



# CORONERS INQUESTS



## *Seend*

**1823**

Inquest on the body of Mary Maslen, found drowned in a ditch in the parish of Seend. Verdict - "Found Drowned".  
**Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 24 March 1823**

**1827**

Yesterday morning the body of a man dressed in a drab coat, and having the appearance of a drover, was taken out of the Canal near Seend Wharf, and now lies at the Bell, Seend, awaiting a Coroner's Inquest. A pair of stockings, a neckerchief, a night cap and four pence were found in his pockets. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 3 May 1827**

Mr Scott, a very respectable farmer of Seend, was found dead in a horse pond, within a furlong of his own house, early on Wednesday. It appears that he had attended Chippenham fair on the preceding day, and that as the labourers were proceeding to their work, about four o'clock in the morning, they discovered the horse which Mr Scott rode, without its rider. A search was immediately made, and within a short time Mr Scott was found as above stated. It is supposed, that the horse, eager to drink, rushed into the pond, and that the deceased fell over its head.  
**Hampshire Chronicle Monday 17 December 1827**

**1831**

Another inquest was held by Mr Adye, on Thursday last at Seend, on the body of James Kemp, a .... of that place, who was found dead in his ..... at half past four the previous morning; he had been previously in perfect health. Verdict – Visitation of God. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 7 July 1831**

A melancholy and fatal accident happened to a newsman, named John Gregory in the employ of Mrs Meyler, of the Bath Herald office, whilst travelling his round on Friday night. At about 12 o'clock that night, two farmers discovered the body of the poor fellow lying in a ditch filled with water by the roadside near Seend, in Wiltshire, and conveyed it to a neighbouring inn; where it was ascertained that life was perfectly extinct. By what means the deceased came into the situation in which his body was found no information has been obtained; and it was evident that he was not intoxicated at the time of the accident, from the testimony of persons on whom he had last called with papers. An inquest was held on the body, and a verdict of Found Drowned returned. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 22 December 1831**

**1833**

The lifeless body of Mr Ford, a butcher of Devizes, was on Wednesday found in the Kennet and Avon Canal, in the parish of Seend, about 4 miles from Devizes. It appears that the deceased went on a business to Seend, and had partaken of some beer at the New Inn, at that place; after which he desired a person who accompanied him to walk on, saying that he would shortly overtake him. Soon afterwards, however, his hat and stick were discovered by the side of the Canal, and on searching his body was found. It is generally supposed that he threw himself in. **Reading Mercury Monday 26 August 1833**

**1835**

Trowbridge Nov 16: At an early hour on Sunday morning, James Kite, the driver of Hillier and May's waggon to Trowbridge, was suddenly and awfully deprived of his life, while descending the hill between Seend and Baldham Mill.

It seems there was a woman riding in the waggon at the time of the fatal occurrence. This person states that, hearing a deep groan, she immediately, but with great difficulty, got out of the waggon, as the front of the vehicle was fastened outside; she adds that, on her getting down, she found that the waggoner was jammed between the wheel and the wall, with his heels upwards, and quite dead. his is the fact; but how the accident happened is unknown, as there was no other person in or near the waggon but the above named woman. Kite has been for very many years upon the road; and was considered very attentive to the interests of his employers. The poor man has left a wife and three children. **Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette Thursday 19 November 1835**

An old man, 70 years of age, named Daniel Rawlings, of Seend, was on Tuesday evening killed by a waggon passing over him in the road near the Old Turnpike, about two miles from Devizes. The old man had been drinking to such excess that he ought not to have been allowed to proceed on the highway alone. He was seen about half an hour previous to the accident, leaning against the hedge quite tipsy, and apparently sick; after which it is supposed that he must have fallen in the road; and a waggon passing at the time, two of the wheels went over his thighs and the lower part of his stomach, crushing him in a shocking manner. - He died within a few minutes afterwards. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 13 October 1836**

