



The Scolle Inn

**Traditionally thought of as just an Inn,
it was also the venue for inquests.**

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Introduction:

Whilst looking into the history of the Scole Inn, it became clear that, besides being a place of refreshment and entertainment, it was a centre for events such as sales, meetings, sporting events, and several others.

One use in the past was that coroners' inquests were sometimes held at the inn.

Scole was on the crossroads of two important highways and so held some importance, probably explaining why this building, as well as being quite a good size and able to house larger gatherings, was chosen to hold inquests.

The Coroner:

The office of the Coroner¹ was established in 1194, originally acting as a medieval form of tax gatherer. Since then this role has evolved over time and one of the roles of the Coroner was to investigate deaths if there is reason to suspect that the death was violent, unnatural or unexplained.

Today Coroners are appointed by local authorities and work within the framework of laws passed by Parliament. They are usually lawyers with at least five years of experience but can also be doctors.

The Inquest:

An inquest² in law is a legal procedure to determine the facts relating to an incident or more informally means a discussion or investigation into something that has happened, especially something undesirable or unexplainable.

In the past, before the Coroner had his own courtroom, inquests were usually held in an appropriate building, close to the incident, that was suitable to hold a

¹ Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coroner>

² Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquests_in_England_and_Wales

number of people in a formal setting. Generally enough room was required for the Coroner, a jury, a witness area and a space for the public to see the proceedings.

Local importance:

Inquests can be of considerable use to local and family historians and reports of inquests in newspapers name people and their families and associates, and events in their lives.

Although this booklet is based on the use of the Scole Inn for inquests, not every case was entirely focussed on the village itself, but all were certainly nearby events.

Some Scole inquests recorded in newspapers:

The Scole Inn, because inquests were held there, is featured in many local and national newspaper reports.

Below are five accounts in local papers of inquests held at the Scole Inn. The transcribed content is as written, with some dubious spelling, punctuation and grammar. The formatting is as near to the original as possible but is displayed so as to be easily readable in this different layout.

After each transcript there are some notes, mainly to give some background to the main character in the text, usually the subject of the inquest.

The Bury and Norwich Post, And Suffolk Herald.

CIRCULATED IN SUFFOLK, NORFOLK, ESSEX, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, AND ELY.

Friday, October 11, 1881. Page 7.

SAD DEATH BY POISONING.—An inquest was held at the Scole Inn, on Friday, before H. E. Garrod, Esq., Coroner for the Liberty of the Duke of Norfolk, touching the death of Miss Jane Emily Ashfield, a lady about 60 years of age, who was found dead in her bed on Thursday morning.

Patience Baker, one of the servants, stated they were not allowed to rise in the morning till deceased rang the bell, and sometimes they were obliged to get up in the night, and at other times very late in the morning. On Thursday morning deceased did not ring the bell as usual, and after waiting some time witness went to the door and knocked, but received no reply.

..... [part unreadable] deceased for several years past, and she had suffered from internal gout and hysteria. He saw her on Wednesday, when she was about the same as usual, but heard that she had been very drowsy during the morning. As he was passing the house on Thursday, just before noon, he called again. Baker met him at the door, and in consequence of that she told him, he went into the house and rapped at deceased's door very loudly. As he could get no answer, he sent for Mr. Debenham, carpenter, who forced the door, and on going in witness saw the deceased lying dead on the bed, near the edge. Just underneath the valance where she lay he found an-empty bottle, labelled "Hunter's solution of chloral." Another bottle, with the same label, was near the bed. Witness knew that the deceased had been in the habit of taking chloral, although it was against his express orders, and it was only a few days before that he taxed her with it, but she denied it. He believed that death arose from an over-dose of chloral³, inadvertently taken. Mr. Amyot also mentioned that the deceased had applied to Mr. Gostling, at Diss, for chloral, but had been refused, and he believed the bottles he found came from the University Stores, London. It was a poison, but the bottles were not labelled

³ Wikipedia: Chloral hydrate - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloral_hydrate

"Poison," and the name of the seller was not on the bottles, which were covered with a three-halfpenny medicine stamp.

The Jury returned a verdict in accordance with the opinion expressed by Mr. Amyot, and added, as a rider, that more caution should be exercised in selling such articles, and that the bottles should be labelled "Poison."

Notes:

Chloral (usually sold as chloral hydrate) is a medicine but also a poison, and an overdose produces symptoms that are similar to acute barbiturate poisoning. Ataxia, lethargy, and coma occur within 1 to 2 hours of ingestion and can lead to death. It has a pear-like odour.

Jane Emily Ashfield was born in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire in 1821. She was baptised⁴ on 10 June, her parents were Charles Robert (clerk) and Ann (nee Goodall), living in Broad Street. (Charles Robert Ashfield was for some time the rector of Burgate in Suffolk, found residing there in the 1851 Census⁵ which included an entry for Jane.)

According to the 1881 Census⁶ held on 3rd April, Jane, 55, single, of independent means, born in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, was living with two servants, Patience Baker (50, cook) and Charlotte Gooderham (20, housemaid). Her address was shown as "Sunnyside", The Street, Scole.

Jane died on 6 October 1881, which was registered⁷ in Depwade district. She was buried in Burgate, Suffolk on 12 October 1881, age given as 60.

