

973

29th October 1914

PROCEEDINGS of INQUEST <sup>by</sup>

held upon the body of

George Ernest Briggs

at Williamstown

Received at the Crown Law Offices,

30th October 1914

P.M.

617

Monna Lyndale J.P.  
Acting Coroner.

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY.

VICTORIA,  
*Central* BAILLWICK,  
To Wit.

RECEIVED  
13 OCT. 1914  
G. L. O.

A MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY on behalf of our Sovereign Lord the King,  
taken at *Williamstown* in the *Central*  
Bailliwick of Victoria, this *29<sup>th</sup>* day of *October*  
in the year of our Lord One thousand nine hundred and *fourteen* before  
the undersigned *Thomas Lonsdale* Esquire, one of  
His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said Bailliwick, upon view of  
the body of *George Ernest Biggs*  
then and there lying dead.

*pm*  
*61/7*

Having duly inquired when, where, how, and by what means the said  
*George Ernest Biggs* come by his  
death, I say that the said *George Ernest Biggs*  
died at *Williamstown* in the said  
Bailliwick on the *25<sup>th</sup>* day of *October* 19 *14*  
from *lysal poisoning, self administered*  
*There is not sufficient evidence to*  
*determine the state of deceased's mind*

As witness my hand this *29<sup>th</sup>*  
day of *October* 19 *14*

*Thos Lonsdale J.P.*

J.P.

Magisterial Inquiry

[No. 53.]

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

Christian and Surname in full.

This Deponent\*

Jane M. Farlane Biggs

on her oath saith, I am a widow

residing at 65 Cecil Street Williamstown

Deceased was my son, he was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1888, he always resided with me from what was said to me on Saturday night last I went to the Williamstown Hospital and I there saw his dead body it was then about 12<sup>40</sup> am.

Deceased left home about 7<sup>30</sup> pm on Saturday evening after having his tea he was then in the best of health and appeared quite happy. At the time he left home he was quite sober but was not of temperate habits I am not aware of any trouble that would prey on his mind.

I never heard him express any intention of committing suicide I am unable to account for his rash act.

He was on good terms with all his relatives.

Jane M. Farlane Biggs

Taken and sworn before me the 29<sup>th</sup> day of October 1914 at W. Town

[Signature] Coroner.

Magisterial Inquiring

[No. 53.]

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA, TO WIT.

This Deponent\* William David Black

on his oath saith, I am a Police Constable

residing at Williamstown

\*Christian and Surname in full.

About 8<sup>10</sup> pm on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> of October I was off duty and was standing in plain clothes at the Mechanics Open Air picture sale, when deceased came along and said to me, I'm going to get this down my neck tonight, and you will have a job taking my corpse to the morgue at the same time he pulled a small blue bottle out of his right hand vest pocket; I said to him don't be a fool - He then said, you don't think I'm that silly do you, I took his remark as being intended for a joke and went into the picture show. The deceased came and sat next to me

About 9<sup>15</sup> pm he went out - and returned soon after with Const Smith, he took up his seat and turning around said to Mr Compton - what do you think of that "Tom" the police are wanting to know if I was going to commit suicide Mr Compton said something I did not catch but deceased said you know me better than that Tom life's too sweet. When the pictures were over I said to deceased where is that bottle George, he replied I've got it here. I made no further remark. Deceased in my opinion seemed quite rational in his manner I did not think he would take his life, he had some drink taken but he was sober

Taken and sworn before me the 29 day

of October 1914 at W' Town

*[Signature]*  
Coroner.

W.D. Black  
Const. 5499.

Magisterial Enquiry

[No. 53.]

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent\* John Ferris Smith

on his oath saith, I am a Police Constable

residing at Williamstown

\*Christian and Surname in full.

On Saturday night the 24<sup>th</sup> inst I was on duty at the Mechanics Pictures. at the interval about 9<sup>20</sup> pm I was told that a man named Powell was at the Morning Star Hotel, that he had a small bottle of lysol, that he was worrying over a case he was concerned in, and that he had said he was going to drink the lysol. I was aware that a man named Powell had been in trouble a few days previously, so I went towards the hotel and met a man named Cunningham. I asked Cunningham if he had seen Powell "He said no" Some one then called out to Cunningham, and a deuce came along running, I knew that Biggs was related by marriage to Powell, so I called Biggs and asked him if Powell was at the hotel, he said no I don't think so. I said I've heard he was worrying about that case and that he had some lysol he was going to drink. Biggs laughed and said, I've a small bottle of lysol, I said do you intend to take it - "He said no" - You ought to know me better than that I'm not such a fool. I said did you say you were going to take it, He said yes but I was only joking. I've been to the pictures and I've just come out to get a drink, I've been sitting alongside Constable Black. I walked back to over

Taken and sworn before me the \_\_\_\_\_ day

of \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Coroner.

over

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent\*

on his oath saith, I am a

*Centurion*

residing at

\*Christian and Surname in full.

