders partly in. The gas was full on and he immediately turned it off and pulled deceased away from the oven. He opened the windows and doors and his wife went for help. Mr. R. J. WELCH, came with the school nurse, also Mr. VICK. The latter and witness tried artificial respiration which continued by Mr. VICK and Mr. WELCH. In about ten minutes Dr. CHURCHILL arrived.

Rose Elizabeth BRUNT, wife of the previous witness who was much distressed whilst giving evidence, deposed to going downstairs and knocked at the kitchen door, calling Mrs. FRAY, but received no reply. She then opened the door, but did not see

her. The scullery was entered from the kitchen and she found that door shut.. On opening it there was a strong smell of gas and she then discovered deceased as her husband had described. She shouted for her husband who came immediately and turned off the gas. Witness ran and told Mr. VICK, the next door neighbour and went for a doctor.

Walter Thomas VICK, man-servant, 80 West-street, next door to deceased said that just before noon on Tuesday, he was called to the house and found deceased lying on the floor of the scullery, having been drawn out of the gas oven. There was a strong smell of gas. Witness and Mr. WELCH tried artificial respiration, but without effect. He had known Mrs. FRAY for five years and she had been very depressed since the death of husband, but he had never heard her threaten to commit suicide.

Robert John WELCH, schoolmaster, 84 Arthur-street, who is also a church-warden at All Saints', said he was called by Mrs. BRUNT from the vestry of the church near by, and a nurse accompanied him. In the scullery deceased was lying on her back. He had his first certificate for first-aid in 1910, and tried artificial respiration (together with Mr. VICK) for about ten minutes, but it was useless. He called Dr.

P.S. MERRITT deposed that he assisted to remove the body to another room and on examining the gas stove he found two pieces of cloth produced, tightly packed under the stove and also lying at the bottom of the stove (inside) was the false teeth. He saw no matches near the stove. The fact of the packing there would be to keep the gas inside.

Dr. Spencer CHURCHILL said he was driving along West-street on the day in question and was called to deceased by Mr. WELCH. There was a strong smell of gas throughout the whole of the basement. She had been dead some time, death being due to gas poisoning.

The Coroner said it was evident that defendant was in a distressed condition of mind due to the recent death of her husband, and it weighed upon her to such an extent that the poor lady undoubtedly took her own life not being at the time of sound mind. They said that very often, and in this case quite sincerely and he recorded a verdict accordingly. He sincerely sympathised with the son in his great bereavement.
