

DOUBLE ROAD TRAGEDY

Pedestrian and Motor-Cyclist Victims of Steam Mills Accident

CAUSE UNSOLVED BY INQUEST

An inquest held at Steam Mills on Monday failed to reveal the cause of a road accident on Saturday, in which a motor-cyclist and pedestrian lost their lives.

The pedestrian, Mr. Joseph Hale, aged 79, of Bowson House, Steam Mills, was run over and killed as he was crossing the road opposite his house by a motor-cyclist, Mr. James Alfred Meek (42), of 6, Valley Road, Cinderford, a sawyer, employed at the Arthur and Edward Colliery, who was thrown from his machine and died a few hours later in Dilke Hospital.

Mr. Hale was for 57 years employed at the old Trafalgar Colliery and was well known in East Dean.

The inquest on the two men was conducted in the little Baptist Chapel at Steam Mills by the Forest Coroner (Mr. M. F. Carter), sitting with a jury, of which Mr. A. Booth was the foreman. The juryman took the oath twice. Evidence was first taken regarding the death of Mr. Hale.

John Hale, of Brierley, a blacksmith, son of the dead man, said his father was for 57 years a manager at Trafalgar Colliery.

Dorothy Emily Griffiths, of 11, Pembroke Street, Cinderford, schoolmistress, said about 1.45 p.m. on Saturday she was standing in the front bedroom window at Bowson House watching Mr. Hale, who was standing on a flat piece of ground on the opposite side of the road. Witness was getting ready to catch the 1.50 'bus for Brierley, where she was going to judge in the carnival. She saw Mr. Hale walk across the road quickly towards the gate in an oblique direction. She did not hear any noise of approaching traffic. He appeared to be three parts of the way over the road when there was a shout, and witness saw a motor-cycle strike him in the side and drag him for some yards along the road. Witness ran out and Mr. Hale was then lying on the road with his head facing Steam Mills. Miss Hale ran up the road screaming and witness attended to her. A motor-cycle was lying on its right-hand side, with its front facing Steam Mills, and a man was lying on the pavement near the bicycle. She did not see the bicycle before it struck Mr. Hale.

In reply to the foreman, witness said Mr. Hale did not hesitate. He walked as if he was in a hurry. She did not see a 'bus carrying miners.

Frederick George East, Edgehill, a sawyer, employed at the Arthur and Edward Colliery, said he was sitting at the back of a 'bus going in the direction of Cinderford. The 'bus stopped at Thomas's house and witness was handing a bicycle out to a man when he glanced down the road and saw 150 yards back a man go up in the air from the road, and another flung forward from a motor-cycle. One landed in the middle of the road and the other in the gutter. Witness went back with others and recognised Mr. Hale lying in the centre of the road.

FUNERAL OF MR. HALE

Brave Action At Colliery Recalled

The funeral of Mr. Joseph Hale, of Bowson House, near Cinderford, took place at Holy Trinity Church on Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. Hale, who was in his 80th year, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Hale, of Upper Lydbrook, both of whom were respected in the district. He was the last son living of a family of five sons and two daughters. Two of his brothers, both of an adventurous disposition, went to America in their youth and died there.

Mr. Hale started work at the Trafalgar Colliery in his youth, and worked there until his retirement about 12 years ago. By dint of hard work he attained the position of under-manager, a position which he occupied for about 46 years.

While in this office Mr. Hale experienced one of the most thrilling episodes of his life. For when a fire broke out in the colliery in the year 1900 he distinguished himself by a gallant rescue of two men's lives. His bravery was noted by the Royal Humane Society, and he was presented with a medal which always remained one of his most treasured possessions. He was also presented with a beautiful clock by the directors of the colliery. The clock bears the following inscription: "Presented to Mr. Joseph Hale, under-manager of Trafalgar Colliery, by the Directors of the Company, for bravery in rescuing two men from death. 1st March, 1900."