Probate was sworn on 11 November 1881; "ASHFIELD Jane Emily. 11 November. The Will of Jane Emily Ashfield formerly of Oak Cottage Palgrave near Diss but late of Scole both in the County of Norfolk Spinster who died 6 October 1881 at Scole

⁴ Buckinghamshire Baptism Index

⁵ 1851 Census HO107 Piece 1795 Folio 378 Page 5 Schedule 17

⁶ 1881 Census: RG11 Piece 1967 Folio 56 Page 14 Schedule 293

⁷ Civil Registration: 1881 Q4 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 143

was proved at Norwich by Marian Harriett Paterson (Wife of Augustus Patterson) the Sister and the said Augustus Paterson Esquire both of 6 Wardie-road in the City of Edinburgh two of the Executors. Personal Estate £11,261 16s. 6d.”

The personal estate above would have a 2024 value of about £1,150,000.⁸

⁸ Bank of England, Inflation Calculator - <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>

The Diss Express.

AND NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK JOURNAL.

Friday, October 10, 1884. Page 5.

SCOLE.

SAD DEATH FROM A GUN-SHOT WOUND.

The young woman, Eliza Garland, who was accidentally shot on Thursday, the 25th ult., under circumstances reported in our last week's issue, died on Sunday morning about eight o'clock. A few days previously her condition appeared to admit of hope that she would recover, but the exhaustion of the nerves, occasioned by the wound, was too much for her system to contend with, and she relapsed into a condition of weakness until death terminated her sufferings. We understand that the deceased was a respectable and cheerful girl, and was much esteemed by the young people with whom she was employed. John Henry Batley, the young man who was holding the gun at the time it was discharged, has since absconded, owing to having been served with a summons to appear before the Magistrates on Wednesday on a charge of assault.

An inquest on the body was held at the Scole Inn at twelve o'clock on Tuesday, before J. W. Sparrow, Esq., Norwich. deputy coroner for the Duke of Norfolk's liberty. Mr. Charles Cooper was elected foreman of the jury, who having been sworn, Mr. Sparrow said that in the absence of Mr. Garrod, the coroner for that liberty, he had been asked to hold that inquest for him, as his deputy, upon the body of a young woman named Eliza Garland, now lying dead, and whose body they would presently proceed to view. She seemed to have met with a deplorable accident on the 25th of last month, by being shot with a gun, which was in the hands of a young man named Batley, but from what he had seen and also from what he had heard, he did not suppose that this was a case in which they would find reason to visit this young man with any blame in respect of the accident beyond the natural blame that would attach to a person who at any time carelessly played with fire arms. There seemed to have been an absence of all intention on his part not only to kill but even of inflicting the slightest injury, and it to be a pure

accident so far as he was concerned. He (the Coroner) thought there would be evidence brought before the jury which would satisfy their minds that at the time Batley had the gun in his hands he had reason to believe it was not loaded. Under these circumstances it was perfectly clear that no blame in the shape of an adverse verdict could properly be attached to him. He did not think that Batley would be brought before them as a witness, because he was told there was a summons out against him calling him before the Magistrates on Wednesday for some offence totally unconnected with that enquiry, which he seemed to have gone away for the purpose of avoiding. His absence, however, was not a matter of any importance so far as the mode in which the accident occurred, because he would have brought them several persons who were present when the accident happened, and who would be able to tell the jury how it occurred and what was done. He should also call before them the surgeon who attended the deceased, and with his assistance, he did not think the jury would have any difficulty in arriving at a proper verdict.

The jury then proceeded to Mrs. Garland's house, situated about half-a-mile from the Inn, for the purpose of viewing the body, and upon their return the following evidence was adduced. The first witness called was -

Mary Ann Garland. who said : I live at Scole and am a single woman. The name of the deceased person, whose body has just been viewed by the jury, was Eliza Garland. She was my youngest daughter. Her father's name was Alfred Etheridge. She was 19 years of age the 5th of last June, and was by occupation a brush maker. working for Messrs. Aldrich, Diss. I sell ginger beer. On Thursday the 25th of September, about five or ten minutes past nine as near as I can remember, Eliza was at home and a young man named Jessie Foreman came in by himself. He was shortly afterwards followed by his two brothers George and Frederick Foreman; and just after them, John Henry Batley came in. Batley asked me for a bottle of ginger beer. Before I could serve him, he took hold of a gun which was hanging up on nails on a baulk⁹ across the ceiling. I saw him with the gun in his hand and said to him, "John put that gun up, you have no business to interfere with it." I also said. "My man will know that has been taken down as soon as he comes in." My daughter Eliza said to me, "Mother that isn't loaded." I said, "No, if I thought it was it wouldn't be here." She got up from her chair near the door to walk to the pantry door. As soon as she got near the corner of the window, the gun which was still

⁹ Baulk – a roughly squared timber beam

Batley's hand went off, and she fell down on the floor. She groaned and appeared to me to have fainted. I put my arm round her shoulders to try and lift her up, and I noticed that blood was coming from her right shoulder. My neighbour, Mrs. Pettit, was in the room at the same time. I said to Batley, "Oh John, you have killed my child."

The Coroner: This is not material.

Mr. E. Rose. (a juror): I think it is material.

The Coroner: "Anything a woman might say in a state of excitement would not be material to lead to a case of manslaughter taken against Batley, but if you wish it I will take it down.

The Jury intimated that it was not necessary to admit this evidence.

The Coroner: A person in a state of excitement would say all sort of things.

Mr. E. Rose: The woman told Batley to put the gun up.

