

GIPSY'S DEATH AT APSLEY

Compiled by Maureen Reader

Some years ago a local identity who was there told this story.

Olga Johan alias Olga Toohey - mysteriously fatally shot at Apsley on 12 January 1931.

The township of Apsley was abuzz with the news that a gipsy woman had been shot at her campsite near the Apsley Race Course.

The deceased had only arrived in Apsley two days before and it was believed she had travelled from Mount Gambier in the company of three men, two boys and two women. There were two cars at the campsite.

The Deputy Coroner, Councillor E J Cranage JP along with local doctor Dr Craig, was asked by the Apsley policeman Constable L Roache to immediately hurry to the scene of the shooting. Upon seeing the deceased lying on her left side with blood oozing from her forehead he felt the circumstances were a little suspicious so he ordered a post mortem which Dr Craig performed in a small room at the back of the Border Inn at about 11 that night allowing Constable Roache and Constable Grummisch of Edenhope, who were investigating the grizzly death, to send part of the stomach and its contents to the Government Analyst in Melbourne.

As it happened, curiosity got the better of two local lads that hot January night; they made plans to meet in the paddock at the back of the Border Inn after dark with the intention of watching the action.

Peeping through the slats at the back of the building, in the dim light, they could see the corpse lying on a table, wide eyed they watched Dr Craig perform the autopsy and as the contents of the gipsy woman's stomach was being removed, the lads heard Dr Craig ask Constable Roache "what did you have for tea tonight?"

Olga Toohey or Johan is buried in an unmarked grave in the Apsley cemetery.