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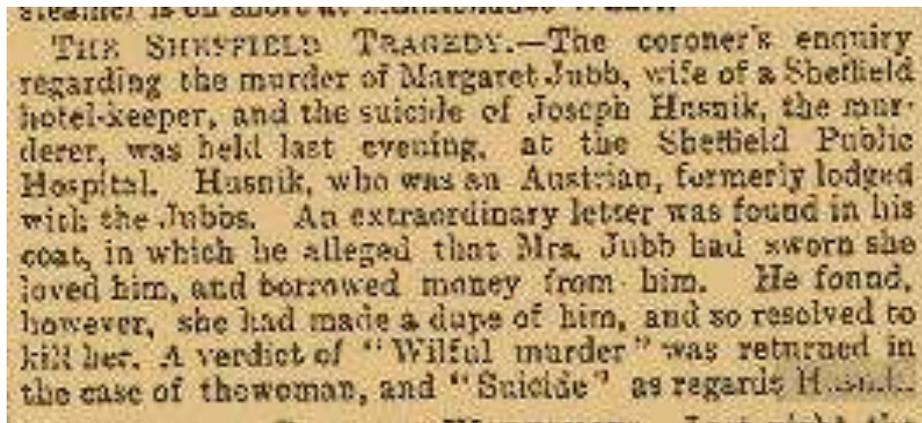
DEATH ON WEST STREET - SHEFFIELD - December 1886

Whilst searching the burial registers of Sheffield's City Road Cemetery I came across the following entry

**"Jubb, Margaret (Married (shot), age 31).
Died at Royal Hotel, West St; Buried on December 4, 1886 in Consecrated ground;
Grave Number 11805, Section W of City Road Cemetery, Sheffield.**

My curiosity was certainly aroused - it is not often that a burial record has the phrase "married (shot)" adjacent to the name.

I checked a newspaper database and found the following report. It is from the Birmingham Daily Post dated 4th December 1886 and is titled " The Sheffield Tragedy"



"the coroner's enquiry regarding the murder of Margaret Jubb, wife of a Sheffield hotel-keeper, and the suicide of Joseph Husnik, the murderer was held last evening (3rd December 1886) at the Sheffield public hospital. Husnik who was an Austrian, lodged with the Jubbs. An extraordinary letter was found in his coat which alleged that Mrs. Jubb had sworn that she loved him, and borrowed money from him. He found, however, that she had made a dupe of him, and so resolved to kill her. A verdict of "wilful murder" was returned in the case of the woman, and "suicide" as regards Hunik."

The Manchester Guardian dated 4th December 1886 also reported on the coroner's enquiry and added some additional information on the tragedy

THE MURDER AND SUICIDE AT SHEFFIELD.

An inquest was held last evening on the body of Margaret Jubb, landlady of the Royal Hotel, West-street, Sheffield, who was murdered on Wednesday by an Austrian named Joseph Husnik. An inquiry took place at the same time with regard to the death of Husnik, who committed suicide by shooting himself immediately after the murder of Mrs. Jubb. Evidence was given bearing out the facts already published, and in addition letters were read which gave a clue to the cause of the crime. In Husnik's pockets two letters were found, both bewailing the conduct of Mrs. Jubb, who, according to Husnik, had sworn him eternal love, and had broken her pledges after obtaining money from him. One of the letters was in these words:—"My Dearest darling love. You are wishing seperreshen from your loving hart. To oblige you I will bury my true heart and seperreyt us soon as possible, so that I be unable to love you agen becos you now that a man without hart cannot love. Your obliging J. H." It was proved that Husnik had deliberately prepared for the committal of the crime. He fired in all five shots, three of which were directed against himself. The jury found that Husnik wilfully murdered Mrs. Jubb and committed suicide himself, but that as to the state of his mind there was no evidence.

I then obtained a copy of The Manchester Guardian dated 2nd December 1886 and it was in that edition that I found out about how the tragedy unfurled.

