

Mrs Constance Gilroy

The Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield, Cotswolds — autumn 1925

The Victim

Mrs Constance Gilroy, age 52 — Proprietress of the Ploughman's Rest for fourteen years, since her husband's death

Drowning. Bruising on both shoulders consistent with being held face-down in the ornamental pond.

Discovered: Found at 6:15 a.m. on Saturday 18th October by Mr Leonard Hapgood, a commercial traveller staying at the inn. Face down in the ornamental pond behind the inn. Fully clothed in her evening dress. Shoes missing.

Water approximately eighteen inches deep.

Time of death: Approximately 11:00 p.m. to midnight, Friday 17th October 1925

Suspects

Name	Age	Occupation	Relationship
Major Cedric Blakeney	61	Retired army officer, weekend guest at the inn	Regular weekend visitor for five years. Had a financial arrangement with Mrs Gilroy: he lent her two hundred pounds for roof repairs in 1923 and she was behind on repayments.
Leonard Hapgood	34	Commercial traveller for a Birmingham hardware firm	Guest at the inn. First visit. Arrived Thursday evening.
Dorothy Vane	27	Clerk at Marchmont's Millinery, Cheltenham	Niece. Mrs Gilroy's late sister's daughter. Visiting since Wednesday to help with accounts.

Evidence Dossier

Autopsy Report

Report of Post-Mortem Examination

Deceased: Mrs Constance Maud Gilroy, aged 52 years **Date of Examination:** 18th October 1925 **Place of Examination:** Back room of the village hall, Lower Addersfield (by arrangement with the parish council) **Surgeon:** Dr Alastair Frome, MB, ChB, of Stow-on-the-Wold

External Appearance

The body is that of a well-built woman of middle years, approximately five feet four inches in height, weighing an estimated ten stone. The skin is pale and cold to the touch. Rigor mortis is present in the limbs and jaw, consistent with death having occurred between six and ten hours prior to examination.

The deceased is dressed in a dark blue wool dress with white collar and cuffs, black wool stockings, and a cotton undergarment. She is not wearing shoes. Her hair, greying at the temples and worn pinned up, has come loose and hangs about the face. A quantity of pondweed is entangled in the hair on the left side.

The face shows a bluish discolouration about the lips and fingertips. Froth is present at the nostrils and mouth, pinkish in colour, consistent with the aspiration of water into the lungs.

Bruising: Two areas of bruising are present on the upper body. On the left shoulder, a roughly oval bruise measuring approximately four inches by two inches, with a pattern suggestive of finger pressure: one distinct mark separated from four parallel marks by a gap of approximately six inches. A similar bruise is present on the right shoulder, of comparable size and pattern. The bruising is consistent with both shoulders having been gripped firmly from behind and pressed downward.

No bruising is present on the forearms, wrists, or hands. No skin or foreign material was recovered from beneath the fingernails. A small abrasion is present on the right knee, consistent with contact with a stone surface.

Internal Examination

The lungs are heavy and waterlogged. On section, a large quantity of fluid drains from both lungs, consistent with freshwater aspiration. The fluid contains fine particulate matter consistent with silt and vegetable debris. The airways contain froth and water. The findings are consistent with death by drowning.

The stomach contains a moderate quantity of partially digested food consistent with a cooked supper taken some hours before death. A small quantity of what appears to be sherry is present.

The heart is of normal size and configuration for a woman of the deceased's age. No disease of the coronary vessels. The liver, kidneys, and remaining organs are unremarkable. There is no indication of natural disease which might have caused or contributed to death.

Items Recovered from the Person

1. A gold wedding ring, inscribed "C.M. to C.A. 1898"
 2. A small brooch in the shape of a swallow, pinned to the collar
 3. A cotton handkerchief in the dress pocket
 4. A brass key on a length of twine, found in the left pocket (identified by the barmaid as the key to the sluice gate at the ornamental pond)
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Opinion

Death resulted from drowning in fresh water. The presence of water and silt in the lungs, the froth at the nostrils, and the waterlogged state of the pulmonary tissue are all consistent with submersion while the deceased was still breathing.

The bruising on both shoulders is of particular concern. The pattern is consistent with a person standing behind the deceased and pressing her downward with both hands. The span of the bruises, approximately six inches between the thumb impression and the outer finger marks on each side, suggests hands of moderate size. I would expect a large man's hand to produce a wider span. The bruising could be consistent with a woman's hands or those of a slight man.

