



# *Coroner's Inquest Report Oaksey*

## **William James Lyefield**

Mr R H Smith (deputy coroner) conducted an inquest at the Cirencester Police-station on Monday on the body of William James Lyefield, aged 13, the son of Henry Lyefield, labourer, of Oaksey, who died in the Cirencester Cottage Hospital on Friday from lockjaw following an accident he met with on the 9<sup>th</sup> February. Mr E J Cole was foreman of the jury.

From the evidence given by John Jennings (16) and his father, it appeared that the deceased, who at the time of the accident was in the employ of Mr R C Warner, of Oaksey, was working in a field with a set of harrows, to which three horses were attached. At 2.15 in the afternoon a shooting party in the adjoining field commenced firing, and the horses, becoming frightened, bolted. Lyefield was knocked down and was caught by the harrows, as a result of which he received a severe laceration of the left thigh.

Mr E C Cripps, surgeon, of Cirencester, said the deceased boy was admitted to the Cottage Hospital on the 10<sup>th</sup> February. He had a wound at the back of the left thigh nine inches in length. The wound had been sewn up, but as dark matter was oozing out between the stitches he opened it again, and had it thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, as septic poisoning was feared. Considering the character of it, the wound had been cleansed as well as possible before the boy was admitted by the hospital. A few days after his admittance the deceased was put under an anesthetic and the edges of the wound were drawn up together. Deceased progressed favourably till the 25<sup>th</sup> February, when he complained that his neck and jaw were becoming stiff. He gradually became worse, and died on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, death being due to lockjaw. Nothing could exceed the attention and devotion the deceased received from the nursing staff at the hospital.

The deceased's father also gave evidence, in the course of which he stated that Dr Nesbitt, of Oaksey, dressed the wound in the first instance. He (the doctor) did not think it necessary to have the deceased conveyed to the Cottage Hospital. The same evening a Mrs Martin suggested that he should take the boy to the hospital, and on the following morning he did so. Deceased died in his presence on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, and he was satisfied that his death was due to the accident.

Following a question put by the deputy-coroner, the witness stated that a rumour was started in his village to the effect that if the deceased had been kept at home he would have been all right. Dr Nesbitt had told his (witness's) wife that if the deceased had stayed home he would have been all right.

The Deputy-Coroner---Did Dr Nesbitt know that you intended to take the boy to the hospital?---I don't know.

Answering the deputy-coroner, Dr Cripps said the boy was no worse for leaving home. It was a fit and proper case for the hospital. He thought Dr Nesbitt had done his best for the deceased before he was brought to the hospital. The father said he did not attach any blame to Dr Nesbitt.

It here transpired that Dr Nesbitt was present, and the Deputy-Coroner asked him if he told Lyefield or his wife that the boy's life would have been saved if he had been kept at home.

The doctor answered in the negative, and said he attended the deceased soon after the accident. He washed the wound and stitched it up and left him comfortable for the night. He went to the house at eight o'clock and gathered from the parents that the deceased was comfortable and asleep. At nine o'clock in the evening a woman came and asked him if he had any objection to the deceased being taken to the hospital. He said he did not consider it necessary to send him to hospital, but at the same time he said he should not object to his being taken there. He went to the deceased's home the next evening, but found on arrival there that he had been removed to the hospital.

The Deputy-Coroner---As far as we are concerned, you did everything possible for the deceased on the evening of the accident, and it was with your approval that he went to the hospital.

Dr Nesbitt---Yes

The Deputy-Coroner (to the father)---Surely you don't wish to find any fault with Dr Nesbitt. There was probably some misunderstanding about the matter.

The Father---No, sir. I don't blame him at all.

The jury returned a verdict of death from lockjaw, following the accident.

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