SHOCKING MURDER AND SUICIDE IN SHEFFIELD

About noon yesterday, a terrible murder was committed in Sheffield followed by the suicide of the murderer, a German named Usnich (sic) who shot Mrs. Jubb, the landlady of a small public house called the Royal hotel, West Street. Mrs Jubb and her husband had only occupied the Royal Hotel for about three months. The husband John Jubb was a table knife cutler in the employ of Messrs. Rodgers and Sons: the house therefore was principally left to the management of Mrs Jubb. Amongst other habitual frequenters of the house was a man named Joseph Usnich, a German employed as an engineer who used to lodge with the Jubbs when they occupied a private house in St Mary's Road. He had recently lodged in Fitzwilliam Street which is no great distance from the Royal Hotel and his visits were indeed more frequent than could be desired by Mr and Mre Jubb. Yesterday morning he was lounging around the house apparently for several hours. He was there as early as eight o' clock and spoke to the servant girl who was cleaning the taproom. A short time before the murder he borrowed a

newspaper and went and sat at the bar apparently to read. Mrs Jubb was with the servant girl Mary Ellen Whittaker and three of her four young children in the kitchen which is connected to the bar by a short passage when a rap was heard in the bar. Usnich had been sitting in the bar a few minutes before Mrs Jubb went from the kitchen to meet the call. She had not been there more than a minute when shoots were heard and the poor woman staggered along the passage to the kitchen, calling to the servant girl that she was shot. She managed to reach the kitchen but fell unconscious on the hearth. The shots reached the ears of the neighbours and a number of people entered the hotel. A Mr Freeman found what had occurred and the bar being empty imagined that the murderer had escaped by the front door. It did not appear however that anyone had come out of the house and Mr Freeman obtained the assistance of the police. Police Constable Candling was promptly in attendance and soon found the missing man who was lying dead behind the entrance door from the house into the bar. He had apparently shot himself immediately after inflicting wounds upon Mrs. Jubb and had fallen against the door. Mrs Jubb had apparently but one wound to the left breast was removed to the hospital but despite every attention the poor woman died about a quarter past one o' clock, a little more than a hour after she was shot. The six chambered revolver with which the murder was committed was taken possession of by Police Constable Candling. the body of the murderer was afterwards moved to the mortuary. It had wounds to the breast and the mouth leading to the conclusion that he fired two shots at himself. There were no shots about the bar of any shot having struck the woodwork. Prior to moving into the hotel the Jubbs lived at 168 St Mary's Road. They were there about three years and during a large part of the time Mr Jubb was ill and altogether unable to follow his employment. Mrs Jubb however took in lodgers mainly members of the theatrical profession and in other ways assisted to maintain the family She is spoken of as being a most industrious woman who worked hard to keep her house clean with her children respectable. Usnich went to lodge with them and whether there were grounds for suspicion or not there seems to be little doubt that Jubb became jealous of his wife. This was generally manifested when Jubb had some drink and on such occasions he and Usnich usually quarrelled. It does not seem clear that Mrs Jubb gave Usnich any encouragement or her husband ground for suspecting them. The inquest will be probably be held today."

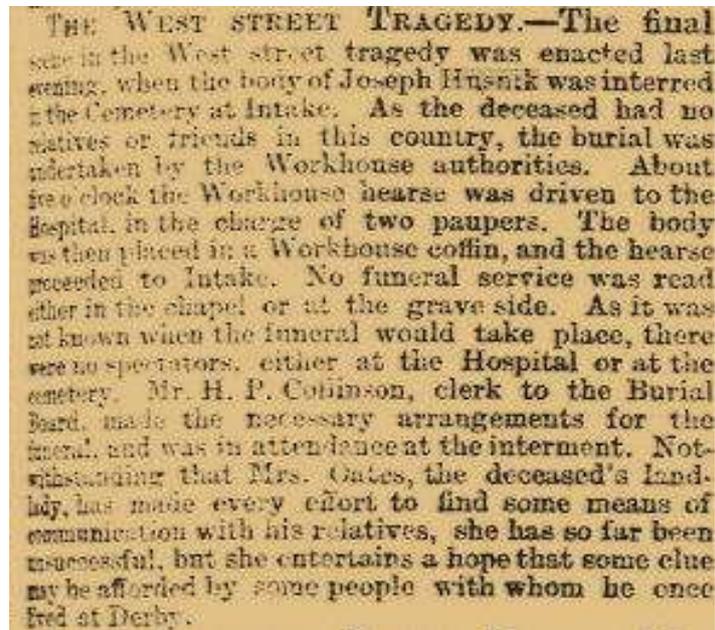
From the above report and the inquest it is difficult to come to a definitive conclusion, but based on the information I have before me it seems as though the most likely explanation for the tragedy is that Mrs Jubb did borrow money from Usnich (possibly to fund the move to the Royal hotel), a transaction that Usnich "misread" for want of a better term. Clearly Mr Jubb had his suspicions about Usnich and his wife but that as far as we know is all they were suspicions. Mrs Jubb must have then "reneged on her promises to pay" Usnich and that led to her murder.