The absence of defensive wounds on the hands and forearms suggests the deceased was taken by surprise and overcome before she could resist effectively. The abrasion on the right knee is consistent with her knee striking the stone edge of the pond as she was forced forward.

The position of the body, face-down in eighteen inches of water, and the presence of the key to the sluice gate in her pocket, suggest she was at the pond by choice when the assault occurred.

I am of the opinion that this was not an accidental drowning. The bilateral shoulder bruising is not consistent with a fall. It is consistent with the application of force by another person.

Dr Alastair Frome, MB, ChB 18th October 1925

Case Notes: Death of Mrs Constance Gilroy

Sergeant Edwin Poole, Gloucestershire Constabulary Notes compiled 18th-20th October 1925

Called to Lower Addersfield on Saturday morning by Constable Garside, who had cycled over from Stow at seven o'clock. I arrived at the Ploughman's Rest at ten. The body had been removed from the pond by then but not yet taken to the village hall. Garside had the sense to keep everyone inside.

The Ploughman's Rest is a stone-built inn on the Burford road, half a mile from the village. Six letting rooms upstairs. A public bar, a private sitting room, a dining room, and a scullery on the ground floor. Behind the inn, a flagstone yard leads to an ornamental pond fed by a spring, with a sluice gate that controls the water level. Mrs Gilroy checked the sluice every night, rain or shine. The barmaid, Peggy Shire, confirms the habit.

Mrs Gilroy was found face-down in the pond at a quarter past six by one of her guests. The water is only eighteen inches deep. Her shoes were on the flagstones beside the pond, placed neatly side by side. She always took her shoes off before walking on the wet stones near the water. Peggy Shire confirms this too.

Dr Frome says drowning, with bruises on both shoulders from being held down. Not an accident. Not a suicide. Someone killed her.

Persons of Interest

Major Cedric Blakeney, 61. Retired officer. Room 3.

My first thought and, I expect, everyone's. The Major and Mrs Gilroy had words on Friday afternoon, loud enough for Peggy Shire to hear through the serving hatch. The debt is two hundred pounds, lent for roof repairs two years ago. Mrs Gilroy had missed four payments running. The Major wanted his money. She told him he could wait.

After the argument, the Major smoked a cigarette by the ornamental pond. I found a Player's Navy Cut end on the flagstones, two yards from the water. His brand. His walking stick was leaning against the back wall of the inn on Saturday morning, though he says he always takes it up to his room. He says he must have forgotten it after his smoke.

Blakeney was drinking in the bar from four o'clock onward. Peggy Shire says he was well into his cups by nine. She watched him go upstairs at half past nine, and he was not steady. He says he read and then slept. No witness to confirm.

Two hundred pounds is a large sum. A retired officer accustomed to a certain standard. Mrs Gilroy's refusal to pay could make a proud man angry enough. And his cigarette end puts him at the scene.

Leonard Hapgood, 34. Commercial traveller. Room 2.

Found the body. His account is detailed but uneasy. He says he went behind the inn at a quarter past six because he wanted fresh air before breakfast. He saw Mrs Gilroy in the pond. He knelt at the edge and tried to pull her out, could not manage it, and ran to the front door.

His overcoat was damp on Saturday morning. The sleeves and the knees, he says, from reaching into the water. Possible.

There is more. Mrs Gilroy caught Hapgood trying to leave on Friday morning without settling his bill. She stopped him in the hallway and he paid up, but she told him she would telephone his firm in Birmingham on Monday. Hapgood does not want his firm telephoned. I can see why. Garside made enquiries: Hapgood has a previous conviction for common assault in Coventry, 1921. Three months.

He says he was out walking on Friday evening and returned at half past ten. Peggy Shire confirms she saw him come in the front door at about that time. He says he walked to Upper Addersfield. The landlord at the Fox and Hounds confirms serving him a pint between nine and ten.

His movements from ten o'clock onward are accounted for by the Fox and Hounds and by Peggy Shire. But the man found the body, his coat was wet, and he has a record.

He also says he noticed a light in the scullery window as he came up the front path at half past ten. Worth noting.

Miss Dorothy Vane, 27. Shop clerk. Room 6. The dead woman's niece.