The Mechanics with deceased  
Deceased appeared to me to be  
quite sober I've known him for  
years and he appeared to be in  
his usual health was cheerful  
and in good spirits. He made  
no complaint about being in  
trouble. From his manner  
and demeanor I could not  
conceive that he contemplated  
taking his own life - I saw  
Mr Tyler Chemist and showed  
him the bottle produced, he  
told me that he sold several  
such bottles last Saturday to  
different customers

*J. J. Smith*  
Const 4681

Taken and sworn before me the *29<sup>th</sup>* day  
of *October* 19*14* at *W Town*  
*Dr. [Signature]*  
Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent\* Thomas Duncan Compton

on his oath saith, I am a Secretary

residing at Electra Street Williamstown

\*Christian and Surname in full.

I remember the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month. About ten minutes to eleven that night I was in Electra Street. I heard a man groaning on the other side of the road near the State School. The man was staggering about and I saw him fall down. I went over and said to him "what's up old man" He said "I've taken ~~some~~<sup>it</sup> there's the bottle," at the same time he pointed to a bottle on the ground. I at once went to the phone and the police were informed. I saw deceased earlier in the night at the picture entertainment at the Mechanics Institute. He appeared sober and rational

Taken and sworn before me the 29<sup>th</sup> day  
of October 1914 at W Town

John Joseph Dale

Coroner.

Thomas Compton

## CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent\*

Lily Innes

on her oath saith, I am a

married woman

residing at

The Morning Star Hotel

Williamstown. I remember Saturday night the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month, I was serving behind the bar that night. Deceased came into the bar about 10<sup>25</sup> pm and called for a pint of beer I served him, he drank the beer said good night Mrs and left the hotel. He appeared quite sober. About a half hour after deceased came back to the side door of the hotel and said I've done it, at the same time he threw the lysol bottle produced into the bar. The bottle was empty it was picked up by my husband and handed to the police

Lily Innes

Taken and sworn before me the 29<sup>th</sup> day  
of October 1914 at W. Town

Dr. [Signature]  
Coroner

Magisterial Inquiry  
CORONER'S INQUEST.

[No. 53.]

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent\*

Timothy James Walsh

on his oath saith, I am a

Police Constable

residing at

Williamstown

\*Christian and Surname in full.

From information received about 11 o'clock on Saturday night the 25<sup>th</sup> inst I proceeded to Parker Street Williamstown where I saw deceased. He was in Dr Macleans Motor Car and was apparently unconscious.

The Doctor at once drove to the Williamstown Hospital and treated deceased for lyeol poisoning. Deceased was admitted to the Institution and died about

12<sup>30</sup> ~~at~~ o'clock on the following morning. The lyeol bottle produced was handed to me by Mrs Ivers husband of the last witness.

Timothy Walsh

Taken and sworn before me the 29<sup>th</sup> day

of Oct. 1914 at Williamstown

John L. ... D.F.

Coroner

## CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent\* Charles Fetherstonhaughon his oath saith, I am a duly qualified Medical Practitioner  
residing at Ferguson St Williamstown\*Christian and  
Surname in  
full.

At the Williamstown Hospital, on the afternoon  
of Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> inst I made a PM examination  
on the body of George Biggs who died in the  
Institution at 12.30 AM.

The body was that of a well nourished, muscular  
young man about 25 years of age.

There were no external marks of violence.

Rigor Mortis was very marked.

The lungs, heart, liver and kidneys were all  
healthy.

The appearance of the brain was normal, but it  
was softer, and more friable than <sup>it</sup> in perfect health.

The stomach contained from 1½ to 2 pints of  
whitish fluid, which had a very strong smell  
of "lysol" and many pieces of the mucous membrane  
of the stomach were floating in the fluid, in  
many places the mucous membrane was swollen  
and excoriated as if it had been acted on  
by a strong caustic.

I consider the said George Biggs died from  
"Shock" caused by swallowing a quantity  
of "lysol" which is a product of coal tar oil  
and is very poisonous if taken internally.

Charles Fetherstonhaugh

M.B. L.R.C.S.D.

Taken and sworn before me the 29 day

of October 1914 at W. Town

J. P. [Signature]