





the Redhill ferry, circa 1900

Wading into the river, which he said was running quite fast, he tried to get hold of one of the girls but his lamp went out. He called for help and two people came, but without lights he was unable to spot the girls again.

The girls must have set off on a well known path but gone in a circle in the fog. Sybil's body was found the next afternoon a short distance from the ferry, and Elsie's body was found 2 days later on the opposite side of the river at a spot known as Hayter's Hole. The jury at the inquest returned a verdict of death by accidental drowning and expressed appreciation of Griffiths' prompt but unsuccessful action.

The sad affair cast the neighbourhood into a pall of gloom. Their funeral took place on the 30th of January at All Saints Church, West Parley. The Bournemouth Echo reported: "The little ancient church was crowded, and in the graveyard over a thousand spectators assembled to witness the last sad rites in a tragedy, the intense pathos of which has strangely moved the whole neighbourhood."



family photo showing the Green sisters Elsie, far right, and Sybil, second right



the sisters' headstone

At that time, when Parley was just a small village and Ferndown even smaller, such a crowd was immense and showed the depth of emotion roused by this most poignant loss. The graves of the two sisters, united in death as in life, are immediately inside the entrance gate to All Saints. That of their mother Julia, who died 10 years later, is right at the back of the churchyard.

The current Rector of West Parley, the Rev. Charles Booth, held a well attended memorial service for Elsie and Sybil in January 2008, on the hundredth anniversary of their death.

Graham Shortland, now of Hereford, researched all the original material for this sad story. Julia Green was his great grandmother, and the two girls his great aunts. Graham said how pleased he was by the memorial service, and by the current restoration of All Saints Churchyard.