She has been at the inn since Wednesday, helping Mrs Gilroy with the accounts. She is the daughter of Mrs Gilroy's late sister. She seems a capable, steady young woman. She was composed when I spoke to her, though her eyes were red.

Miss Vane gave me the most complete account of Mrs Gilroy's evening. She and her aunt had supper together with the other guests, then spent the evening in the private sitting room going over the books. Miss Vane went upstairs at quarter past ten. Peggy Shire saw her on the stairs. She says she read for a while and fell asleep.

She says she heard the scullery door open and close at about quarter to eleven. Mrs Gilroy going out to check the sluice, she assumes. She thought nothing of it. She knew her aunt's nightly routine.

Miss Vane has no apparent connection to the argument over money, no quarrel with her aunt, and no reason I can see to wish her harm. She is the bereaved relative. She has asked when she may telephone her employer in Cheltenham to explain her absence.

I am treating Miss Vane as a family witness. Her account of Mrs Gilroy's habits has been the most useful evidence I have received.

Key Questions

1. Blakeney's cigarette end at the pond and his walking stick at the rear wall. He admits being there in the afternoon. But was he there at night?
 2. Hapgood's damp coat. He says he tried to pull her out. The coat is consistent with that story, but it is also consistent with being at the pond the night before.
 3. Who was in the scullery at half past ten, when Hapgood saw the light?
 4. The shoes beside the pond. Mrs Gilroy went out there willingly. She was not dragged.
 5. The bruises. Dr Frome says moderate-sized hands. That does not narrow the field as much as I would like.
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Next Steps

- Press Blakeney on his movements after he went upstairs. Can anyone confirm he stayed in Room 3?
- Make further enquiries about Hapgood's conviction. What sort of assault?
- Interview the landlord at the Fox and Hounds to confirm Hapgood's timings.
- Examine Mrs Gilroy's financial records for anything else that might give someone a motive.

Blakeney had motive, opportunity, and his cigarette end at the scene. Hapgood found the body with a wet coat and a criminal record. Between the two of them I expect to find my answer. Miss Vane's account gives me the framework of the evening. I am building from there.

Statement of Major Cedric Blakeney

Taken at the Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield, on the 18th day of October 1925, by Sergeant E. Poole, Gloucestershire Constabulary.

I have been coming to the Ploughman's Rest on weekends for five years. Good walking country. Mrs Gilroy kept a decent house and a fair cellar. I have no complaints about the place.

I arrived on Friday at noon. Peggy, the barmaid, showed me up to my usual room. Number three, first floor, at the front. I unpacked, changed my boots, and went down to the sitting room. That is where the business happened.

I will be straight with you, Sergeant. I lent Mrs Gilroy two hundred pounds in the spring of twenty-three. The roof was leaking above three of the guest rooms and she could not get credit from the bank. I offered. She was to pay me back at ten pounds a quarter, starting that autumn. She paid the first two instalments and then nothing since. That is four quarters missed. Forty pounds behind.

On Friday afternoon I raised the matter. I did not shout. I am not a man who shouts. But I was firm. I told her the arrangement was not working and I needed my money. She said, "You will have your money when I have it and not before." I told her that was not good enough. She said trade had been poor and the motor-car people had stopped coming since the road to Burford was being mended. I said that was not my concern.

I will not pretend the exchange was pleasant. But I did not threaten her. I am a retired officer of His Majesty's forces and I do not threaten women.

After the argument I went outside. I walked round the back and smoked a cigarette by the pond. I needed to cool off. I stood there for ten minutes, perhaps, looking at the water. Then I went to the bar. I left my stick propped against the wall. I forgot about it.

I was in the bar from four o'clock until half past nine. Peggy can confirm that. I had several whiskies and a couple of beers. I am not going to pretend I was sober. I went upstairs at half past nine. The stairs gave me some trouble. I sat on the bed and read a few pages of my book. I could not tell you what. I put the candle out and fell asleep.

I did not leave my room until I heard the commotion on Saturday morning. I opened my door and Peggy was on the landing. She said Mrs Gilroy was dead. I went downstairs. The commercial traveller, Hapgood, was in the hallway with a wet coat. Miss Vane was in the kitchen. She looked grey.

I did not go near the pond on Friday night. I had no reason to. I was angry about the money, yes. But killing the woman would not get it back, would it? Dead women do not repay debts.

