

John Holt

Reported in the Bacup Times October 1874

One of the most appalling tragedies that as ever stained the criminal annals of Rossendale and which has involved the loss of two lives was enacted at Bacup early on Monday morning when a man murdered his wife by cutting her throat and immediately took his own life in a like manner. The name of the perpetrator of these horrible deeds is John Holt, aged 54 a labourer in the quarry. His wife Mary Ann was 49 years old and they have six children and resided in Plantation Street. Four of the children worked in the mill and it may be inferred that as working people they were in tolerably good comfortable circumstances.

The cottage in which they lived had one room downstairs with a small scullery and two room upstairs one of which held one bed. The other bedroom having two beds in which one Holt and his wife slept, with two of his children in the other. The police found Mrs Holt at the foot of the children's bed. She had a terrible gash in her throat almost severing her head from her body, from which blood was rapidly flowing. Her husband lay on his back within a yard of her and if anything he had a still more severe wound in his throat... and inquest was held at the Market Hotel, the verdict in the case of Mary Ann Holt was therefore entered upon the the inquisition as one of "Wilful Murder" against John Holt and in the case of John Holt that he committed suicide whilst in an unsound state of mind.