



CORONERS INQUESTS



William Pearce

Fatal Accident at East Harnham

On Tuesday, a fatal accident occurred to a poor fellow at East Harnham. It appears that on the morning of that day Messrs. Goddard, fly proprietors of this city, received instructions from Mr. William Day to send four horses to Woodyates, in order to convey Brigantine, the filly that won the Oaks this year, in a van to Stockbridge. Several of Messrs. Goddard's horses being out on hire, they borrowed a pair from Mr. Herring, one of which was ridden by a man named William Pearce. On coming down the hill leading to East Harnham, there being no drag on the wheels, the van and horses came down at a fearful pace, and, encountering a cart which was drawn up by the side of the road, Pearce was thrown off the horse which he was riding and the van passed over his body, crushing him in the most frightful manner. He died instantly. His remains were conveyed to the Swan inn, where an inquest was held on the following day, before Mr. R. M. Wilson, coroner.

Henry Young deposed - I live in Pennyfarthing Street and I am in the employ of Messrs. Goddard. Yesterday I was riding on one of the leaders of the race-horse van, which was coming from Woodyates to Salisbury. At a little after 12 o'clock we arrived at the top of Harnham Hill. The deceased was riding one of the wheelers. The van had been used for the same purpose and he had frequently ridden before it. There was a horse in the van. I did not drag the wheel.

The Coroner - Why not?

Witness - We have often come down before without a drag. There was no one on the box. There were 3 people inside the van with the horse. There was a drag to the van. We came down the hill at full gallop. The weight of the van overpowered the horses.

The Coroner - It is a great mercy you are alive to tell us so.

At the bottom of the hill there was a cart which had stopped by the farm-yard wall. The van in passing came in contact with the wheel of this cart. I can't say how Pearce fell. I was in front and could not see. I can't say whether the man fell first or the horse. The van in passing caught the wheel of the cart and the van and the horse stopped. On looking round over my shoulder I saw the deceased on the ground, and the horse on which he was riding also, the van having passed over him. When I got up to him he was dead. The blood was flowing freely from his head. The drag had been put on several times coming from Woodyates that morning. The deceased did not suggest that the drag should be put on at the top of the hill. The wheel rider always called to the leader to pull up. I found that the weight of the van overpowered the horses just before we came round Little Harnham corner. We came from Woodyates at the rate of 7 or 8 miles an hour. It was a very heavy van, over a ton weight .

The Coroner - Where would a careful person drag the wheel?

Witness - Just on the turn of the hill.

A Juror - Did Pearce call upon you to stop and put on the drag?

Witness - No. The men inside with the horses would get out and put on the drag. The drag was put on 3 times between Woodyates and Salisbury.

Mr. Campbell Quinn deposed - I reside at Harnham Bridge. I was about 100 yards from the bridge on the Britford Road, when I saw the horses coming along with the van at full gallop. The van came in collision with a cart which was stationary, on the right hand side of the road. This cart was as near as it could be to the wall. I saw it draw up, as if to

avoid the van. From the effect of the collision the rider of the wheel horse was thrown to the ground, and the van passed over him. I don't think the falling of the other horse had anything to do with the fall of the man.

By the Jury - I don't know whether the wheels passed over the deceased. His body was dragged some distance by the van, which is very low. He fell between the horses. I saw the dead body lying on the road behind the van.

Mr. W. Martin Coates, surgeon, deposed - I was sent for yesterday to see the poor man and when I came he was quite dead. He had a very large scalp wound, several of his ribs were broken, as were also both his thighs. My impression is that the scalp wound was caused by the wheel. I don't think both the thighs were broken by the wheels. I can't say distinctly how they were broken; but great force must have been used.

The Coroner in summing up said that it was no doubt a pure accident, arising from want of caution in not putting the drag on the wheel. If the jury believed the statement of Henry Young, the deceased was as much to blame as anybody else. The jury could return no other verdict than that of Accidental Death.

One of the jury suggested that racehorse vans should have drags fitted to them which could be used by the man inside.

The jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death.

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