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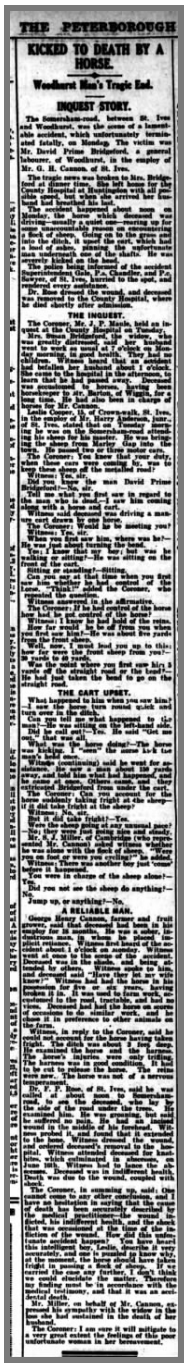

THE PETERBOROUGH

KICKED TO DEATH BY A HORSE.

Woodhurst Man's Tragic End.

INQUEST STORY.

The Somersham-road, between St. Ives and Woodhurst, was the scene of a lamentable accident, which unfortunately terminated fatally, on Monday. The victim was Mr. David Prime Bridgeford, a general labourer, of Woodhurst, in the employ of Mr. G. H. Cannon, of St. Ives.

The tragic news was broken to Mrs. Bridgeford at dinner time. She left home for the County Hospital at Huntingdon with all possible speed, but on her arrival her husband had breathed his last.

The accident happened about noon on Monday, the horse which deceased was driving—usually a quiet one—rearing up for some unaccountable reason on encountering a flock of sheep. Going on to the grass and into the ditch, it upset the cart, which had a load of ashes, pinning the unfortunate man underneath one of the shafts. He was severely kicked on the head.

Dr. Rose, who was informed of the accident Superintendent Dale, P.c. Chandler, and P.c. Sawyer, of St. Ives, hurried to the spot, and rendered every assistance.

Dr. Rose dressed the wound, and deceased was removed to the County Hospital, where he died shortly after admission.

THE INQUEST.

The Coroner, Mr. J. P. Marsh, held an inquest at the County Hospital on Tuesday.

Mrs. Susan Bridgeford, the widow, who was greatly distressed, said her husband went to work as usual at 7 o'clock on Monday morning, in good health. They had no children. Witness heard that an accident had befallen her husband about 1 o'clock. She came to the hospital in the afternoon, to learn that he had passed away. Deceased was accustomed to horses, having been employed by Mr. Arthur, of Wistow, for a long time. He had also been in charge of horses for Mr. Cannon.

Leslie Cooper, 15, of Cromwell, St. Ives, in the employ of Mr. Harry Anderson, junr., of St. Ives, stated that on Tuesday morning he was on the Somersham-road attending his sheep for his master. He was bringing the sheep from Harley Gap into the fold. He passed two or three motor cars.

The Coroner: You knew that your duty, when those cars came on, was to keep them down? P.c. notable road?

Witness: Yes, sir.

Did you know the man David Prime Bridgeford?—No, sir.

Tell me what you first saw in regard to the man who is dead.—I saw him coming along with a horse and cart.

Witness said deceased was driving a manure cart down to his horse.

The Coroner: Could he be meeting you? Witness: No, sir.

When you first saw him, where was he?—He was just about turning the bend.

Yes; I know that my boy; but was he walking or sitting?—He was sitting on the front of the cart.

Sitting or standing?—Sitting.

Can you say at that time when you first saw him whether he had control of the horse?—I cannot, replied the Coroner, who corrected the question.

Witness answered in the affirmative.

The Coroner: If he had control of the horse how had he not control of the horse?

Witness: I know he had hold of the reins. How far would he be off from you when you first saw him?—He was about five yards from the front sheep.

Well, now, I do not want you up to this horse or to the front sheep from you?—He was not near.

Was the point where you first saw him 5 yards off the straight road or the bend?—He had just taken the bend to go on the straight road.

THE CART UPSET.

What happened to him when you saw him?—I saw the horse turn round quick and turn over in the ditch.

Can you tell me what happened to the man?—He was sitting on the left-hand side.

Did he call out?—Yes. He said "Get me out, that was all."

What was the horse doing?—The horse was trying to get out the same as he was when you saw it.

Witness (continuing) said he went for assistance. He saw a man about 150 yards away, and told him what had happened, and he came at once. Others came, and they extricated Bridgeford from under the cart.

The Coroner: Can you account for the horse suddenly taking fright at the sheep—if it did take fright at the sheep?

Witness: No, sir.

But it did take fright?—Yes.

Were the sheep going at any unusual pace?—No; they were just being taken and slowly.

Mr. A. J. Miller, of Cambridge (who represented Mr. Cannon) asked witness whether he was alone with the flock of sheep. Were you on foot or were you cycling?" he added.

Witness: There was another boy just come before it happened.

You were in charge of the sheep alone?—Yes.

Did you not see the sheep do anything?—No.

Jump up, or anything?—No.

A RELIABLE MAN.

George Henry Cannon, farmer and fruit grower, of St. Ives, said he had known deceased for 18 months. He was a sober, industrious man, in whom he placed implicit reliance. Witness first heard of the accident about 1 o'clock on Sunday. Witness went at once to the scene of the accident. Deceased was in the stable, and being attended to by others. Witness spoke to him, and deceased said "Have they let my wife know?" Witness said he had. Deceased then asked for tea, as he was thirsty, having broken it up. It was used to farm work, and accustomed to the road, trackside, and had no vices. Deceased had had the horse on account of occasions to do similar work, and he chose it in preference to other animals on the farm.

Witness, in reply to the Coroner, said he could not account for the horse having taken fright. The sheep was about 5 feet away. In examining the horse after the accident, the horse's injuries were only trifling. The harness was in good condition. It had to be cut to release the horse. The reins were new. The horse was not of a nervous temperament.

Dr. F. F. Rose, of St. Ives, said he was called at about noon to Somersham-road, to see the deceased, who lay by the side of the road under the trees. He complained to him. He was groaning, but said nothing. He found that he had a lacerated wound in the middle of his forehead. He was pressed it, and found that it extended to the bone. Witness dressed the wound, and ordered deceased's removal to the hospital. Witness attended deceased for head-ache, which culminated in pneumonia, on June 18th. Witness had to leave the ultimate. Deceased was in indifferent health, and his was due to the wound, coupled with shock.

The Coroner, in summing up, said: One cannot come to any other conclusion, and I have no hesitation in saying that the cause of death has been accurately described by the medical practitioner—the wound inflicted, his indifferent health, and the shock that was occasioned at the time of the infliction of the wound. How did this unfortunate accident happen? You have heard the evidence. The horse was driven in a very reasonable way, and no one knows why, at the moment, the horse shied, or took fright in passing a flock of sheep. If we carried the case any further, I don't think we could elucidate the matter. Therefore my finding must be in accordance with the medical testimony, and that it was an accidental death.

Mr. Miller, on behalf of Mr. Cannon, expressed his sympathy with the widow in the sad bereavement she had sustained in the death of her husband.

The Coroner: I am sure it will mitigate to a very great extent the feelings of this poor unfortunate woman in her bereavement.

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