As to my cigarette end by the pond: I smoked it at four o'clock in the afternoon, as I have told you. If you find it there in the morning, that is because I left it there in the afternoon.

I want to say one more thing. Mrs Gilroy was a difficult woman about money. She always had been. But she was honest and she ran a clean house and she did not deserve what happened to her. I should like to know who did it, same as you.

Statement of Mr Leonard Hapgood

*Taken at the Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield, on the 18th day of October 1925, by
Sergeant E. Poole, Gloucestershire Constabulary.*

Right. I'll tell you what happened, start to finish. I got nothing to hide.

I arrived at the inn on Thursday evening. I'm on the road for Blount and Moseley, hardware suppliers, Birmingham. Kitchen fittings, ironmongery, that sort of thing. I cover the Cotswolds and Oxfordshire. I'd been in Bourton-on-the-Water on Thursday and needed a bed for the night. Somebody in the village told me the Ploughman's Rest was cheap and clean. It was.

Mrs Gilroy signed me in. Room two, first floor. Reasonable. Eight shillings the night with breakfast.

I'll be honest with you about Friday morning. I tried to leave early without settling up. That was stupid. I was short that week. My firm don't pay expenses until the end of the month and I'd had a bad run of sales. Mrs Gilroy caught me in the hallway with my bag. She was not pleased. I paid her. She said she'd be telephoning my firm on Monday to let them know. I asked her not to. She said she'd think about it.

I'm not proud of it. But I paid her and that should have been the end of it.

On Friday evening we all had supper together. Mrs Gilroy, the old soldier, the niece, and me. Lamb chops, potatoes, greens. Nobody said much. The Major was already half-cut by then. The niece was quiet. Mrs Gilroy served and ate and cleared. After supper I went for a walk. I walked up to Upper Addersfield. There's a pub there, the Fox and Hounds. I had a pint of bitter. The landlord will remember me. I'm not a face he sees every week. I was there from about nine until ten, I'd say. Then I walked back.

I got to the inn at half past ten, near enough. Peggy let me in the front door. She was just finishing up in the bar. As I came up the path from the road I noticed a light in the window at the back of the inn. The scullery, I think it is. A yellowish light, like a lamp or a candle. I thought nothing of it at the time. Mrs Gilroy or Peggy, doing something in the kitchen. It's only now you ask that I remember it.

I went straight to my room and went to bed. I was tired. I'd walked four miles there and back.

Saturday morning. I woke at six. I'm always up early. Habit of the road. I thought I'd stretch my legs before breakfast. I went downstairs. The front door was still locked, so I went through the scullery. The back door was unbolted. I went out onto the flagstones.

I saw her straight away. She was in the pond, face down. Her hair was floating. The water's not deep. I thought maybe she'd fallen. I knelt down at the edge and grabbed her arm and

tried to pull her over. She was heavy. Cold. My coat got soaked, the sleeves and the front. I got her half turned but I could see... I could see she wasn't breathing. She was gone.

I ran round to the front and hammered on the door. Peggy came down. I told her Mrs Gilroy was in the pond. She went white. Then the Major appeared on the stairs. Then the niece came through from the kitchen.

Look, I know how it looks. I found the body. My coat's wet. I tried to skip a bill. But I didn't do this. I'm a hardware salesman, not a... I sell tap fittings and drawer handles. That's what I do.

I was in my room from half past ten. Ask Peggy. She saw me come in. I didn't go out again. The front door was locked when I came down on Saturday, which means nobody went out that way after Peggy locked up. Whoever went to that pond went out the back.

Statement of Miss Dorothy Vane

Taken at the Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield, on the 18th day of October 1925, by Sergeant E. Poole, Gloucestershire Constabulary.

My aunt was the kindest person I have ever known. I am sorry. I will try to be clear.

My name is Dorothy Vane. I am twenty-seven. I work as a clerk at Marchmont's Millinery in Cheltenham. My mother was Aunt Constance's sister, Margaret. She died in 1919. The influenza. Since then, Aunt Constance has been the nearest thing to family I have. I visited her three or four times a year, usually to help with the accounts. She was very capable with guests and with the running of the house, but the bookkeeping tired her. She said the numbers swam.

