

FATAL FALL FROM A CLIFF

On Wednesday afternoon, Fredk. BLAKE, Esq, the coroner, held an inquest at the Sandown Hotel upon the body of **William TRUCKLES**, who was formerly a gardener in the employ of Mr JACOBS, at Hazelwood, Swanmore, and whose body was found at the foot of the Culver Cliff on Monday afternoon.

Emily TRUCKLES, the widow of deceased, identified the body as that of her husband, who was a gardener and 25 years of age. He was employed at Hazelwood, the Young Men's Home. She last saw him on Sunday, about 2.30. He left home alone, and said that he was going to Sandown to see his sister. He was in the habit of going there on Sunday. He seemed in very good health and spirits. He said he should return about 8 o'clock, but did not know whether he should walk or come by train. He did not return. His general health was good, and he was a sober man. Never knew him to be subject to attacks of giddiness.

Henry BROOMFIELD stated that he was a labourer, and lived at Haylands. On Sunday evening, about 5.30, he met deceased, whom he knew very well, at Brading. He did not notice anything particular in his manner, but he appeared to have had some drink. He said he had 1s 5d, and began speaking about his money before he got up to witness, who made answer that he did not want to know how much money he had. Deceased went back with him to a publichouse, and witness had a pint of beer, but deceased had none. They then went outside till the house was opened, and then they went inside the house together and had some beer, which witness paid for. Deceased had about two pints. He stayed till train time, and witness offered to pay deceased's fare if he had not money enough. That was about 8 o'clock. The landlord made them some tea, and they each had two cups. The drink he had overcame witness, but so far as he could remember they left the house together, and the last time he saw deceased alive was near the Brading Chapel. Did not recollect whether he left deceased there or not. Witness lost the train and had to walk home. Was not certain whether deceased left the house with him or not. Should think the deceased was in about the same condition as he was.

Robert MORTIMER, landlord of the Robin Hood publichouse at Brading, said that on Sunday evening the deceased came to his house as a traveller and had a pint of beer. He went away, and came back again with BLOOMFIELD about 6.30 and remained till 8.30, when they left together, as he understood to go to Ryde by train. Including the first pint, should think deceased only had three pints of ale. Deceased was in a very excited state, such as he had never seen him before, and witness made him a strong cup of tea. His mouth twitched and his eyes turned about, and he gave him the tea as he thought there might be something the matter with him.

By a juror: BLOOMFIELD came back, and I asked him where deceased was, and he said he had gone towards home.

James HOWARD, a gunner in the Royal Artillery, said that about 12.15 in the day on Monday deceased came into the Red Cliff Battery, where he was stationed, and asked the time. Witness told him, and he thanked him and left. The battery is about three-quarters of a mile from the place where the deceased was found. Deceased seemed rather strange, and spoke in a low tone.

P.S. RUSSELL deposed that shortly after 6 o'clock on the evening of Monday from information he received, he went to the foot of the White Cliff in company with the chief officer of Coastguard. Found deceased lying flat on his back, his head doubled under him, and his feet toward the cliff. His arms were extended, and in his right hand he grasped a stone. He was quite dead, but the body was warm. Thought he had been dead about four hours. He had a large wound on the forehead, another on the top of the head, and his neck

was dislocated. The injuries were quite sufficient to cause death. The height of the cliff was about 200 feet, and he would have broken his fall about three parts of the way down. The footpath at the top of the cliff, above where deceased was found, was 30 feet away from the edge. Found deceased's hat that morning about 30 yards from where the body was found.

By the Coroner: When I found the hat so far from him, I thought perhaps he might have had his hat blown off, and might have tried to recover it, and so missed his footing and fell. He might have thought he could have got down to it, but there was no signs of a slip near where the body was found.

The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict that deceased came by his death by falling over the cliff, but that there was not sufficient evidence to show what caused him to fall.

*NB: We note a discrepancy in the spelling of the surname Truckles, which should have been **Truckel***

Researched by
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