The Coroner: But the daughter expressly said to the young man that it was not loaded, and therefore he might be fairly of opinion that it was not loaded.

Examination continued: In my excitement I told Batley he had killed my daughter, but I don't believe that he shot her intentionally. Batley and the three Foreman's said they would go to Diss to fetch a doctor, and they left my house at twenty minutes past nine, saying they would go and fetch Mr. Rose, surgeon. Before they left Geo. Foreman carried Eliza upstairs.

A Juror: Did Batley make any answer when you told him he had killed your daughter?

Witness: I did not hear any.

Examination continued: We laid her on the bed and Mrs. Pettit and myself cut her clothes and got them off her. The four young men got back at ten minutes to ten, quite exhausted from running. I said to them, "Where is Dr. Rose?" George Foreman said, "He is not coming." I said, "Oh my child, she will bleed to death." The wound was bleeding all night. I kept wringing rags out in a little warm water and putting them on to her. This is what Mr. Rose told them to do. In the morning I went to Mr. Button, assistant overseer and got from him a note to take to Mr. Rose. I took it to Diss myself and gave it to Mr. Rose. At about half-past eleven he came and saw Eliza at my house and continued in attendance upon her until she died, on Sunday morning last. The last time Mr. Rose saw her was on Saturday the 4th inst.

Mr. Rose thought her better a part of the time, but I never did. Everything that I could do for her I did.

The Foreman: Was Batley in the house that afternoon? - No, he had not been there for a fortnight.

The Coroner: Had there been as far as you know any quarrel between Batley and your daughter? - No.

Mr. E. Rose: Did you notice any tow on the gun when he put it down? - There was some on the nail. Did you notice Batley pull any tow off the nipple? - No.

Mr. Harrold (a juror) : Did you hear him pull the trigger up? - No - Do you know if there was a cap on it? There must have been one on. - A Juror said he had heard that Batley put one on.

The Coroner: Have you the slightest idea in your mind at the present time that Batley intended to injure your daughter? - No, I have not.

The Coroner: I think that disposes of all the other questions.

The Foreman: Were your daughter and Batley ever sweethearts? - No that is quite wrong altogether.

A Juror: It is reported that Mr. Rose did not see your daughter from the Wednesday till the Saturday. Is that correct?

The Coroner: We shall hear that from Mr. Rose himself.

Geo. Foreman, brickmaker, Scole, said: I know deceased well. I was at her mother's house on the evening of the 25th of September with my two brothers and John Henry Batley. I saw Batley take a gun from the ceiling and look at it. I heard nothing said about the gun by anyone, except this, that Batley said to the deceased, "Is this gun loaded?" and I heard Eliza say, "It is not loaded." I saw Batley examining the gun and whilst he was doing so it went off. Eliza fell upon me and I eased her down on to the floor. She groaned. There was blood upon my hands which came off her dress. We were all frightened. I carried her upstairs, Mrs. Garland walking in front holding her hands. Batley, my brothers, and myself went to Diss for Dr. Rose.

A Juror: I should like to know the time.

Witness: We left Mrs. Garland's twenty minutes past nine, and ran nearly all the way. We saw Dr. Rose. I told him what had happened, and asked him if he would come to Mrs. Garland's daughter. He said, "Where is your certificate?"

The Coroner: Did he say "certificate" or order.

Witness: That is the name I gave it. I believe he said "certificate." but it might have been another word. I told him I had nothing. He then said, "I will not come." He said we were to bathe the place with hot flannels. He also said, "If she is shot she is shot." We then went back to Mrs. Garland's house as quickly as we could, and I told her exactly what Mr. Rose had said was to be done for her - that is she was to be bathed with hot flannels.

The Coroner: From what you saw did you form any opinion as to whether Batley did it on purpose or not.

Witness: I don't know.

The Coroner said he would not press the question because the mother had given a positive opinion on the subject.

Mr. E. Rose: Did you hear say to Batley, "You won't shoot me with that, because it is not loaded?" - Witness: He did not say so.

The Foreman: Did Mr. Rose say he wouldn't go, or he couldn't go. - Witness : He said he wouldn't go.

Alfred Etheridge said: I am a bricklayer, and live at Scole with Mrs. Garland. The gun now produced is mine. I was not at home when the accident happened. The gun hung up on the baulk. I last handled it on the first of April. I have not used it since. I hung it up myself. I loaded the gun that morning with powder and shot. I do not believe that Mrs. Garland or the deceased knew that it was loaded. I had not been in the habit previously of keeping the gun there loaded There was a cap on the gun. There was tow round the nipple and in the barrel when I left it. The shot was mixed, Nos. 3 and 5.

By the Foreman: I cannot say why I left the gun loaded. I went away the first of April and came back last Saturday, but have been backwards and forwards during that time.

The Coroner: It was a very careless act on your part. I don't suppose you left it loaded with any evil intention, but if you had not, this accident would never have occurred. Therefore you are as much responsible as anyone for the death of this poor girl. This is what the foreman means by his question, and he is quite right.

The Foreman: If I was going away I should not leave a loaded gun on my premises.

Re-examined: From the 1st of April till the time of the accident I never had the gun in my hand.