I arrived on Wednesday afternoon by the bus from Cheltenham. Aunt Constance met me at the crossroads with the pony trap. She seemed well. A little tired, perhaps. She said trade had been slow since the summer. We had tea and talked about what needed doing.

On Thursday and Friday I worked on the accounts in the private sitting room. Invoices, receipts, the ledger. The usual.

On Friday we all had supper together at half past six. Aunt Constance had cooked the chops herself. The Major was there, though he had been at the whisky since the afternoon and did not eat much. Mr Hapgood was polite enough. After supper, Mr Hapgood went out for his walk and the Major went to the bar. Aunt Constance and I went to the sitting room to finish the accounts.

We worked until about half past eight. Aunt Constance said she was tired and would finish the washing up and then go to bed. I stayed in the sitting room for a while longer, checking some figures, and then I went upstairs at quarter past ten. Peggy was still in the bar. She said goodnight to me on the stairs.

My room is number six, on the second floor, at the back of the inn. It is a small room above the scullery. I have always stayed there. Aunt Constance called it "Dorothy's room." I changed into my nightgown and got into bed. I was reading a novel. *The Secret Adversary*. I had borrowed it from the lending library in Cheltenham.

At about quarter to eleven I heard the scullery door open and close. It has a particular sound, that door. A heavy thud, then the draught excluder brushing against the frame. I knew what it was immediately. Aunt Constance went out every night to check the sluice gate at the pond. She was particular about it. The spring feeds the pond and if the sluice blocks with leaves the water rises and floods the flagstones. She checked it every night without fail, usually at about this time.

I did not think anything of it. I heard the door and I thought, "There goes Aunt Constance to check the sluice." I went back to my book. I fell asleep with the lamp on. I woke once in the night, turned it off, and went back to sleep.

On Saturday morning I came down at half past six. Mr Hapgood was in the hallway. He was wet and his face was the colour of chalk. He said, "Your aunt's in the pond." I did not understand at first. Then Peggy came in from outside. She was shaking. I went to the kitchen and sat down. I could not feel my hands.

I do not know who would do this to Aunt Constance. She could be sharp with people, but she was fair. She was honest. The Major's debt was a worry to her, but she would not have let it make her enemies. Mr Hapgood was a stranger. I cannot see why he would do such a thing, though I know he had that trouble about the bill.

Aunt Constance was fifty-two and she ran that inn by herself and she did it well. She deserved better than this. I am sorry I cannot be of more help to you, Sergeant. I have told you everything I know.

If it would help, I am happy to stay on for a few days to assist with any arrangements. I should like to telephone my employer at Marchmont's to explain why I shall not be in on Monday.

Police Examination of the Scene

Case: Death of Mrs Constance Gilroy, the Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield **Date of Examination:** 18th October 1925 **Examining Officer:** Sergeant E. Poole, Gloucestershire Constabulary **Assisting:** Police Constable A. Garside, Stow-on-the-Wold

The Ornamental Pond

The pond is situated approximately thirty feet behind the rear wall of the inn, reached by a path of flagstones laid directly on the earth. The pond is roughly circular, ten feet in diameter, surrounded by a low stone wall approximately eighteen inches high. It is fed by a natural spring on its northern side. A sluice gate on the southern side, operated by a brass lever, controls the outflow into a drainage channel running toward the road.

The water depth at the time of examination was approximately eighteen inches at the centre, shallower at the edges. The bottom is lined with stone and covered in a layer of silt. The water is clear but cold.

The body was found face-down in the pond, head toward the sluice gate on the southern side. Mrs Gilroy's shoes, a pair of black leather court shoes, were found on the flagstones approximately two feet from the edge of the pond, placed side by side and neatly aligned. The barmaid, Miss Shire, confirms that Mrs Gilroy always removed her shoes before approaching the pond, to avoid slipping on the wet stones.

Cigarette end: A single cigarette end was found on the flagstones, approximately two yards from the eastern edge of the pond. It is a Player's Navy Cut. Major Blakeney smokes Player's Navy Cut and admits to smoking by the pond on Friday afternoon. The cigarette end was **dry** when recovered on Saturday morning. Light drizzle fell over Lower Addersfield after midnight on Friday, as confirmed by Constable Garside. Exposed items on the flagstones would be expected to show dampness. The cigarette end was sheltered by its position close to the rear wall of the inn, beneath the overhang of the eaves. Its dryness is therefore not conclusive as to the time it was smoked.

