

Thomas George Heritage the eldest son of Henry William Hemming Heritage tried to commit suicide in 1900 and did so in 1904. These are the two relevant entries from The Stratford Herald:

April 6th 1900

"Attempted Suicide." – "On the morning of Tuesday week it became known that Thomas Heritage, a middle aged man; and holder of the license of the Saracen's Head inn, had attempted to take his life by cutting his throat. He had been in indifferent health for close upon two years but lately had suffered very severely, and it is said was not responsible for his actions. As far as can be gathered the gruesome discovery was made by his wife, who found him on the floor, very shortly after the deed had been committed, with blood running from his throat. She immediately called in her brother-in-law Mr. J.H. Heritage. P.c. Sharp, and a man named Pearce, who was doing some thatching there at the time. Dr. Pitt of Wellesbourne was also telegraphed for at once, and he came in very quick time and attended to the man's injuries. For several days he was unable to recognise the people in attendance upon him, but has since come round."

October 28th 1904

"Suicide of a Publican." "Deep sympathy will be felt in Ettington for the widow and children of Mr Thos. George Heritage for many years landlord of the Saracen's Head, who was found drowned in a pond at Ettington Park on Tuesday morning, and on whose body an inquest was held at the Lord Nelson coffee house on Wednesday afternoon by Mr. G. F. Lodder, deputy coroner for South Warwickshire. Mr. Rainbow was chosen foreman of the jury.

Angelina Heritage, of the Saracen's Head, said the deceased was her husband, and he would have been 45 had he lived till Thursday. For the last eight years he had been in very bad health, suffering a good deal from eczema, brought on by rheumatism. It worried him a good deal. Dr. Pitt formerly attended him, and latterly Dr. Alexander, and he had been twice to a Birmingham specialist. Dr. Alexander had attended him recently for eczema in the right foot. It did not prevent him getting about, but it must have given him pain to do so. Her husband was in financial difficulty. He had been at the Saracen's Head for seventeen years. The late Mr. Shirley was the owner, and she understood Flower and Son, Ltd. had taken it over until the son came of age. They had had notice to leave, which expired on September 29th, but that did not seem to affect him: Indeed, recently he had seemed better and brighter. She did not know why he got notice, whether it was because he did not do sufficient trade. Her husband was a temperate man, not given to excessive drinking. They had been staying on at the house to oblige the new tenant. The sale took place the previous day (Tuesday). They did not sell up everything. Deceased was about on Monday and helped to get ready for the sale. He did not lead her to suppose he was going to do away with himself. On March 27th 1900, he attempted to take his life by cutting his throat. There was no cause for his actions then beyond ill health. At two o'clock on the morning of Tuesday deceased passed through her bedroom fully dressed, and

said he was going downstairs. Nothing else passed between them. As he did not return in a short while she got anxious and gave information to the police. P.c. Arthur Sharp said at 4 a.m. on the 25th, from information left at his station that the deceased was missing from his home, he went out to make a search in the district and at 10.10 a.m., while looking round the fish-ponds in Ettington Park he saw the body in the water, three or four yards from the bank. The pond was about a mile from the Saracen's Head. He went for assistance from the gardens and got the body out. He examined it, but found no marks of violence. He also searched the body, but only discovered a pocket-knife and a few small articles. Deceased was fully dressed, with the exception that one boot was missing. The body was in a standing position, and the cap could just be seen above the water. He was quite dead, and there was frost on his cap. Witness removed the body to the Saracen's Head. He was called in previously when Heritage attempted to cut his throat, and there was no reason for that except that he had been ill and depressed. Witness had known him for 10 years, and lately he seemed more cheerful than usual.

Thomas Heritage, 16, son of the deceased, said his father slept with him on the night of the 24th. During the night he woke up and found his father was dressing. He asked what was the matter and his father replied that he was just going downstairs. He often got up in the night. He never saw his father again.

By the jury: Witness noticed nothing strange in his manner.

The Coroner, in summing up, said there was nothing in the evidence to suggest that anyone was responsible for the death of the deceased other than himself, and there was no doubt that he got up in the night, walked to the pond, and committed suicide by drowning. He seemed to have had a certain amount of worry and to have been in a bad financial way. Very likely the fact that he was leaving the public-house where he had been for 17 years might have preyed on his mind, and led him to do what he otherwise would not have done. Probably they would come to the conclusion that he was not in his right mind.

A verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane" was returned.