Mr. F. R. Rose, surgeon, Diss, said: I am a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, England, and am medical officer of the Diss district, which comprises the parish of Scole. I remember the night of the 25th of September. George Foreman, and two or three other lads coming to my house at a quarter before ten o'clock. One of them told me of the accident which had happened to Eliza Garland, and asked me to go to her. I said, I am too unwell to go tonight; the case is open to any other medical man in the town, you had better go to them. I was very unwell indeed that night. I asked the person who spoke to me if he had an order, and he said "No." I said, "Then you had better go to some other medical man." He did not say whether he would go to any one else. I told him to tell Mrs. Garland to apply flannels and hot water to the wound until such time as they could get some one to see her. They then left. On the following morning Mrs. Garland brought me an order from the assistant overseer, and I went over to Scole and saw her daughter. I found a gun shot wound on her right shoulder. It was not bleeding then. The wound was about three inches in diameter. I was afraid to probe it. I gave her stimulants and applied stipticks¹⁰ to the wound. About half-past seven o'clock on Saturday morning I saw her again with another medical man - Mr. Fenn, Diss. I afterwards saw her sometimes twice a day, but always once a day, until Saturday the 4th October, except on Thursday and Friday the 2nd and 3rd. She appeared to be doing very well when I saw her on Wednesday October 1st. When I saw her last Saturday she was very sadly indeed, and I feared she would not recover. She appeared to be carefully attended to by her mother. The cause of death was exhaustion of the nervous system arising from a gun shot wound in the left shoulder. When I saw her on Wednesday she laughed and chatted with me and appeared to be doing very finely. I was too unwell to see her on the Friday after, but when I called on the Wednesday I left word with them to be sure and send for me if anything serious occurred.

Mr. E. Rose - When you first saw the wound did you examine it to see if there was any shot in it? – It would not admit of that.

The Coroner: I understand that when he saw her the blood had ceased to flow. If he had then probed the wound the probability is that he would have started the blood again and the patient would have lost her life there and then. That is the reason I asked the question if the wound was probed.

¹⁰ Stiptick: Something to staunch bleeding; an astringent.

In reply to a juror, the witness said he was told by the girl herself that there was sparrow shot in the gun.

Mr. R. Rose thought it looked very queer for Batley to pull the tow off the gun. He had been told on good authority that deceased had said there was no shot in the gun.

The Coroner: If you think Batley took down the gun for the purpose of shooting the young woman, I don't believe it and I am sure the jury don't.

Mr. E. Rose: Batley seems to have taken great pains to remove the tow. The act was a piece of gross carelessness on his part.

The Coroner: His carelessness is on a par with that of the owner of the gun, who left it loaded.

No more questions having been asked, the coroner said that the other two young men by the name of Foreman, and Mrs. Pettit, who were in the house when the accident occurred, were in attendance, but their evidence would only be corroborative of that already given. He, however, was quite willing to have them if the Jury desired it.

The jury intimated that there was no necessity for any further evidence.

The Coroner said the matter had resolved itself into a very simple question, and one which need not delay them much longer; at the same time he was of opinion that matters of this kind always required to be very carefully considered, and he did not think any amount of reasonable time spent over an investigation of this character could fairly be said to be time lost or misapplied. The jury were assembled for the purpose of enquiring into the circumstances attending a very sad matter, because it was a very sad matter to see a young girl about 19 years of age suddenly placed in a position in which she might have lost her life at that moment, and actually in a position which occasioned her, after languishing for a fortnight, to lose her life. After recapitulating a part of the evidence, the Coroner said, according to that given by Mrs. Garland, she seemed to have remonstrated with Batley for taking the gun down from the baulk; not that she had any idea that it was loaded but because the man with whom she lived and who put it there, would find out that it had been moved when he came home. She had also sworn that her daughter said the gun was not loaded. Of course if the mother heard it, and the witness Foreman heard something about the gun not being loaded, it might be concluded that Batley heard it also. It was a very foolish thing for anyone

to take up a gun. whether it was loaded or not and use in that sort of way, because you may have a very firm impression the gun was not loaded, but you cannot have an absolute certainty with regard to a strange gun you know nothing about, that somebody tells you is not loaded, but if the person who left it there is not present, and the charge has not been drawn, you cannot tell whether it is loaded or not. Proceeding with the evidence the Coroner pointed out what appeared to be a little discrepancy between the statement given by Foreman and Mrs. Garland with regard to the deceased falling down, but they were both reconcilable in point of fact, and believed they had each spoken the truth. He also directed the attention of the jury to what he considered to be a very important piece of evidence given by the woman, viz., that she had not the slightest idea in her own mind that Batley intended to injure her daughter. That being so it was very important so far as Batley was concerned. Passing on to Foreman's evidence the Coroner pointed out another slight discrepancy between it and that given by Mrs. Garland. Foreman had sworn that Batley put the question "Is this gun loaded?" The mother did not hear him say so. He (the Coroner) did not think they could question for a moment but what Batley did make this enquiry, and the girl replied that it was not. He then read from Foreman's evidence his account of going for Mr. Rose, who, according to his (Foreman's) statement, said "I will not come." He (the Coroner) thought these kind of people were very apt to put a thing in that way, and in a different sense altogether to what was actually said or intended. He could not conceive, after hearing the evidence of Mr. Rose that day, that the jury would put that interpretation upon it. He said "They asked me to go and see Mrs. Garland's daughter. I said 'I am unwell to go to her, but the case is open to any other medical man in the town.'" He (the Coroner) would like to know what else he could have said under the circumstances. If it had been a place where there was no other medical man within a reasonable distance there is no doubt Mr. Rose would have gone to the case, but as he was very unwell and there was another medical man close by he might very reasonably say, especially as no order was brought to him for his attendance, "I cannot go you had better get someone else." Having told them so, he gave special directions what the mother was to do until someone saw her. He (the Coroner) looked very carefully into that part of the case, because if there had been any negligence on the part of the medical man he should have felt it to be his duty to admonish him and make some very strong comments, but as he