Mr. Hale was also a very old member of the Freeminers, and several representatives from this association attended the funeral.

It is very interesting to note that Mr. Hale was the oldest member of four generations in his family. There is his daughter, Mrs. A. Green, of Temple Guiting, near Cheltenham, who herself has a married daughter, Mrs. K. Holder, of the Bungalow, Hawkwell. Eleven months ago a son was born to Mrs. Holder, and "Tim," as he has been christened, completed the four generations.

"A WONDERFUL MAN"

Mr. Hale was a wonderful man in many respects. Up to the last he never had to wear glasses, and his hearing was extremely good. His health kept so well that in all his life he never had to stay in bed a day through illness. He made a wonderful recovery from an accident which occurred nine months ago, when he sustained a broken thigh when skittling, and at the time of his death he was able to walk quite well without any support. He had to receive attention at the Dilke Memorial Hospital for his thigh, and when he returned he could not speak too highly of the kind and careful attention he had received there. His happy disposition made him quick friends with both nurses and other patients alike, and only recently he received a friendly visit from one of the nurses at his home.

he arrived on the scene at 1.55. Mr. Joseph Hale was lying in the middle of the road in a pool of blood. He was on his right side with his head towards Steam Mills. He was dead. Mr. Meek was on his back at the edge of the pavement, also facing Steam Mills. The road was 20 feet wide and the surface in good condition. The pool of blood was 8 feet from the near side of the road facing Cinderford and extended 4ft. 8ins. towards the off side of the road. The other pool of blood extended 2ft. into the road from the gutter. There were two drag marks on the road, the first 16ft. from where Mr. Hale was lying, 6ft. 6ins. from the offside kerb, and 11ft. 4ins. long. A second mark was parallel with the first, 5ft. 6ins. from the offside kerb, and 9ft. long. The second mark ended before the first. The marks were consistent with the footrest and the handlebar having dragged along the road. There were spots of blood along the road from where the mark started to where the pool of blood was. The surface of the road was wet. There were no marks to show whether the motor-cycle had crossed to its off side from its near side.

Replying to the Coroner, witness agreed that when the motor-cycle struck Mr. Hale it was about 14ft. from the left kerb travelling in the direction of Cinderford.

Dr. H. H. Sumption, Drybrook, said he was summoned and saw Mr. Hale being carried on a stretcher into the house. He was told he was dead, so went on to attend to Mr. Meek.

Mr. Hale had a deep cut on the back of his head three inches long; the skull underneath was cracked. There appeared to be a fracture of the base of the skull and the leg was broken below the knee. Probably he was struck on the side of the leg. Death must have been instantaneous. The cause of death was shock owing to the fracture of the base of the skull, and hemorrhage. There was a tremendous loss of blood.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence as to the cause of death and found that the death was the result of being knocked down by the motor-cycle driven by James Alfred Meek, who was on his wrong side of the road; but there was not sufficient evidence to show why he was on the wrong side.

Giving evidence in the case of the death of James Alfred Meek, a brother, Albert Victor Meek, said his brother had been riding a motor-cycle since before the war. This was, witness believed, the first accident he had had.

STRUCK THE KERB

Dr. Sumption said that Mr. Meek was taken to the Dilke Hospital in the ambulance and he followed. Death occurred after a few hours. There were several abrasions in the front of both legs and over the left cheek and side of the chin. Several cuts on the forehead and left temple; hemorrhage of the left eye and from both ears and mouth. Both frontal bones of the forehead were crushed in. Death was due to shock, fracture of the base of the skull, and injury to the brain. His opinion was that Meek's head struck the kerb.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence and found that Meek met his death by running into the pedestrian, Mr. Hale.

