

**THE 1926 WILLESLEY LAKE TRAGEDY
INVOLVING A COUPLE FROM GRIFFYDAM**



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - SEPTEMBER 2021

**THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN TRANSCRIBED FROM VARIOUS
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES OF THE DAY**

A distressing story was told at an inquest in early July 1926 which was held at Ashby de la Zouch on the bodies of a young man and his wife which were recovered by dragging operations from Willesley Lake, near Ashby. The deceased were Thomas King (32), a coal miner, of Griffydam, and his wife Lucy Maud, aged 30. They were taken from the lake clasped in each other's arms, or as a police witness said, "Hugging one another".

Mrs. King's feet were bound together by a man's necktie, and the couple's arms were tied together with a strap. A letter in the man's hand writing and some of the woman's clothing were found on the bank.

ANOTHER CHILD

The Coroner referring to the letter found at the scene, said that the young couple had lived happily for a time, but on medical advice occupied separate rooms.

When the husband learned that another child was expected he was considerably distressed. Mrs. King had said to her husband : "If I tell you, you won't forgive me", and her husband had replied "We will see".

She had then made an accusation against another man, who, however, not only denied it, but threatened proceedings.

ALLEGATION WITHDRAWN

On the Thursday, at her mother's house, the woman withdrew the allegation in the presence of the man, and said to her husband "I had to say something because you threatened my life".

It was arranged that the parties should meet at a solicitor's office in Ashby.

The young couple afterwards went out together that night, and were not seen again.

In the letter he left at the scene, the husband said, "*Oh, mother, get someone to look after my children. I could not stay any longer. Give heed to my words, O Lord consider my meditation*".

The Coroner said it was a case of joint suicide during temporary insanity, and observed that the action of the man who had been accused by the woman had throughout been such as he would expect from one who was wrongfully accused.

THE FUNERAL

In the presence of a large concourse of people, the double funeral of the victims of the Willesley drowning tragedy took place at Griffydam in the adjoining graveyard of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in the afternoon of July 12th.

Thomas King and his wife Lucy were both interred in the same grave. The bodies were conveyed from Ashby during the day and placed in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.

About 30 relatives, most of them carrying flowers, walked from the residence of the deceased parents in Griffydam to the chapel where a crowded congregation awaited. The service there and in the little adjoining graveyard was conducted by Mr. Herbert Rowell (a Griffydam local preacher and trustee of the chapel).



HERBERT ROWELL



Eight young coal-miner friends of the deceased acted as bearers, and the funeral cortege to the graveside headed by the coffins afforded a pathetic scene.

There was a large number of wreaths and sprays, including one from the neighbours, the others being from relatives and friends.

**NO HEADSTONES WERE FOUND FOR THE COUPLE WHEN THE AUTHOR
CARRIED OUT HIS AUDIT OF THE GRAVEYARD**