



# SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORONER'S INQUESTS



## Compton Chamberlayne

**John Hunt 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1886**

### **8 Year Old's Death From Horse Fall**

An inquest was held by Mr G. Smith at the Salisbury Infirmary on the body of 8 year old John Hunt, who met his death after falling from a horse & the horse then treading on him. The accident happened in the farm yard of Mr Keevil, of Compton Chamberlayne.

William Clapp, of Compton Chamberlayne, was farm bailiff to Mr Keevil and said that the father of the deceased boy was employed on the farm as a dairyman and his lad was often about the farm, doing occasional jobs. At 12.15 pm on Tuesday, two of Mr Keevil's horses were returning to be harnessed to the reaping machine, after having been to drink water. The deceased boy was riding on one of those horses. Mr Clapp could not say whether the boy had been placed on the horse or had gotten on the horse of his own accord. An engine driver on the farm, named Stephen Plowman, ordered the deceased boy and another boy, aged 10, to stop with the horses at the gate of the yard, whilst he went to see to the machine. During his absence, the boys rode the horses down the yard and the horse on which the deceased was riding, stumbled and threw the boy over its head. My Clapp did not see the accident but the horse came towards him and he saw that the boy was on the ground. He picked him up and sent for the boy's father, who was on the farm. The boy's father came immediately and Dr Clay, of Fovant, who happened to be passing, was called in.

The witness, Mr Clapp, did not think it was proper to allow small boys to ride horses in that manner. He considered that the boys ought to be warned and mentioned that the deceased's mother had spoken to the boy on the matter on the morning of the accident.

The Coroner told the witness that that was the second case they had had that week. He also told the witness that as farm bailiff to Mr Keevil, he ought to give a general order prohibiting small boys from riding horses.

John Hunt, father of the deceased boy, said his son was not employed on the farm but occasionally did things there. The first he heard of the accident was when he was sent for by Mr Clapp. Small boys of ten years of age or under were not, as he was aware of, allowed to ride horses about. Mr Hunt had sent for Dr Clay, who happened to be in the village at the time. Dr Clay informed the boy's father that it was a very bad case and that he could do nothing for the boy. The boy was conveyed to the Infirmary late in the evening.

Mr H. Brown, acting house surgeon at the Infirmary, said that he examined the boy but found no external marks. The death occurred the same night. He afterwards made a *post mortem* examination and found that there was extensive bruising to the upper part of the abdomen and the lower ribs on the right side. No rib was fractured, but there was considerable extravasation of blood. On opening the body, the cavity was discovered to contain a large quantity of clotted blood and the liver and stomach were both bruised. The liver had been torn from its attachments behind and above and the main vein had been ruptured. From those injuries death had resulted.

The Coroner, in summing up, said it would be desirable that the jury should add some rider to their verdict, as a remonstrance against the practise of farmers allowing small boys to have charge of horses. He was of the opinion that general instructions to that effect should be given. This opinion was acquiesced in by the jury, and a rider to that effect was added to the verdict of "Accidental death."

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