Walking stick: A Malacca cane with a silver collar, identified as belonging to Major Blakeney, was found leaning against the rear wall of the inn, beside the scullery door. Blakeney says he left it there on Friday afternoon after his smoke and forgot to retrieve it.

The Scullery

A small room at the rear of the ground floor, used for washing up and food preparation. The floor is flagstone. A wooden draining board runs along one wall beside a stone sink.

The rear door of the inn opens from the scullery onto the flagstone path leading to the pond. The door is thick oak, fitted with an iron latch and a heavy draught excluder of felt along the bottom edge. It was found unbolted on Saturday morning.

Kitchen cloth: A damp cotton cloth was found draped over the draining board on Saturday morning. Mrs Gilroy cleaned the scullery and finished the washing up at approximately nine o'clock on Friday evening, according to the barmaid. A cotton cloth left on a wooden draining board in the conditions of Friday night (dry, moderate temperature, no heating in the scullery) would be expected to dry within approximately two hours. **The cloth was still damp at ten o'clock on Saturday morning, some thirteen hours after its supposed last use.** The dampness is consistent with the cloth having been used significantly later than nine o'clock, possibly within the last eight hours.

Sound test conducted at Sergeant Poole's request: On the 19th of October, Constable Garside opened and closed the scullery door from outside in the ordinary manner while Sergeant Poole stood in Room 6 (Miss Vane's bedroom, second floor rear) with the bedroom door closed. The door was opened and closed three times. **The sound was not audible from Room 6.** The combination of the thick oak door, the felt draught excluder, and the intervening floor and ceiling timbers prevents the sound from carrying to the second floor.

A second test was conducted with the bedroom door open. The scullery door was faintly audible on one of three attempts.

A third test was conducted with Sergeant Poole standing on the back stairs, between the ground floor and the first floor. The scullery door was **clearly audible** from this position.

Miss Vane states she heard the scullery door open and close "at about quarter to eleven" from her bedroom, with no mention of her bedroom door being open.

Mr Hapgood's Overcoat

A brown tweed overcoat belonging to Mr Hapgood was examined on Saturday morning. The sleeves from elbow to cuff were damp. The front of the coat, from waist to knee, showed damp patches. The knees of Mr Hapgood's trousers were also wet.

The pattern of dampness is consistent with a person kneeling at the edge of the pond and reaching forward into the water. It is also consistent with a person who was at the pond at an earlier time, though the coat would have had several hours to dry if worn in the night.

The Flagstones

The flagstone path from the scullery door to the pond was examined for footprints. The stones are smooth and dry under normal conditions and do not retain impressions. After the overnight drizzle, the stones were damp on Saturday morning. No useful prints were recovered.

Summary

1. Mrs Gilroy went to the pond voluntarily. Her shoes were removed and placed neatly, as was her habit.
 2. The cigarette end near the pond is Major Blakeney's brand. Its dryness beneath the eaves is inconclusive.
 3. The walking stick was left at the rear wall during the afternoon.
 4. The kitchen cloth in the scullery is too damp for use at nine o'clock the previous evening. Someone used the scullery much later.
 5. Miss Vane's claim to have heard the scullery door from Room 6 is not supported by the sound test. The door cannot be heard from that room with the bedroom door closed.
 6. Mr Hapgood's coat dampness is consistent with his account of kneeling at the pond on Saturday morning.
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E. Poole, Sergeant Gloucestershire Constabulary 20th October 1925

Documentary Evidence

Items recovered from the Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield, 18th-19th October 1925

Item 1: Mrs Gilroy's Desk Diary

A cloth-bound desk diary for the year 1925, found in the private sitting room on the writing desk. Selected entries:

Monday 13th October Ordered coal from Benson's. Twenty hundredweight at 2s. 3d. Peggy says the cellar door sticks again. Must get Hobson to look at it. Letter from Dorothy, she will come on Wednesday.

Tuesday 14th October Quiet day. One rambler for lunch, nothing more. Wrote to the bank about the overdraft. They will not extend it. The Major is coming on Friday. I must speak to him about the payments.

Wednesday 15th October Dorothy arrived on the two o'clock bus. She looks thin. I worry about her. She says the shop is busy and she has not had time to eat properly. We had Welsh rarebit for supper and she ate two servings.