understood it he saw nothing whatever to blame him for, and therefore he should not blame him. The next morning the mother obtained an order. which she took to Mr. Rose, who immediately came and attended to the deceased with all the skill employed by a medical gentleman of his position in the profession. It was impossible to probe the wound at first, and it would have dangerous to do so. It seemed to him (the Coroner) with regard to Mr. Rose's attention to the case, there was nothing to blame him for but everything to commend him in doing all he could to save the poor girl's life. It was perfectly true that he did not go to see her from Wednesday. October 2nd, till the following Saturday, but the jury had heard his statement that on the Wednesday she was much better that he came to the conclusion the case was progressing and it was absolutely unnecessary for him to see her on the following day; and he did not go on Friday because he was very unwell himself, but if he had been sent for he would have gone. He saw her again in the regular course of things on Saturday, and she was then much worse. He (the Coroner) therefore could not see that there was anything to cast on him the slightest blame whatever. Allusion was then made to the evidence given by Etheridge, and the Coroner remarked that the principal blame must be laid on the shoulders of that man, for if the gun had not been loaded the accident would not have happened. Primarily the blame must be attached to him for leaving the gun in that place, but the next amount of carelessness must be attached to Batley for taking the gun down and pulling it about, in the course of which it was discharged and this deplorable accident happened. The first point for the jury to consider was if there was anything in the conduct of Batley to render him liable for the carelessness displayed on the occasion. He (the Coroner), was clearly of opinion there was not, and if the jury thought there was evidence sufficient to return a verdict of manslaughter against Batley, he (the Coroner), as a lawyer, had no hesitation in saying that no jury would convict, and the grand jury would throw out the bill. There was nothing in any shape or form to put him on his trial. It must be a case of accident, amounting to excusable homicide. The medical man had told them that death was caused by exhaustion, arising from a gun shot wound in the shoulder, and he could not conceive of another verdict than excusable homicide that could be returned.

The Jury, after a very brief consideration, returned a verdict in accordance with the coroner's suggestion.

- The funeral of the poor girl took place on Wednesday and was attended by a large number of her former associates from Diss, many of whom deposited flowers upon the coffin.

Notes:

In a third party family tree, Eliza has parents given as Alfred Etheridge (1827 - 1904) and Mary Ann Garland (1826 - 1914). No evidence of any marriage between Mary and Alfred has been found – but it is more than likely that he was the father of all her children and named as such for Eliza. Interesting that in 1871 Alfred was head of the household but in 1881 he was a boarder!

On 2 April 1871¹¹, Census Day, Eliza (4, scholar) was living in Victoria Road, Diss, living with Alfred Etheridge (45, bricklayer, probably Eliza's father), mother Mary Ann (47, domestic servant) and siblings Caroline (20, charwoman), Robert (15, scholar), Charlotte (11, scholar) and Sophia (8, scholar)

The 1881 Census¹² shows Eliza (15) living at Waterloo, Scole with her mother Eliza Ann (55, charwoman), sister Charlotte (20), nephew Frederick (6, scholar) and boarder Alfred Etheridge (55, bricklayer).

Eliza's death in 1884 was registered in Depwade Norfolk¹³. She was buried in Scole on 8 October 1884.

¹¹ 1871 Census: RG10 Piece 1834 Folio 103 Page 18 Schedule 108

¹² 1881 Census: RG11 Piece 1967 Folio 61 Page 24 Schedule 250

¹³ Civil Registration: 1865 Q4 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 169

The Diss Express.

AND NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK JOURNAL.

Friday, October 24, 1884. Page 5.

SCOLE.

FATAL ACCIDENT. - An inquest was held at the Scole Inn on Saturday last before Mr. S. Newson deputy coroner, on the body of James Nicholls, bricklayer, aged 36 years, who died on Thursday, the 16th inst., from injuries received the previous Sunday. The precise circumstances attending the sad affair will probably be never fully understood. The evidence given at the inquiry by the witness Markwell, of Oakley, who found the injured man upon the road, supports the theory advanced in our last issue, viz., that deceased fell owing to his overcoat becoming entangled with the step of the cart. This, however, does not agree with the statement made by Nicholls to his wife a few hours before his death. The Rev. F. Page Roberts, Rector of the parish, was elected foreman of the jury, who having been duly sworn, proceeded to view the body, after which the following evidence was adduced: -