### 1837

Inquest - Mr Whitmarsh held an inquest on Thursday last, at Seend, on the body of James Fulbrook. On the previous day he was observed by the lock keeper coming down the towing path to fill a lock, and in twenty minutes afterwards, as the lock keeper and several others went to the spot, it was found that he had slipped off the lock gate into the water. On taking him out, he was quite dead. The deceased was a fine young man, and lived near Reading. Verdict - Accidental. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 30 January 1837**

Inquest - An inquest was held yesterday at Seend, on the body of a young man named Samuel Ford, who had terminated his own existence as long ago as the 13th November. It appeared that he had been in a very declining state of health, and for a short time was confined to his bed. He frequently expressed himself weary on life; and on the 15th November requested his nephew who was sitting with him to give him a razor which lay on the table, for the purpose of cutting of his nails, and then desired for him to leave the room, at the same time enjoining him to say nothing about the razor to the family. Shortly afterwards it was discovered that he had cut his throat.

His friends desirous of concealing what had happened, caused his corpse to be interred without an inquest. Rumours, however, soon spread that he had not died a natural death. The Coroner was sent for, and the corpse disinterred; and after a patient investigation the facts adduced. The Jury at the inquest returned a verdict of Felo de se. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 7 December 1837**

(OPC Note - Felo de se literally means 'Felon of Himself' - The Latin term is used archaically to mean suicide.)

### 1838

Inquest - At the New Inn, Seend near Devizes, on the body of James Hancock, 46 years of age, who was found drowned in the Canal, not far from the New Inn. Deceased had been seen walking alone on the towpath within an hour of his body being found. Verdict - Found Drowned. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 24 September 1838.**

Inquest - At Seend, on the body of William Salter, 32 years of age, who died from the injuries he received in falling from a hay loft. Verdict - Accidental Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 27 September 1838**

### 1841

Inquest - Mr Whitmarsh also held an inquest at the New Inn, in the Chapelry of Seend, on the body of John Price, a private in the 19th regt. of foot. It appeared that the deceased had been sent on an escort of duty from Devizes to Bath on Saturday, and had reached a field adjoining the above Inn on his return, where he was found dead on Monday evening. There were no marks of violence on his person; and it having been stated that he had for some time been labouring under a disease of the heart, and otherwise in weak health, the Jury returned a verdict of "Died by a visitation of God". The deceased, although but 25 years of age, had been in the service eight or nine years, and bore an excellent character. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 29 March 1841**

## 1842

Inquest - Held by Mr George Sylvester at Seend Cleeve, Melksham on the 6th inst, on the body of Henry Selwood, aged 40 years. The deceased was a boatman in the employ of Mr Snozell, of the Wharfhouse. On the previous evening he went into the garden to take down a clothes line, and not returning on the expiration of 20 minutes, he was discovered prostrate. On examining the body, it appeared lifeless. Mr Hoare, surgeon of Seend, was in immediate attendance and used every means to resuscitate him, but in vain. Verdict – Died by the visitation of God.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 17 January 1842**

Inquest - By George Sylvester Esq, at Seend, Melksham on the 18th inst, on the body of James Watts, who was employed as a mason on the canal, and was taken suddenly ill of an affection of the abdomen, of which he died in a few hours. Verdict - Natural Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 30 June 1842**

Inquest - Held by Mr George Sylvester, Esq, Oct 27 at Seend, on Mary Ann Hillier, aged 4; she was discovered enveloped in flames, death quickly ensued. Verdict - Accidental Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 3 November 1842**

Inquest - Nov 12, at Hinton in the parish of Steeple Ashton, on James Kingham, aged 38 years, carter to Mr Porter of Seend Row. Deceased was proceeding from Poulshot, riding on his waggon laden with wheat, and while placing some false raves, he was jerked off into the road, which produced an extensive wound of the scalp and subsequently lock jaw. Verdict – Accidental Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 17 November 1842**

## 1843

Inquest - An inquest by Mr Sylvester on May 29th at Seend, on Joseph Sumner, aged 74 years. From the evidence adduced, the deceased attended a club meeting on Saturday evening at the New Inn, and returned home and retired to rest as well as usual, but was found dead in his bed the following morning. Verdict – Natural Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 1 June 1843**

