



# CORONERS INQUESTS



## The Inquest on the Body of Miss Smith

On Friday morning an inquest was held before Mr. Baker, coroner, on the remains of Miss Mary Ann Smith, aged 22 years, daughter of the Rev. John Smith of the Rectory. The following jurymen were sworn: Mr. Thos. Spackman (foreman), Messrs. W. Willis, W. Cannon, W. Norris, S. Long, M. Davis, John Povey, J. Parker, J. Povey, G. Westall, E. Stone, and D. Titchener.

The first witness called was Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, wife of the Rev J. Smith, who said deceased was her daughter, and on Tuesday last she appeared in her usual good health. Witness drove deceased and her sister to Liddington in the afternoon to a small garden party. Deceased appears to have took very little part in any play there, which fact had been brought to witness's knowledge since. The same evening deceased and her sister walked back home together. They returned about 7.30 p.m. Deceased then complained of suffering from headache, and went to bed without taking any supper. Afterwards she had a little gruel taken up to her. About ten o'clock p.m. she called and stated that her head ached so much that she couldn't sleep. Witness bathed her head with a little water and other things, and she then appeared easier. She left her, thinking after a little sleep she might derive much benefit from it. But a six o'clock on the following morning witness went to deceased and found her much worse. She didn't appear to take but little notice of anyone then. Deceased sister slept with her during that night. A doctor was sent for at seven o'clock, and a second person was sent off at eight o'clock but she appeared to get still worse, and died at nine a.m. before the medical man had arrived. Deceased had always been very healthy previous to this.

Mrs. E. Peck stated that on Wednesday morning at 8.30 she was called to the Rectory. She remained with the deceased young lady up to her death, which took place at nine a.m. She died very quiet. During the time witness was with deceased she bathed her head constantly with vinegar, &c.

Dr. Goodden stated that he was temporally doing duty then for Dr. Fernie. On Wednesday morning he was sent for to come and see deceased, which he did at once, but on arriving at the Rectory he found her dead. He examined the body and found no marks of injury whatever. From the evidence he had heard he was of opinion that deceased died from congestion of the membranes of the brain, probably brought on by the excessive heat.

The jury were at once unanimous in returning their verdict according to the medical testimony.

The funeral of the deceased young lady took place on Saturday evening, the time appointed being 6.30, but it was about seven o'clock before the corpse was interred. The coffin was of polished oak, and was carried to the church on a bier by six young men of the church choir. Mr. Chandler, of Swindon, was the undertaker, and carried out his duties thoroughly. The Sunday school scholars of the deceased, to the number of eleven, with Miss Saunders and Miss Gee, walked in front of the coffin, which was taken from the Rectory to the church. Here the piece appointed was sung by the choir. The Rev. P. S. Warren officiated, and read the 90th Psalm, and from the 1st epistle of Paul to the Corinthians xv. 20. Another hymn was sung, and then a start was made for the new cemetery, where the remains of deceased are interred.

Following the coffin came the Rev. J. and Mrs. Smith, Miss Lucy Smith and a child, behind these came sixty couple of mourners, and a whole mass of inhabitants round the neighbourhood, amongst whom we noticed the Rev. A. J. Pile (Bishopstone), the Rev. W. B. Pitt (Liddington), the Rev. J. R. Kearney (Bourton), the

Misses Warren's (Wanborough), Mr. and Mrs. Spackman (Hinton), Mr. & Mrs. Willis, and Mrs. Horlock and child, Misses Keevil (2), Miss Allaway (Bourton), Mr. Lea, Mr. & Mrs. Hancock, Mrs. Gee, Mrs Archer, Mrs Peaple, Miss Bonnell and friends, Mr. & Mrs. Long, and numerous others.

After the close of the service at the grave a most impressive hymn was sung; Nearly the whole of the parishioners were present to share their grief with the family of the deceased, as well as a large number of persons from Bishopstone, Bourton, Wanborough, Shrivenham, Liddington, Swindon, and Newbury. It was estimated that there were 200 mourners present of all classes. The whole of the children present were kept in excellent order by P.C. Read, who kept the children out of the cemetery until the mourners and friends had passed out.

[The article continues with details of the wreaths and crosses on the grave]

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**OPC Note:**

Miss Smith was buried at Little Hinton Cemetery, Row 3, plot 24 – west side. The grave marker being a Cross on plinth with kerb.