

George Phillips

Rushworth Chronicle

20 January, 1891

SUPPOSED SUICIDE

A magisterial inquiry concerning the death of George Phillips, miner, was held at Hipgrave's Junction Hotel, Whroo, on Wednesday last, before Mr Wolton Wigg, J.P.

Senior Constable Bennett deposed as follows: --- On the morning of the 14th inst. I was informed by Edward Bransom that a man named George Phillips was supposed to have committed suicide at Whroo by throwing himself down a shaft .

I proceeded to the place mentioned in company with Charles Akers, and on arrival saw a pair of boots, hat and vest on the surface close to the shaft, a small black dog was beside them. I secured the assistance of Robert Cameron and others, and erected a windlass. Cameron descended the shaft and recovered the body. On examination the skull was found to be fractured, the brains protruding. I removed the body to Junction Hotel for the purpose of having an inquiry held. No property was found on deceased's person nor in his hut.

Robert Cameron said: I am a miner residing at Whroo. I have seen the body, and recognise it as that of George Phillips, who was a miner residing at Whroo for about 20 years. About noon I proceeded to the shaft where the deceased was supposed to have committed suicide, and at Senior Constable Bennett's request, I descended the shaft and found the body of the deceased in about seven feet of water. The shaft was about 140 feet deep.

Charles Thomas Akers deposed: I am a miner residing at Whroo. I worked with the deceased for about thirty years. I saw him on the evening of the 13th inst., between seven and eight o'clock, in my hut at Whroo. He appeared calm then, but had been queer for a few weeks previously, and in a melancholy despondent state. He did not show any signs to indicate self-destruction. **[Couple of lines blurred.]**

... on the 13th inst., and he worked with me for about six hours. He stated several times that if he had a gun or a pistol he would shoot himself. I was informed that his boots, vest and hat on the edge of a shaft about half a mile from where I resided. I identified the articles as those worn by the deceased. I was present when the body was recovered, and recognised it as that of George Phillips. **[Akers continued]** Deceased was a single man, a native of London, England, and about 56 years of age. He has a brother residing in Melbourne. So far as I know he was not possessed of any property.

A verdict was entered to the effect that the deceased, George Phillips, met his death by falling down the shaft, but there was not sufficient evidence to show how he got there.

Whroo cemetery records list a George Phillips buried in January, 1891.