After locating these reports I then returned to the City Road Cemetery's burial records and found the following entry

"Husnik, Joseph (Engineer, age 27).
Died at Royal Hotel, West St; Buried on December 7, 1886 in Unconsecrated ground;
Grave Number 12968, Section BB of City Road Cemetery, Sheffield.

And so both are buried in the Cemetery but Margaret in consecrated ground whilst Joseph was in unconsecrated ground.

In March 2010, I came across the following report of Joseph Husnik's funeral in the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent. Dated 8th December 1886, it refers to the funeral which took place the previous evening. It sounds positively "gothic" as it would have been dark when the hearse left the workhouse and arrived at the cemetery.



THE WEST STREET TRAGEDY.—The final scene in the West street tragedy was enacted last evening, when the body of Joseph Husnik was interred in the Cemetery at Intake. As the deceased had no relatives or friends in this country, the burial was undertaken by the Workhouse authorities. About five o'clock the Workhouse hearse was driven to the Hospital, in the charge of two paupers. The body was then placed in a Workhouse coffin, and the hearse proceeded to Intake. No funeral service was read either in the chapel or at the grave side. As it was not known when the funeral would take place, there were no spectators, either at the Hospital or at the cemetery. Mr. H. P. Colinson, clerk to the Burial Board, made the necessary arrangements for the funeral, and was in attendance at the interment. Notwithstanding that Mrs. Oates, the deceased's landlady, has made every effort to find some means of communication with his relatives, she has so far been unsuccessful, but she entertains a hope that some clue may be afforded by some people with whom he once lived at Derby.

As a footnote, Her husband John Jubb did not live that long after the tragedy. He is buried with his wife in the same grave

Jubb, John (Table Knife Hafter, age 42).

Died at Firvale Workhouse; Buried on June 23, 1892 in Consecrated ground; Grave Number 11805, Section W of City Road Cemetery, Sheffield.

The death in the workhouse seems indicate that his illness deteriorated after his wife's death - I wonder what happened to their four children?

The Royal Hotel was demolished many years ago and to date I have found no information on the house.

Sources

Birmingham Daily Post dated 4th December 1886

The Manchester Guardian dated 2nd - 4th December 1886

[The Sheffield Indexers](#)

Notes

- [The Jubb Family - 1881 Census](#)

Household:

Source Information:

Dwelling 25 Manton St Census Place Sheffield, York, England

Family History Library Film 1342124 Public Records Office Reference RG11 Piece /

Folio 4651 / 68 Page Number 23

Name Relation Marital Status Gender Age Birthplace Occupation Disability

John JUBB Head M Male 32 Sheffield, York, England Table Knife Hafter

Margret JUBB Wife M Female 25 Dore, Derby, England

Annie E. JUBB Daur U Female 4 Sheffield, York, England

John A(Alfred). JUBB Son U Male 1 Sheffield, York, England

- **As a postscript there is an entry in the Manchester Guardian dated 6th July 1885 when a "J Husnik and H Merryman" of Sheffield applied for a patent for a self-feeding penholder.**