

Henry Charles Taylor

BUCKINGHAM ADVERTISER - 4 November 1905

A VILLAGE TRAGEDY

At the Beaconsfield Police-court, on Monday, Henry Charles Taylor, son of the landlord of the Pheasant Inn, Lent Green, Burnham, was charged with the wilful murder of his sweet-heart, Lilian Annie Baker, on Saturday, and was remanded until Monday next.

P.S. Heath stated that, on information received, he went to the inn, and in the garden saw the body of deceased with her throat cut. Witness then proceeded into the house, and saw the accused with his mother and sister. Seeing the witness, prisoner said, "I have done it. It was her wish. I did it."

BUCKINGHAM ADVERTISER - 3 February 1906

BUCKS WINTER ASSIZES

Trials of Prisoners

THE BURNHAM MURDER

Henry Charles Taylor (24), carman, was charged with feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, killing and murdering Lilian Annie Baker, on October 28, 1905, at Burnham.

Prisoner pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Disney and Mr. H. Russell appeared for the prosecution, on behalf of the Treasury, and Mr. Ryland Adkins, M.P., and Mr. C. Douglas-Pennant (instructed by Mr. R.S. Wood, solicitor of High Wycombe) were for the defence.

The evidence showed that prisoner and deceased were together on the night in question, apparently on good terms, but later the man went into his father's house and said he had killed deceased. The girl was found dead in the garden at the back of the house, having been strangled.

The defence was that prisoner was insane, but although of low intellect, no evidence of insanity was proved.

The jury found the prisoner guilty, with a recommendation to mercy, and the Judge passed the usual death sentence.

THE BUCKS HERALD - 17 February 1906

REPRIEVE OF THE BURNHAM MURDERER. -

Henry Charles Taylor, who was sentenced to death at the recent Bucks Assizes for the murder of Lilian Annie Baker at Lent Rise, Burnham, has been reprieved.

SUICIDE OF THE BURNHAM MURDERER

On Wednesday afternoon an inquest was held by the Isle of Wight Coroner, at Parkhurst Prison, on the body of Henry Charles Taylor, aged 24, a convict undergoing a life sentence. Deceased, who was sentenced to death at the last Bucks Assizes for murder, the sentence being afterwards commuted to penal servitude for life, committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell under remarkable circumstances on the previous Monday afternoon.

Dr. Robert Cunyngham Brown, deputy medical officer at the prison, said he received deceased at the hospital on his arrival from Lewes Prison on April 30. Deceased was partially paralysed in the left leg, and used crutches, owing to an infantile disease. He showed no sign of mental weakness or suicidal tendency. Owing to his physical weakness deceased was ordered light labour only. He wished to go out to work, but he was put on light indoor labour, tailoring in his cell. There was an order that deceased should exercise slowly by himself. On being sent for on Monday witness found the deceased lying in his cell, death being undoubtedly due to strangulation, and there was a clearly defined mark round his neck.

Assistant Warder Trowbridge said he last saw deceased alive when at 12.35 p.m. - during the dinner hour - he looked through the inspection glass of deceased's cell, and saw him sitting on his cell stool, looking towards the door. Witness was patrolling up and down the hall outside the cells.

Warder Murphy said at 12.55 p.m. he went to collect prisoner's dinner tin from his cell, when he found deceased in a standing position against the bed board, which was leaning against the cell wall. Owing to deceased's peculiar position he called Principal Warder Peers, who was close by, and the Principal Warder came at once, and said, "This man has hung himself," and cut him down immediately.

The Coroner - All this only took a short time, I hope?

Witness - The whole thing only took half a minute. Deceased was quite dead when cut down. When he took deceased's dinner to his cell, at 11.25, he had no conversation with deceased, who made no complaint, and witness saw nothing strange about him. Deceased did not seem any more despondent than usual.

Principal Warder Peers said he was close by the last witness when deceased was found hanging, and he cut him down at once. Deceased was standing upright. He had apparently tied a handkerchief over the top of his bed board, 6ft.4in. long, which was standing on the cell stool, he had fastened the handkerchief round his neck and dropped off the stool.

Assistant Warder Garratz, who was in charge of deceased's party, said the deceased never made any complaint; in fact, whilst at exercise that morning he was whistling airs and songs.

The Coroner said deceased appeared to have been brooding over his crime and the punishment he was consequently undergoing, with the result that it produced a state of mind which led him to destroy himself.

A verdict of "Suicide from hanging" was returned, and the jury expressed the opinion that no blame attached to the prison officials.

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