Elizabeth Nicholls said: The deceased was my husband, and had he lived until today he would have been 36 years old. On Sunday afternoon last as I was going to church I saw him walking in the direction of this house about half-past two o'clock. I did not know he was going out. He was quite well when I saw him. I have understood that he hired a trap to go for a drive. Shortly after seven o'clock in the evening he returned with Mr. Markwell, of Oakley, who was in charge of the pony and cart. My husband had met with severe injuries. Markwell sent for a doctor at once. Shortly before my husband died he told me how the accident happened. He said he had occasion to get out of the cart on the other side of Hoxne church. Finding the pony would not stand still he wound the reins round his hand to prevent it from going on. It did start and pulled him down. He spoke to the pony and called for it to stop but it did not take any notice, and the reins on his hand becoming tighter he was dragged along the road. He thought if any other conveyance came along the road he would be killed, and so he managed to get under the cart. One of the wheels went over his left hand. He thought of putting his right leg or arm between the spokes of one of the wheels to stop the cart but

was afraid of breaking them. He then tried to get on to the axle-tree and as he could not succeed he said he would give up and die. The first sound he heard was from Mr. Markwell's house at Oakley. He died on Thursday about two o'clock. He was not conscious all the time since the accident, but was perfectly rational at the time he made his statement. He also told me he had been to Stradbroke and put the pony up at the White Hart. He was all right when he started to get back, and he rode alone. He did not tell me he was going out, and I thought he was in bed before I saw him in the street. He told the man of whom he hired the pony that he should be back at six o'clock. He did not tell me what time he left Stradbroke, but said he went there to see a man who owed him some money. At first he did not intend going further than Horne.

George Markwell, basket maker, Oakley, said: Last Sunday night, about seven o'clock, I heard something sliding past my house, and upon going out heard someone say "Whoa." I called out "Who are you?" but received no answer. I immediately ran to the pony's head, and then heard some one say "Take my hand away." I said "Where is your hand?" It was very dark and I could not see anything. I called to my father but could not make him hear. The pony was going at a walking pace when I first saw it. As I could not get any help I pulled up the reins and let the shafts down. I afterwards saw a man underneath the cart, and I took off his overcoat which was entangled in the step. I cannot say whether the reins were in deceased's hands or under the pony's feet: they did not appear to be attached to anything when I pulled them up. Deceased's head was completely covered up with his two coats. I observed that he had two very bad scrapes on each side of his knees, and his body up to the breast appeared very much bruised. It looked as if he had been drawn along by his coat. I asked deceased where he came from and he said from Hoxne. When deceased saw me he knew who I was. I and Noah Bartram helped deceased into the cart and he sat up by himself and I drove him to Scole. He did not state to me how the accident happened. By the Foreman: His head was towards the pony, face downwards which was protected by his coat. I did not see any marks on his face. When driving him to Scole he said "Take me home and don't say anything about it." I have since examined the road. and picked the whip up about a mile and a half from where I found him.

By the Jury : The harness was broken. The terret¹⁴ of the saddle was pulled out and broken.

Mr. T. E. Amyot, surgeon, Diss. said: "I was called to the deceased on Sunday evening last, a little after eight o'clock, and found him most severely bruised and suffering from two very severe and deep lacerated wounds in the knees, which had torn the whole flesh away to the bone of the knees, and also a bad wound on the left hand, probably caused from the wheel going over it, and from extensive contusion of left side, extending from the hip to the upper part of the chest, with a small but lacerated wound over the lower ribs. Up to Tuesday morning he seemed going on tolerably well, considering the severe nature of the case; but then symptoms of difficulty of breathing, and blood poisoning came on, with delirium; the blood poisoning arising from the foetid discharge. Early on Thursday morning I was summoned to him, and mortification had taken in the right leg below the knee. He died from syncope¹⁵ arising from poisoning. The wounds were such as would be caused by his being dragged along the road. The face was untouched and that is probably accounted for by its being protected by the coat. There is no mark on the wrist by the reins. His left hand was very badly injured and it was impossible to see if there were any marks of the reins.

Mr. Howell, a juror, said deceased hired the pony of him and left shortly after three to go to Hoxne. He was quite sober.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

Notes:

This was also reported in the Norfolk News, Saturday August 26, 1884, page 7.]

James was born in Scole on 18 October 1848 and was baptised there on 28 October. His parents were James (labourer) and Harriett.

¹⁴ Terret: A terret or rein ring is a metal loop on a horse harness through which the reins pass to prevent them from tangling or getting snagged on the harness

¹⁵ Syncope: Another word for fainting or passing out

James' father died¹⁶ a few months before he was born. He was buried in Scole on 18 June 1848, aged 27 years.

In 1861, the Census¹⁷ shows James, 12, scholar, living in The Street, Scole, with mother Harriot, 35, widow, dressmaker, surname spelt Nichols, and grandparents William and Esther Harold.

There appears to be a jump from Norfolk to Wiltshire somewhere between 1861 and 1868.

The Salisbury and Winchester Journal, published on 3 October 1868, records a marriage on 26 September 1868; "On the 26th ult., at the Independence Chapel, Crow-lane, Wilton, by the Rev. J. Tyrrell, Mr. JAMES NICHOLLS to MARY COOT, both of Compton Chamberlayne." The marriage was registered¹⁸ in Wilton, Wiltshire.

The 1871 Census¹⁹ shows James living on The Street, Scole, 22, bricklayer, with wife Mary, 21, housekeeper, born in Compton Chamberlayne, Wiltshire, seven miles west of Salisbury. (Again, surname spelt Nichols.)

Mary, James's wife, died in 1872 aged 23, and was buried in Scole on 10 July 1872.

In 1873 James, widower, married²⁰ Elizabeth Sparrow, following banns in Scole on 23 November and the following two weeks.

He was living on Scole Common at the time of the 1881 Census²¹, 32, an unemployed bricklayer, living with his wife Elizabeth, 46, a dressmaker.

James was buried in Scole on 19 October 1884.