The foreman of the jury expressed the sympathy of the jury with both families. They trusted that the accident would be a lesson to all of us. The Coroner also expressed his sympathy with the relatives. He said he had known Mr. Hale for many years. He was a respected servant of the colliery company for which he worked so long. Only recently as he passed he had noticed Mr. Hale sitting on the little bank near his house—it seemed to have been a favourite spot of his. He was very sorry that Mr. Hale should have met so untimely an end. He also knew Mr. Meek and expressed his sympathy with those left behind in this case.

same graveyard.

There were many mourners at the funeral, for during his life Mr. Hale endeared himself to all he met through his good humour and ready sympathy.

The service in the church and at the grave-side was conducted by the Vicar of St. Stephen's Church, Cinderford, the Rev. F. W. Potts Hicks. Family mourners who were present included:—Mrs. A. Green and Miss E. Hale (daughters); Sidney, John and Bert (sons); Mrs. Sidney, Mrs. John Hale and Mrs. Bert Hale (daughters-in-law); Mr. Alfred Green (son-in-law); Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Holder (grand-daughter and grandson); Miss Lena Brain (grand-daughter); Mr. Bert Hale, jun. (grandson); Mr. William Beach (nephew); Mrs. H. Jordan (niece); Messrs. John, Albert, Hubert and Stanley Hale (nephews); Mrs. Alfred Harris, Fred Fisher and Frank Harris (nephews).

Among the many mourners present were: Mr. W. D. Meredith, J.P. (secretary of the Forest of Dean Freeminers' Trustees), Mr. Riley Brown (chairman), Mr. William Pace (treasurer), and Messrs. T. Jones, F. James, G. Trigg, F. Bowkett, Joseph James (Freeminers).

The following is the list of floral tributes: Emily, Jack and Ethel; Bert; Alice and kiddies; Ada, Alf., and all at Temple Guiting; Sid., Edith and children; Alma and Ken.; Little Tim; Pat, Jack, Billy and Kenneth; Mrs. Griffiths and Cassie; Rene and Jack; Tessie M. Phillips; Mrs. A. J. Meek; Mrs. J. Hill and family; From W. G. Whittle and staff; From S. J. Nichols and Sons; Mrs. Tyson and Ruby (Coventry); Sports Committee (Brierley); Rose and Harold; From the Forest of Dean Trustees and Freeminers; From Miss M. Kibble; All his friends at the "Seven Stars"; Mr. and Mrs. Surbey; Mr. and Mrs. Joe James; Mr. and Mrs. A. Pope; Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Oldham Roberts and family; Fred, Fanny; Clara and family; Alf., Bess and family; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Harris; Mr. and Mrs. Hatton (Lydbrook).

CENTENARY EXPRESS

To commemorate Bristol's association with the Company, the G.W.R., propose to introduce a new express in each direction between Paddington and Bristol as from Monday, the 9th September next.

The train will be called "The Bristolian" and will be scheduled to do the 118½ miles on the "down" journey via Bath and the 117½ miles on the "up" journey via Badminton in 105 minutes in each direction at an average speed of 67.6 m.p.h and 67.1 m.p.h. respectively.

The new train will leave Paddington at 10.0 a.m., and Bristol 4.30 p.m., on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and will be the fastest in the country for a run of over a hundred miles, while its schedule is fifteen minutes less than any previously introduced between the two original termini of the G.W.R.

THE DAIRY FARMER'S LADDER

With the Milk Board apparently established for some time to come, producers dissatisfied with their returns may well set about any readjustment of their methods that may be necessary. Mr. James Mackintosh, writing in The Farmer and Stock-Breeder, gives his idea of the steps in the ladder of progress for the dairy farmer. Starting with an ordinary herd, he suggests: First rung of the ladder—start recording; get rid of non-paying cows; earn the Accredited bonus. Second rung—study feeding; use balanced rations. Third rung—pedigree dairy-bred bull; calf marking, grading up. Fourth rung—pedigree bulls, each better than the last; grading up in yield and type. Fifth rung—pedigree herd mostly home bred; healthy stock; high yields.