Thursday 16th October Checked the spring accounts. Three cheques I did not write. D.'s hand. Thirty-one pounds. I have looked at them twice. There is no mistake. I do not know what to think.

Friday 17th October Spoke to D. about the cheques. She says she will repay. I said I must write to the bank and to Marchmont's. She took it badly. I do not want to ruin the girl but I cannot let this stand. Thirty-one pounds.

Major B. about the money this afternoon. He was not pleased. I told him he would have it when I have it. I cannot conjure money from thin air.

Item 2: Letter from Blount & Moseley Ltd

A typewritten letter on headed paper, found in Mr Hapgood's room (Room 2), dated 10th October 1925.

Blount & Moseley Ltd. Hardware Suppliers 14 Broad Street, Birmingham

10th October 1925

Dear Mr Hapgood,

We write to remind you that your October expenses claim is now overdue. Please submit receipts for all accommodation and travel costs by the 24th of this month. We note that your

sales figures for the Cotswolds territory have fallen for the third consecutive quarter. Mr Blount asks that you telephone the office on Monday to discuss your position.

Yours faithfully, R. Cartwright Office Manager

Item 3: Receipt from the Fox and Hounds

A handwritten receipt from the Fox and Hounds, Upper Addersfield, found in Mr Hapgood's coat pocket.

Fox and Hounds 17th Oct. 1925 1 pint bitter — 6d. Paid. T. Barnwell, landlord.

Item 4: Major Blakeney's Promissory Note

A handwritten note on plain paper, found in Mrs Gilroy's writing desk, dated 12th April 1923.

I, Constance Gilroy, acknowledge receipt of a loan of Two Hundred Pounds (£200) from Major C. Blakeney, to be repaid at Ten Pounds per quarter commencing 1st October 1923.

Signed: C. Gilroy Witnessed: P. Shire

A pencil note in Mrs Gilroy's hand at the bottom reads: "Paid: Oct '23, Jan '24. Nothing since."

Cotswold Gazette

Saturday 25th October 1925

INNKEEPER FOUND DEAD IN POND

Foul Play Suspected at Lower Addersfield

The village of Lower Addersfield, ordinarily known only to ramblers and those who take the Burford road, has been the scene of a suspected murder.

Mrs Constance Gilroy, aged 52, proprietress of the Ploughman's Rest inn, was found drowned in the ornamental pond behind her establishment in the early hours of Saturday 18th October. The discovery was made by a guest, a commercial traveller, at approximately a quarter past six in the morning. Mrs Gilroy was fully clothed and lying face-down in water barely eighteen inches deep.

Dr Alastair Frome of Stow-on-the-Wold, who conducted the post-mortem examination, stated that the cause of death was drowning, but that bruising on the deceased's shoulders was "not consistent with an accidental fall." Police are treating the death as suspicious.

Sergeant Edwin Poole of the Gloucestershire Constabulary has been leading the enquiry since Saturday morning. He has interviewed several persons who were present at the inn on Friday night.

Among those questioned is Major Cedric Blakeney, a retired army officer and regular visitor to the inn, who was overheard in a "heated exchange" with Mrs Gilroy on Friday afternoon. The nature of the disagreement has not been disclosed, though this newspaper understands it concerned a financial matter. The Major was seen at the rear of the inn that afternoon, in the vicinity of the pond where Mrs Gilroy was later found.

Also questioned is the commercial traveller who discovered the body, Mr Leonard Hapgood of Birmingham. Mr Hapgood was staying at the inn for the first time. It is understood that his clothing was wet when examined on Saturday morning. He states that this was the result of his attempt to pull Mrs Gilroy from the water.

Mrs Gilroy's niece, Miss Dorothy Vane of Cheltenham, was also staying at the inn. Miss Vane had been assisting her aunt with the inn's accounts. She is understood to have been most helpful to the police in establishing the events of Friday evening.

Mrs Gilroy had run the Ploughman's Rest since the death of her husband, Mr Albert Gilroy, in 1911. She was a familiar figure at the Addersfield market and was known to the congregations of both St Michael's, Lower Addersfield, and All Saints, Upper Addersfield. The Reverend

Canon Trotter of St Michael's described her as "a woman of great energy and firm opinions, well-liked in the parish."