¹⁶ Civil Registration: 1848 Q2 Depwade Norfolk Vol 13 Page 26

¹⁷ 1861 Census: RG09 Piece 1232 Folio 154 Page 7 Schedule 41

¹⁸ Civil Registration: 1868 Q3 Wilton Wiltshire Vol 5A Page 333

¹⁹ 1871 Census: RG10 Piece 1835 Folio 51 Page 6 Schedule 26

²⁰ Civil Registration: 1873 Q4 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 614

²¹ 1881 Census: RG11 Piece 1967 Folio 60 page 22 Schedule 338

THE NORWICH MERCURY.

CIRCULATES THROUGH NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, ESSEX, HUNTINGDONSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, AND LINCOLNSHIRE.

Saturday, October 24, 1896, page 6

LABOURER BURIED ALIVE AT SCOLE.

On Monday the body of a man named William Rampley, labourer, was discovered in a gravel pit at Scole, near Diss. The earth had slipped upon him and buried him up. When found he was quite dead and stiff.

On Tuesday Mr. H. E. Garrod, Coroner for the Liberty of the Duke of Norfolk, held an inquest at the Scole Inn. Frederick Foreman, labourer, stated that on Monday he went to Mr. Bolton's gravel pit to speak to the deceased, but when he got there he could only see Rampley's coat and waistcoat lying outside. Walking into the pit, he found the earth had fallen on to deceased. A piece of his shirt by his hip could be seen, otherwise he was fully covered up. There was about two tons of earth upon him. Witness went to Mr. Bolton, and afterwards removed the earth. Deceased was quite dead, George Bolton, farmer, deposed to employing deceased at the gravel pit. When he visited the spot on Monday morning, deceased was throwing the top soil off. Witness had got some gravel on the Saturday previously. He told him to be careful and not to make a hole, but on going there afterwards witness found he had made hole and the earth had slipped from the top. Deceased had been working on and off at the pit for about seven years, and knew the nature of the soil. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death by fall of earth."

Notes:

William was born in 1849²². His parents were Nathan (1827-1902) and Susan nee Quantrill (1826-1856).

²² Civil Registration: 1849 Q2 Hartismere Suffolk Vol 13 Page 463

At the time of the 1891 Census²³, William was living with his widowed father, Nathan. He was about 40 years old, born in Rickingham, an agricultural labourer, living in The Street, Scole.

William died on 19 October 1896²⁴ and was buried in Scole on 21 October 1896.

The Thetford and Watton Times also reported William's death, on the same day with identical wording.

²³ 1891 Census: RG12 Piece 1544 Folio 143 Page 7 Schedule 32

²⁴ Civil Registration: 1896 Q4 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 147

The Diss Express.

AND NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK JOURNAL.

Friday, August 25, 1933. Page 3.

INQUEST ADJOURNED FOR POLICE INQUIRIES.

DOCTORS DAUGHTER FATALLY INJURED NEAR DISS.

Collision with Motor Car.

Conducted by Mr. G. W. Barnard (County Coroner) who sat with a Jury of which Dr. G. H. Ransome was foreman, the inquest was opened and adjourned until September 4th at the Scole Inn, Scole, on Monday, so that the police can complete their inquiries, on Miss Lizzie Ann Shackleton, the 19 year old daughter of Dr. Wm. Shackleton of Barnsley House, Billericay, Essex, who died from injuries following a collision between the cycle she was riding and a motor car driven by Mr. W. D. Chitty, of Diss. The shocking accident occurred on the Scole - Diss main road on Saturday morning, when Miss Shackleton was returning home in the company of her sister after holidaying with her parents at Sheringham.

At the inquest the police were represented by Supt. I. Fuller (Harleston), Mr. H. S. Gotelee (Ipswich) represented Mr. W. D. Chitty, the driver of the motor car, and Mr. F. Stunt (Chelmsford) represented the relatives of the deceased.

Dr. William Shackleton of Barnsley House, Billericay, Essex, gave evidence of identification. He last saw his daughter alive at Sheringham where they had been staying, on Friday at about 5-30 p.m., when she and her sister, Agnes May, left with their bicycles to cycle to Norwich, intending to stay the night with two aunts and proceed home on the following morning.

The Coroner: They were both experienced cyclists? Witness: Yes Sir. They have been cyclists for years and have cycled through Charing Cross and London. Both my daughters had good hearing and sight.

Dr. V. P. Robinson of Diss stated that when he arrived at the scene of the accident the girl was dead lying by the side of the road. There was a fracture in the left frontal region of the skull, laceration of the brain, a curved cut on the right side of the front of the head, over the temple penetrating to the bone, flesh on the nose was torn considerably and there were small grazes on both knees. No bones were broken. The neck was not broken.

....The Coroner: The injuries to the head might have been caused by contact with the road? - Dr. Robinson : The fracture was probably caused by the penetration of some sharp object. The other injuries could have been caused by contact with the ground.

Could any part on a motor car be a sharp object to cause this fracture? – Yes, the mirror lamp, handle, and other projections, it is possible for the other injuries to have been caused by contact with a motor car.

At this point the Coroner said it was not intended to carry the inquest to a finality that day.

Mr. Gotelee: Are further enquiries being made?

Supt. Fuller: That is so.

Mr. Gotelee : I think then I must defer my cross-examination until the resumed hearing.

The Coroner: That is as far as I propose to carry this inquiry. Further enquiries are being made by the police and a month's adjournment is suggested.

