

## THE MELANCHOLY DEATH OF LADY LANGFORD

Henry Davis, Esq., county coroner, held an inquest on Saturday, at Ardgillan Castle, on the body of Lady Langford, who was accidentally drowned on the day previous while bathing on the strand, in the neighbourhood of Balbriggan.

Charlotte Louisa Bates, on being sworn, deposed that she was a servant in the employment of the deceased; on the 4th instant she was directed by her mistress to carry her bathing dress to the place where her ladyship was in the habit of going into the water daily; she arrived at the bathing place about a quarter past twelve o'clock, and had only time to open and arrange it when Lady Langford arrived.

To one of the jurors—It takes about ten minutes to go from Ardgillan Castle (where the deceased resided) to the bathing place; after undressing, her ladyship asked her did she think the sea was rougher than on the day before; the witness replied that she thought it much rougher; when the deceased went down the steps leading from the bathing place to the water, the witness said, "My lady, don't now go out too far," to which she replied "there is no fear;" she then walked into the sea, and turned round, as if for the purpose of dipping; the witness further said that the deceased did not dip; she saw her working with her hands, and thought by that she had lost her footing, witness ran down the steps, and plunged into the water with her clothes on, and waded onward through the sea above her breast, when the washing of the waves against her clothes prevented her making any progress; she turned back, and tore off her gown and bonnet, and again went into the sea to rescue her mistress, when a heavy sea threw her on her back, and she lost sight of the drowning lady; on ascending the steps she saw Lady Langford lying on her back in the water, not more than four yards from her; ran to look for help, and called some men from a neighbouring field; the bathing place is a natural excavation in the rocks, into which the swell of the sea comes and recedes with great violence; was living with Lady Langford for four years; could not say whether the tide was a high one or not; it was higher than she ever saw it before; when the men came the deceased was visible, but none of the men could swim, and they refused to go into the sea; at that time the deceased appeared to be insensible, and was floating on the water; a man named Bryan Bryan, a gardener in the employment of the deceased, came when the body had been an hour in the water, and went into the sea to bring it out; he caught hold of it and shoved it before him for a short distance, when he was obliged, in consequence of the heavy sea which was breaking at the time, to make for the shore; at the time Bryan went into the sea the body was much farther out than when the other men came.

Bryan Bryan, on being sworn, said that about one o'clock on the day previous he heard of Lady Langford being drowned, and he immediately ran down to the strand; when he saw the body it was about twenty perches out in the sea, and very near the surface; he stripped off and reached the body, and pushed it before him towards the shore; the back surge receding from the shore was too strong for him, and he could make no way with the body through the water, and was obliged to abandon his purpose to save himself; at the time he had to leave the body it was not more than six perches from the shore; there was a heavy swell on at the time, but no breakers, and was about high water; waited until a boat came from Balbriggan and brought in the body.

To a Juror—At the time he swam out the lady was quite dead.

Francis M'Evoy, Esq., surgeon, was next examined. He said on hearing that Lady Langford was drowned he drove at once to the bathing place; when he arrived it was five minutes past one o'clock; he saw the body floating about 130 yards from the shore; it was brought ashore in a boat at twenty minutes to two o'clock, and immediately conveyed to Ardgillan Castle; a hot bath, and every other means to restore animation were tried, but to no purpose, as life was quite extinct on the body being taken out of the water; the witness further stated that he had examined the body, and there were not the slightest marks of violence upon it; it presented all the appearance of death caused by drowning.

The jury returned the following verdict:—"Louisa Lady Langford was accidentally drowned while bathing at Ardgillan on the 4th instant, the sea having been very rough with a heavy swell, and a very high tide."