

William John Owen

Rushworth Chronicle

10 October, 1896

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY.

A magisterial inquiry was held before W. Wigg, Esq., J.P., yesterday, touching the death of William John Owen, who was drowned in Anderson's dam on the previous afternoon.

Frank Mortimer deposed that he was a school boy and resided at Waranga, near Rushworth. He met the deceased and James Birch at the railway cutting beyond the Old Lead, and they went to a dam in Anderson's paddock. The deceased walked into the dam and attempted to walk across one of the corners. He seemed to slip under the water. He came up again and witness jumped in and tried to reach him but could not, having his clothes on. He then went to Mr Hayes' for assistance. The dam was about six feet deep. The deceased, who was about 10 years of age, said he could swim. Mr Hayes went in, but could not find the body. It was recovered about an hour after by Mr James Potter.

James Birch gave corroborative evidence.

James Potter deposed that on hearing of the accident he went to the dam and recovered the body in about six feet of water. He endeavoured to restore animation, but failed. The bank of the dam was steep and very slippery. He removed the body to the residence of deceased's parents and sent for the police and a doctor.

Martha Robbins deposed that the deceased was her son. She had been twice married. He was in good health when she left him in the morning. He was in the habit of going swimming when he had a chance of slipping away.

Constable Smith deposed that he had examined the body of deceased. There were no marks of violence on it.

A verdict of accidental death from drowning was returned.