Mr. Gotelee: I am rather surprised to hear that as all the witnesses are here. The other girl cyclist lives in Leicester and is only here for a fortnight. Surely the police can complete their inquiries in a fortnight? I had hoped you would be able to complete the matter to-day.

The Coroner: The police inquiries may lead to other action being taken.

Mr. Gotelee: That being so surely the best course is to take the evidence here to-day?

The Coroner: The usual practice is for the Coroner to allow the police to complete their inquiries.

Supt. Fuller: The police inquiries are not yet complete, and I cannot say what action is likely to arise from this. It would not be wise for me to say anything at this point but if the Coroner wishes to adjourn for a fortnight, I take it that if the

inquiries are not complete by that time the inquest can be further adjourned from time to time without calling the witnesses together.

Mr. Gotelee: If the Superintendent agrees to that. I think it will suit everyone.

The Coroner (to Supt. Fuller): You will know in a fortnight whether proceedings will be taken?

Supt. Fuller : In all probability.

The Coroner then adjourned the inquest until September 4th, at 3 p.m.

Expressions of sympathy were extended to the relatives by the Coroner, Mr. H. S. Gotelee on behalf of Mr. Chitty, Superintendent Fuller on behalf of the police and by Dr. Ransome on behalf of the jury.

Notes:

Lizzie was born in 1914, registered in Billericay, Essex²⁵.

The 1921 Census²⁶ shows Lizzie (7 years old) living with parents William (48, medical practitioner) and Sarah Alice (48, home duties), siblings Agnes May (11) and William Isaac (9), and servants Millicent Clark (23, cook) and Maud Amos (27, nurse and housemaid). The address was Barnsley House, Great Burstead, Essex.

Her death on 19 August 1933 was registered in Depwade, Norfolk²⁷. She was buried on 23 August in Great Burstead, Essex²⁸.

Lizzie's father, William, was the cousin of Ernest Shackleton²⁹ (1874 – 1922), the great explorer. William was a medical man, God converted, and became a missionary in China from 1905 to 1909.

²⁵ Civil Registration: 1914 Q1 Billericay Essex Vik 4A Page 1267

²⁶ 1921 Census: RG15 Piece 08963 Schedule 117 RD 193 RS 2 ED 6

²⁷ Civil Registration: 1933 Q3 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 248

²⁸ Essex Burial Index

²⁹ Billericay Community Archive, The Shackleton Family -

https://www.billericayhistory.org.uk/content/topics/people-2/famous_billericay_residents/the-shackleton-family

Finding out about inquests:

Perhaps a good place to start to search for inquests records is at the local or county archives for the place where the inquest would have been held. From 1752 to 1860, coroners were required to file their inquests at the Quarter Sessions, and so they may be preserved among the records of Quarter Sessions.

The Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013 direct that all inquests must be recorded and a copy kept. After an inquest has concluded an interested person can ask the coroner for the recording of any inquest held in public.

For inquests within the last 75 years, you will need to contact the coroner's office and request the file. Requests should be made in writing or by email, and must include the name of deceased and the exact date of death.

The National Archives³⁰ has much information on inquests. Subscription sites, such as Findmypast³¹, Ancestry³² and The Genealogist³³ have datasets which contain inquests.

Most inquests were public events. Many had press reporters present and so were often found reported in newspapers. Experience has shown that often the local newspapers had better coverage as they were giving local people information about local events. The British Newspaper Archive³⁴ is a partnership between the British Library and Findmypast to digitise the British Library's vast collection of newspapers. (It's interesting to note that often newspapers from all over the country reported our local inquests – often word for word – a day or two later.)

³⁰ The National Archives: <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/coroners-inquest-records/>

³¹ FindMyPast: <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>

³² Ancestry: <https://www.ancestry.co.uk>

³³ The Genealogist: <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>

³⁴ British Newspaper Archive: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

Scole Inn today:



Links to information about Scole:

- British History Online: Hundred of Diss: Osmundeston, or Scole:
<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol1/pp130-136>
- Exploring Norfolk Churches:
<https://www.exploringnorfolkchurches.org/church/st-andrews-scole/>
- Family Search: Scole, Norfolk, England Genealogy:
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scole,_Norfolk,_England_Genealogy
- GENUKI, : Norfolk Genealogy, Scole:
<http://www.origins.org.uk/genuki/NFK/places/s/scole/>
- Norfolk Churches, St. Andrew, Scole:
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scole,_Norfolk,_England_Genealogy
- Norfolk Heritage Explorer, Parish Summary, Scole:
[https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?TNF1268-Parish-Summary-Scole-\(Parish-Summary\)](https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?TNF1268-Parish-Summary-Scole-(Parish-Summary))
- Norfolk Heritage Explorer, Scole Inn:
<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF15110-Scole-Inn-formerly-White-Hart-Inn>
- Norfolk Magazine:
<https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/magazines/norfolk/23736494.5-facts-scole-norfolk-suffolk-border/>
- Pictures of England:
<https://www.picturesofengland.com/England/Norfolk/Scole>
- Scole Parish Council:
<https://www.scoleparish.org.uk/scole-village>
- Scole Pocket Park:
<https://www.riverwaveneytrust.org/scolepocketpark/>
- Town and Village Guide:
<https://www.townandvillageguide.com/Norfolk/Scole.html>
- Wikipedia:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scole>



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