

Name: Betty Ireland
Occupation: Shoemaker's wife
Home: Oldham
Date: 25 September 1819
Source: Lees Inquest 22 – 23
Summary: Close observation of the open wounds and bruising on the body of John Lees after returning from St.Peters-field, then bleeding to death within days.
Done by: CW

BETTY IRELAND called In, sworn, and examined by the CORONER.

Q. What are you?

A. I am the wife of a shoemaker at Oldham.

Q. Did you know John Lees, the deceased?

A. Yes; I knew him from fourteen years of age.

Q. When did you first see him, after he was hurt?

A. I did not see him till after his death.

Q. What did you see about him then?

A. I have seen many dead people, but I never saw such a corpse as this, in all my life.

Q. Did you wash his clothes?

A. I did.

Q. Did any one assist you in taking off his clothes?

A. Yes, John Leech.

Q. Tell us if you saw any marks of violence on the body?

A. There was a bruise, and black, on the top of the right shoulder. It was more like a dark purple than black.

Q. What size was that?

A. The breadth of my hand, or more.

Q. Were there any more bruises about him?

A. The next part, I remarked, was his right hip; the skin was off in two places, as if it had been a scab. One place was smaller than the other.

Q. What caused these marks?

A. I don't know what produced them.

Q. What was the general appearance of the body?

A. If I must tell the truth, and the whole truth, there was hardly a free place on his back; it was exactly as if he had been tied to a halberd and flogged.

Q. Do you mean to say he was discoloured all over?

A. No, Sir; his thighs and legs.

Q. Have you not seen dead bodies discoloured, and might not these appearances have arisen from mortification?

A. I have often seen dead bodies discoloured, but I never saw one like this. I

think his inside was putrefied.

Q. Can you swear that all these marks were produced by violence?

A. I can't say that his breast and belly were discoloured more than any other person's.

Q. Was any thing the matter with his feet?

A. One foot had a poultice on it. I took it off, but did not perceive any thing particular.

Q. How was the cut on his elbow?

A. It looked very sore.

Q. Did it not seem as if it had been mending?

A. No. I touched it, and took the plaster off.

A JUROR (*to the Witness*).—Did it bleed again when you saw it?

A. Yes, as fresh as if it had been just done. He bled most when he was put into his coffin.

Q. You say there were no marks on his breast?

A. Not that I saw; the marks I saw were on the back and sides.

Q. Did the other places bleed?

A. No; they did not.

The CORONER (*to Mr. Harmer*)—Mr. Harmer, do you wish to put any questions.

Mr. HARMER (*to the Coroner*)—I thank you, Sir.

The Witness examined by Mr. HARMER.

Q. How soon after the death did you attend to lay out the body?

A. Before the body was cold.

Q. I understood you to say, that you have assisted in laying out many persons after their death. Is that so?

A. Yes.

Q. And some of these have been discoloured?

A. Yes.

Q. Did any of those who were so discoloured die of violence?

A. No.

Q. And the discolorations on them had quite a different appearance from what the deceased's bruises exhibited?

A. Yes, Sir, quite different.

Q. The belly and breast had no marks or discolorations?

A. No; they were all on the back.

[The Witness withdrew.]