

Thomas Ryan

Rushworth Chronicle

4 February, 1910

Magisterial Inquiry.

A magisterial inquiry was held at the court-house, Rushworth, yesterday, before Dr Heily, J.P., touching the death of Thomas Ryan, dog inspector to the Shire of Waranga, whose dead body had been found that morning by a man named Frederick Fitzgerald in the stables at the rear of Roberts' Exchange hotel.

Information had been given to the police by Fitzgerald and it was apparent that deceased had committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with a pea rifle. Evidence tendered by Fitzgerald was to the effect that deceased and himself had been on a tour of the district collecting dog fees. They had been on an extended drinking bout, eventually getting back to Rushworth on Wednesday afternoon.

On Wednesday night they found their way into the stable and went to sleep. About five o'clock on Thursday morning Fitzgerald heard a report as if a firearm had been discharged. He jumped up and exclaimed, "Who's shooting?" Deceased was sitting close by and on catching hold of him he found that he was dead, and that he had a pea rifle clasped in his hands. He then went for the police.

Senior Constable O'Brien deposed to finding deceased in the stable at the Exchange stables as described by the last witness. He had apparently placed the heel of the rifle on the ground, put the muzzle against his forehead, and pulled the trigger. The rifle was clasped in his hands.

Dr Christie deposed to making a post-mortem examination of the remains of deceased. He found the forehead powder marked, and there was a small hole in the centre of the forehead. On removing the skull he found the bullet lodged at the base of the brain, and it was from a bullet wound in the head that death had ensued. Death must have been instantaneous.

A finding was returned that deceased had died from the effects of a gunshot wound, self-inflicted, but that there was no evidence to show the state of his mind at the time of the rash act.

Footnote: Cemetery records at Rushworth list a Thomas Ryan.