## 1844

Inquest - By Mr George Sylvester Jan 22nd at Seend, Melksham on Hannah Hill, aged 42 years. The deceased on the Saturday previous being occupied in her domestic concerns, suffered the rupture of a vessel on the lungs, from which a large quantity of blood was thrown off, producing syncope and death in about an hour. Verdict – Natural Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 25 January 1844**

Inquest - By Mr George Sylvester , Esq, Feb 21st at Seend on the body of Anna Maria Freame, aged 8 years. The deceased was accidentally and seriously burnt several months since, by her clothes catching fire; she was attended professionally by Mr Kenrick of Melksham, who considered it advisable to send her to the Melksham union workhouse, where she remained for several weeks; but her health beginning to suffer, she returned to Seend, and shortly after died. Various reports were circulated that the deceased had experienced want of proper attention, implicating the character of the authorities of Melksham Union, which from the enquiry were proved to be totally groundless. Verdict – Accidentally Burnt, producing Emaciation and Death. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 7 March 1844**

Inquest - By Mr George Sylvester at Seend, Melksham on John Fisher, aged 64. Deceased suffered for several days from pain of the head, attended with violent giddiness, depresses spirits and occasional deprivation of consciousness. On Friday evening he left his house; on the following morning the body of the deceased was found in the Canal. Verdict – Temporary Derangement. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Saturday 12 October 1844**

Inquest - Held by Mr George Sylvester at Seend, in the parish of Melksham on James Slatter, aged 14 months. From the evidence it appeared that deceased had a fall, when the back of his head came in contact with the floor; the child survived this accident but a fortnight. Mr Hoare, of Seend, was consulted but deceased died the same day; after which numerous reports detrimental to the character of the mother were circulated. Mr Hoare performed a post mortem examination, but nothing was discovered to warrant the reports. Verdict – Accidental Death. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Saturday 14 December 1844**

Inquest - At Seend in the parish of Melksham, on Joseph Bright, aged 16 years. Deceased was proceeding on Thursday from Newbury with his boats, and on reaching Seend, he proceeded to open the locks; having opened two, he had drawn one paddle of the third, when he was missed, and his hat was seen floating on the water, and they shortly after discovered the body. It was inferred that he was disabled by falling on the foxley, as he was an excellent swimmer. Verdict – Accidental Death. **Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette Thursday 19 December 1844**

**1845**

Inquest - Held by George Sylvester, Esq, at Seend, in the parish of Melksham, on Benjamin Dicks, aged six years who was gathering primroses on the bank of a pond, and the earth giving way precipitated him into the water. His only companion was a little boy, who ran for assistance, but before its arrival life was extinct. Verdict – Accidental Death  
**Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette Thursday 24 April 1845**

**1847**

Inquest - By Mr Sylvester at Seend, on the body of George Seymour Awdry, aged five months, infant son of A Awdry, Esq. It appears that the deceased had a severe attack of convulsions at the age of six weeks, from which he recovered. He was put to bed on Saturday evening, in good health, and was found dead on Sunday morning by the side of his nurse. Mr Trinder, the surgeon, was of the opinion that death might have been occasioned from a convulsive fit or suffocation. Verdict – Natural Death. The jury are of opinion that no blame whatever attaches to the nurse (Jane White), who had the care of the deceased. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Saturday 27 February 1847**

Inquest - Held by Mr G M Sylvester, Deputy Coroner, at Seend, on John Gray, aged 57 years. The deceased left his bed in the night in an unconscious state, and falling down stairs fractured the neck of the thigh bone, and died from its effects several weeks afterwards. Verdict – Accidental Death. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Saturday 2 October 1847**

**1849**

Inquest - Held by George Sylvester, Esq, at Seend on Silas Gibson, aged 70 years. The wife of the deceased left him apparently in health; on her return in a short time, life was extinct. Verdict – Died from Natural Causes. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 19 April 1849**