

HENRY WAKEFORD

SUICIDE AT RYDE

Henry WAKEFORD, aged 23, a groom in the employ of Col. E. W. CRADOCK, J.P. C.C., was found hanging dead in the w.c. attached to his employer's stables on Saturday. The body having been cut down with the assistance of George WOOD, coachman in the same employ, was seen by Dr. Davey and then removed to the mortuary. In the afternoon the Coroner (E.F. Blake, Esq.) held an inquest on it at the Gem Inn Hill-street, Mr. H. P. TAYLOR being the foreman of the jury.

George WOOD said deceased had been in Col. Cradock's employ about six years. His general behaviour was in no way strange, although sometimes he appeared rather quiet. He had done his work regularly and had worked as usual on Saturday morning. Had not seen him alive that morning, but on going to the w.c. attached to the harness-room he found him hanging by a piece of rope to one of the rafters. He found the note produced in the harness-room. The note was as follows "Gone to London. Uncle dead. Shall not be back until Monday. I shall get the sack, but that doesn't matter. Please let some one know." By "some one" deceased meant his young lady. It was 10 o'clock when witness went to the w.c. The piece of rope produced was part of that by which deceased was hanging. Witness had previously concluded from the note that deceased had gone away. Deceased was partly dressed. He was quite dead when found. Witness helped to cut him down. Had no idea whatever that such a thing was likely to happen. Witness had seen him the day before, just before 7 o'clock and he then seemed as usual. There was no reason to lead the witness to think that deceased had in reality gone to London.

By a Juror: Had no words with the deceased the night before: they parted the best of friends.

Albert ATRILL, Clairmont Cottage, Simeon-street, stated that the deceased had been boarding with him for two years and three months. Saw him last at 8.45 that morning, when he came in to breakfast. They had that meal together. Deceased then seemed strange, in fact he had been strange and very depressed for a week or so. He had told witness that he had an internal complaint and that he had been to Dr. DAVY, who said he was to lie by. This was about two weeks ago. Deceased had also stated that he was afraid he would have to undergo a medical operation, and that seemed to worry him. He had mentioned this more than once, but he had made no suggestions as to suicide.

By the Foreman: Knew the deceased's young lady slightly. There had been no row between them that he knew of.

Dr DAVY said he knew deceased very slightly. The only time he had been to see him was two or three months ago. He then complained of indigestion and witness prescribed for him. In his opinion it was quite a delusion that deceased had to undergo an operation. There was nothing strange about him when he came to see the witness. Indigestion very seldom ended in insanity, but the two frequently went together. His was not a bad case of indigestion. Witness was sent for that morning at a few minutes to 11. He went immediately to the harness-room, and on opening the w.c. door a little way he saw a piece of rope attached to the rafters under the slates. The door could not be properly opened on account of the body leaning against it. The coachman and another man helped to get the body out. Life was then extinct and had been for about an hour. The body was quite warm. Witness had no idea whatever to the state of the deceased's mind.

The Coroner said no doubt the jury would have some difficulty in arriving at a suitable verdict. He had no doubt as to the state of the deceased's mind at the time he committed the deed. The only thing he dreaded was having to undergo an operation and that had been shown to be a delusion. Whether they thought there was sufficient evidence to justify them in returning a verdict of insanity or otherwise he would leave them to say.

The jury returned an open verdict.
