



# Broadland Memories

COPY OF REPORT IN LOWESTOFT JOURNAL 2 JULY 1898

SAD DROWNING AT OULTON. AN EARLY INQUEST.

It is not often that Pressmen and Jurymen are summoned to attend an inquest so early as 7 in the morning, but such was the case on Monday when Mr. Coroner Chaston held an inquiry at the Wherry Hotel, Oulton, regarding the drowning of a wherryman named Wallace Solomon, aged 34, of Carlton Colville, who is supposed to have fallen off the wherry Reedbird between Somerleyton and Oulton Broad on Saturday Morning.

The Coroner gave good reasons why he held the Inquest at such an early hour. It was because it was deemed advisable, in order to cause no inconvenience to the Wherry Hotel, that the body should be removed as early as possible; further that, because he had an engagement in London and wanted to leave by an early train. The relatives too desired to move the body as soon as they could.

After the body had been viewed the evidence was taken.

William Sturman, a marshman, said he was on Kemps Heath at Oulton between 9 and 10 on Saturday morning, when he saw a wherry pass the Steam Mill with one man on board. He saw the same wherry between 11 and 12 lying up the river with no one on it. The sail was set, and he noticed that the wherry had blown across the river. The quant was lying on the wherry, but not in a manner to indicate that the deceased had fallen overboard.

Charles Solomon, deceased's brother, said the deceased could not swim. Witness started from Somerleyton at 8 am on Saturday morning on a wherry with another man, his brother following alone in another wherry, his companion having gone to Mr. Kerry Rix at Somerleyton to get his wages. Witness arrived at Oulton Broad at 10.30, but was not surprised the deceased was so far behind him. He believed that deceased accidentally fell overboard. In reply to the Coroner he said he did not consider it dangerous for one man to work a wherry.

Edward Drew of Oulton Broad stated that he went with Daniel Daines to search for the body, which they found at 1.45 on Sunday, morning, about 300 yards from the Oulton Dyke.

The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally Drowned".

They handed over their fees to the widow, who is left with three children.

After the enquiry was closed the Coroner received the following letter from Mr. William Pitcher who is at Mutford Lock -

"I earnestly hope your attention will be called to one man being on a wherry alone, and that you may be concerned that it is a most dangerous practice, and may deem it essential to take such steps that may prevent it being done in future."

The Coroner commented on this, and said he put the question to one of the witnesses as to whether it was dangerous, and he replied in the negative.

The Jury also took no notice.

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