

George Smith

Hampshire Advertiser - 13 April 1878

SUICIDE AT BROADLANDS. - Mr. F. Blake, coroner, held an inquest at Broadlands, on Thursday evening, on the body of George Smith, aged 48, gardener there, in the employ of Captain T. Harvey, who was found dead in a well near the stables that morning. Charles Smith, brother of deceased, said he lived near him in Cross-Lanes. Deceased a bachelor, had lived with his mother 25 years till her death, about seven weeks ago. He last saw him alive that morning about 6 o'clock at his home where he lived alone. He appeared, as usual of late, much depressed in spirits, and merely answered a question and muttered. From the time of his mother's death he grew melancholy and reserved, and became worse during the last fortnight. He fretted over the loss of his mother, and hearing no tidings of a brother in Australia. Witness had expressed his fear to persons that the deceased would go out of his mind. - Mrs Miriam M. Boggis, in charge of the house at Broadlands, gave corroborative evidence as to deceased's growing mental depression and nervousness. He brooded over a trifling matter - about a plant he had forwarded to Shanklin - and on Wednesday evening, the last time she saw him alive, enquired anxiously if she had heard anything about the plant. About 9.30 that morning a boy, Henry Coombes, employed on the grounds, reported to her that deceased was missing, and his hat was lying by the well. - Police-sergeant Tiley deposed to raking in the well containing about eighteen feet of water, and drawing up the body, which was clothed except the jacket. There was nothing in his pockets. His jacket and watch were lying on a table in the harness-room. There was no appearance of his having gone to the well for water, and witness was told the water was contaminated and unfit for use.— Mr. W. F. Foster, surgeon, deposed that he was called in, and found deceased had been dead from drowning some hours. — Verdict — “Suicide whilst in an unsound state of mind.”

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