The inquest has been opened and adjourned pending further enquiries. Sergeant Poole has requested that anyone who passed through Lower Addersfield on the evening of Friday 17th October and observed anything unusual should contact the police station at Stow-on-the-Wold.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been announced.

Scene Description: The Ploughman's Rest, Lower Addersfield

Prepared by Sergeant E. Poole, 18th October 1925

General

The Ploughman's Rest is a two-storey Cotswold stone building on the north side of the Burford road, half a mile east of Lower Addersfield village. It stands alone. The nearest house is Hobson's farm, a quarter of a mile to the west. The road passes the front of the inn. Behind the inn, the ground slopes gently down to a stream at the bottom of the valley. Fields on all sides.

The front of the inn faces south, onto the road. A gravel forecourt separates the building from the road. The rear of the inn faces north, onto a flagstone yard and the ornamental pond beyond.

Ground Floor

The front door opens into a hallway running from front to back. The main staircase rises on the right. Doors open to the public bar (right), the private sitting room (left), and the dining room (left, behind the sitting room). The scullery is at the rear, at the end of the hallway. A back staircase, narrow and uncarpeted, rises from beside the scullery door to the upper floors.

- **Public bar:** Front room, right side. Two windows facing south onto the road. The serving hatch connects to the scullery.
 - **Private sitting room:** Front room, left side. One window facing south. Mrs Gilroy's writing desk is here.
 - **Dining room:** Behind the sitting room. One window facing west.
 - **Scullery:** Rear of the ground floor. Stone-flagged floor, a stone sink, a wooden draining board, shelving. The rear door opens onto the flagstone yard. The door is thick oak with an iron latch and a heavy felt draught excluder along the bottom edge.
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First Floor (via main staircase)

A carpeted landing with four doors.

- **Room 1:** Front left. Currently unoccupied.
 - **Room 2:** Front right. Mr Hapgood's room. One window facing south, overlooking the road.
 - **Room 3:** Rear right. Major Blakeney's room. One window facing north, overlooking the yard and the pond. **From this window, the ornamental pond is visible in daylight. At night, the pond is not visible unless the moon is bright.**
 - **Room 4:** Rear left. Currently unoccupied.
 - **Peggy Shire's room** is a small room above the bar, accessed from the first-floor landing. One window facing south.
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Second Floor (via back staircase only)

The back staircase continues from the first floor to the second floor. The second floor contains two rooms under the eaves.

- **Room 5:** Front side. Used for storage. Not a guest room.
 - **Room 6:** Rear side. Miss Vane's room. Directly above the scullery. One small window facing north, overlooking the yard. The room is accessed only by the back staircase. **A person going from Room 6 to the scullery would descend the back staircase and arrive at the scullery door without passing through the hallway, the bar, or any of the first-floor guest rooms.**
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The Rear Yard and Pond

The scullery door opens onto a flagstone yard approximately fifteen feet wide. The flagstones are smooth limestone, worn by use. They are slippery when wet.

A flagstone path continues from the yard to the ornamental pond, approximately thirty feet from the scullery door. The pond is circular, ten feet in diameter, surrounded by a low stone wall eighteen inches high. The spring enters from the north. The sluice gate is on the south side, operated by a brass lever.

The rear of the inn is not visible from the road. The only windows overlooking the yard are the scullery window (ground floor), Room 3 (first floor, Major Blakeney's), and Room 6 (second floor, Miss Vane's).

Distances

- Front door to scullery door (through hallway): approximately forty feet
- Scullery door to ornamental pond (across flagstones): approximately thirty feet

- Room 6 to scullery (via back staircase): approximately twenty-five feet, descending two flights, no doors between except the bedroom door and the scullery door itself
 - Room 3 to front hallway (via main staircase): approximately twenty feet
 - Room 2 to front hallway (via main staircase): approximately fifteen feet
 - The Ploughman's Rest to the Fox and Hounds, Upper Addersfield: approximately two miles by road
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Conditions on Friday 17th October 1925

Dry during the day and evening. Moderate temperature. Sunset at approximately half past five. No exterior lighting at the rear of the inn. The flagstone yard and pond would be in darkness after sunset, with only the light from the scullery window providing illumination near the door. A person at the pond would not be visible from inside the inn unless someone carried a lamp outside.

Light drizzle began after midnight and continued until approximately four o'clock on Saturday morning.