

James Bailey

Rushworth Chronicle

3 July, 1914

FOUND DEAD. A FRACTURED SKULL.

Some surprise was occasioned in Rushworth on Saturday morning last, when it became known that Mr James Elijah Bailey, groom, had been found dead at the rear of the hotel yard of the Royal hotel, Rushworth.

The surprise was the greater from the fact that deceased was about the street during the afternoon and evening of the previous day, and, although he had been drinking, appeared to be in his usual health.

It was John Dixon (Yarrowonga Jack) who first discovered "Jimmy," and he promptly advised Constable Hannah, who made an inspection and found him to be dead. Deceased did not show signs of having been much knocked about, but blood was coming from his right ear and it was apparent that this injury had been caused some time before he fell or lay down, as the blood had dripped over the shoulder and down the front of his coat. Whether Bailey had fallen on some hard substance, was kicked by a horse, or received an unlucky blow from some unscrupulous person will probably never be known.

He followed the occupation of a groom and occupied that position at the Cricketers' Inn up till the previous Thursday evening. He was a quiet, inoffensive person and it is hard to believe any person would injure him unless influenced with the object of robbery.

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY.

A magisterial inquiry was held at the Court-house, Rushworth, on Saturday afternoon by Dr Heily, J.P., touching the death of James Elijah Bailey.

Mary Ann Slater, licensee of the Cricketers' Inn, Rushworth, deposed that she knew deceased, who had been in her employ as groom for the past twelve months. He was about 45 years of age and was a single man. During the last few weeks deceased had not been carrying out his work as desired and on the 25th inst. she paid him £1 and dismissed him from her employ. She last saw him alive on the 26th, when he was in her parlor and was slightly under the influence of liquor. He wanted a drink but she did not serve him and deceased then went away. Deceased had no enemies that she knew of.

Dr Christie, medical practitioner, deposed that he had that day made a post mortem examination of the remains of James Bailey, whom he had known for the last eight or ten years. He found on external examination that blood was coming from the right ear. There was a contusion of the scalp behind the right ear. On removing the scalp he found another bruise behind the right ear and on the frontal bone. There was a good deal of blood under the bruise behind the ear. On removing the vault of the skull he found a large quantity of blood in the cranium. He also found that the petrus portion of the temple bone was fractured. This fracture extended to the back and then to the top of the head. There was no laceration of the brain. He then examined the internal organs of the body and found them all healthy with the exception of the liver and kidneys, which were slightly enlarged and tough. On opening the stomach he found only a slight quantity of fluid in it. He could not detect any smell of alcohol in it. In his opinion the cause of death was fracture of the base of the skull, with hemorrhage into the cranium cavity. The fracture might have been caused by a blow or a fall. Death had taken place about six or eight hours previous to his examination. As far as he knew deceased had no enemies but was a very quiet person.

Senior-Constable Woodyatt asked that an adjournment be granted till the following Friday, at 2 p. m., as there had not been sufficient time to make full inquiries.

An adjournment was made as requested and an order given for burial of the remains.

Rushworth Chronicle

10 July,

1914

Magisterial Inquiry

The adjourned inquiry, touching the death of James Bailey, who, as our readers know, met with his death at Rushworth on or about the 27th June last under peculiar circumstances, was resumed on Friday afternoon last before Dr J. V. Heily, J. P.

John Dixon deposed that on the evening of 26th June last, at about 8.30 p.m., he closed the gate at the rear of Brice's hotel yard, but saw no signs of deceased then. Next morning, however, he was going through this gate and saw deceased lying in the yard, about three or four yards from the gate. Deceased was to all appearances dead, and he went and informed the police.

I. L. Darby deposed to seeing the deceased on the evening of 26th June, between the hours of 5 and 6. He spoke to him. Deceased appeared to have had some drink. Deceased knew what he was doing, and complained of not feeling too well.

J. Thompson stated that he saw the deceased on the evening of the 26th June staggering along, and noticed him bump into a gate.

D. Crothers gave evidence that on the 26th June he saw deceased at about 5 p.m. going along the Tatura road towards the town. About 6.5 p.m. he saw him lying on the road 10 or 15 yards from the back gate of the Royal Hotel. He was lying at full length on his back with his feet towards the gate. He asked deceased what he was doing there, but got no reply. He caught hold of him by the shoulder and gave him a shake. Deceased grunted, but did not get up. Witness did not notice any injury to deceased's head, or any blood on him.

Wm. Cameron deposed that on 26th June, about 4.30 p.m., he saw the deceased in High street. He saw him next about 6.15 p.m. lying on the ground about 20 yards from the back gate of the Royal hotel. He (witness) said, "What are you doing here?" Deceased replied, "Nothing," and sat up. Witness said "You are in the road of the traffic, and you had better move or you will be run over." Witness helped him on to his feet and deceased staggered along. Witness held on to his arm and intended to take him into a shed in the hotel yard, but just as they were going through the gate deceased gripped a post and would not let go, at the same time cursing witness, who left the scene.

Senior-Constable Woodyatt gave evidence to the effect that on June 27th, at about 7. 30 a.m., in consequence of a message received, he went to the Royal hotel, and saw deceased lying dead in the back yard. Deceased was about six yards from the gate entrance. The body of deceased was lying on its back, with the arms by its side. Blood was dripping from the right ear, and the back of the head appeared to be bruised. There were some stones lying near the body. One was embedded in the ground about 18 inches from the head of deceased, and had a round top, about as big as a man's fist.

He had the body removed to the police station, the sum of 5s 6d being found on it. He (witness) had known deceased for several years as a very inoffensive man. He had never known him to be mixed up in a quarrel. Most of his money he spent in drink. Since the inquiry was adjourned Constable Hannah and himself had made searching inquiries, but had not been able to find out actually how deceased had met his death. He found no evidence of foul play.

His Worship found that deceased "died from injuries to his skull and brain, caused by a blow or fall, and that there was no evidence to show how such had been produced."

Footnote: Rushworth cemetery records include a listing for James E. Bailey.