

SHOCKING TRAGEDY AT RYDE **HOLIDAY-MAKER'S CAR KILLS LOCAL MAN**

Shortly after midday on Saturday a visitor who had just arrived on holiday with his car filled with luggage was involved in an accident on the Asheys-road which had fatal results to a well known local man. Mr. **Tom Rowlands GAWN**, of 15 Riboleau-street, Ryde, employed by Mr. A. J. PRIOR, butcher, of High-street, was delivering meat when by some unexplained means he was knocked down and dragged by a large car driven by Mr. D. R. FRASER, of Middlesex. Although quickly rushed to hospital suffering from extensive injuries GAWN passed away a few hours later. Deceased was a familiar figure about the town, chiefly by reason of the fact that a very intelligent mongrel dog was invariably seated on the driver's seat with him. On special occasions this extremely faithful animal would be attired in fancy costume, wearing a hat and holding a pipe in its mouth.

The facts of the shocking occurrence were told to the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. JOYCE, Esq.) at the inquest held at the Primitive Methodist School on Tuesday. The Coroner had the assistance of a jury, of whom Mr. H. V. TAYLOR was foreman. Mr. G. F. S. STRATTON appeared on behalf of Mr. FRASER, the driver of the car, Mr. P. W. HARMAN for Mr. A. J. PRIOR, deceased's employer, Mr. G. Hall KING, of Portsmouth, also appeared for Mr. FRASER through his insurance company, and Inspector A. MORRISON watched the proceedings on behalf of the police.

Blanche Louisa GAWN. The widow, said her husband was 58 years of age. He was hard of hearing, but could carry on a conversation without shouting.

Nina Ivy Marion PRIOR, wife of Arthur James PRIOR, butcher, carrying on business at 130 High-street, gave evidence on behalf of her husband, who was ill. She said that her husband had employed GAWN as odd man for some years. At midday on Saturday she asked him to take the van to the farm in Rosemary-lane and to deliver some meat at Windella House, Asheys-road. To do that he would stop on his left-hand side of the road and cross the road to make the delivery.

Henry Charles JAMES, 1 St. Michael's-cottages, Asheys-road, deposed that about 12.15 that morning he was walking down Asheys-road towards his home. He saw a stationary van on the right side of the road, PRIOR's van stationary on the left-hand side a little farther down, and still farther down he saw COOPER's van on the other side. He saw the car coming from Ryde at a very moderate speed and when it passed him just after Bettsworth-road he thought its speed was six to seven miles an hour. After it had passed he saw GAWN with a piece of paper in his hand. He then disappeared and witness saw nothing more of him until he saw him being turned over under the car. He just caught a glimpse of him between the van and the car and then he disappeared. Witness ran to the spot and found a piece of steak wrapped in paper in the middle of the road just below where the horse and van were standing. He thought the car dragged deceased about three yards. When picked up deceased was eight to ten yards from the

horse and van. He rendered what assistance he could. The driver of the car was very good, he took out the luggage and they put deceased inside and drove him to the hospital. Witness did not hear a horn sounded.

The Coroner asked witness whether he would like to correct his statement that the car was only going at about seven miles an hour in view of the fact that deceased was dragged three yards, and he replied that the car was going quite slowly.

Charles Henry LANE, 30 Station-road, Ryde, employed by Frederick Thomas COOPER, baker, of Ryde and Binstead, stated that he was in the body of the van sorting bread and did not see the accident. He heard the shriek of the brakes of a car, jumped out of his van, and saw the private motor-car come to a stop almost opposite the rear of his van. He saw deceased lying in the road two or three yards behind the car and about 4ft. from the gutter. He did not hear a hooter sounded.

P.C. WINNARD said he arrived on the scene at 1.40 p.m. At that time there were no vans there, only Mr. FRASER. Witness measured the road, which was 24ft. wide. It had been freshly tarred and gravelled, and 5ft. on the nearside, where Mr. FRASER was driving, was practically unusable. There was a pool of blood 4ft. from the nearside, but he could find no trace of skid marks on the road.

Dr. W. V. D. BOLT, house surgeon at the County Hospital, told the Coroner and jury that when admitted at 12.40 deceased was unconscious and suffering from shock. He had a fracture of the right elbow joint, a compound fracture of the right leg and thigh, and fractured ribs on both sides. He had superficial bruises, chiefly about the face and forearms. He died at 3.55 the same afternoon from shock and cranial hemorrhage.

Dudley Robert FRASER, sanitary engineer, of Cecil Park, Pinner, Middlesex, said that on Saturday he had just arrived on holiday and was staying at Whitecliff Bay Hotel. He thought his speed in going down Ashey-road was about 15 miles an hour. There were vans on his near and off side and he had to move out. He was moving in to get into his road again, and as he was passing the horse and van deceased came out from somewhere and the first thing he knew was that he was right in front of his car. He did not know whether deceased jumped from the driver's box or came round the horse's head, but he did not think he came from the back of the car. As he drew almost level with the van the man stepped right in front and he had only just a glimpse of him in front of the radiator. His off-side lamp struck deceased and witness applied his brakes and pulled up quickly. He passed fairly close to the van. He was so distressed after the accident that he did not notice exactly where the other vans were, as his only concern was to get the luggage out of the car and take the poor man to hospital. – The Coroner: Do you still say that your speed did not exceed 15 miles an hour? – Absolutely. – And that it would require at least 8ft. before you could pull up a car travelling at the speed? – It's a long car and a heavy one. – By the Foreman: He saw no movement in the van as he was approaching, although he had a clear view of the road. – By Mr. STRATTON: He had been driving since 1904 and had never had an accident. Just before he got to Bettsworth-road he slowed down and blew his horn as there were children about.

Ida Marion FRASER, the driver's wife, who accompanied him in the car, gave corroborative evidence, and was greatly affected when making her statement.

The Coroner said the police had done their utmost to get the necessary evidence and the witnesses were agreed as to the accident by which that unfortunate man lost his life. There was a slight discrepancy in regard to the speed at which Mr. FRASER was travelling. He was bound to say that Mr. FRASER had given his evidence well, and very truthfully. He had said he was travelling at about 15 miles an hour, but the witness JAMES was far more moderate in his estimate which he put at seven. He felt bound to accept the evidence of the driver of the car on that point. The presumption was that deceased jumped off and, being in a hurry to deliver the parcel, got into the road.

The jury were absent some minutes in considering their verdict, and on their return the foreman said that from the evidence put before them the only conclusion they could come to was that deceased met his death accidentally by being struck by the car. – The Coroner recorded the verdict to that effect.

Mr. HARMAN, on behalf of deceased's employer, expressed deep sympathy with the relatives. He added that Mr. PRIOR much regretted the loss of deceased, who had always been a good workman when he had any work for him to do. – Mr. STRATTON, on behalf of Mr. FRASER, also tendered deep sympathy with the relatives, and expressed Mr. FRASER's appreciation of the sympathetic way in which the police had carried out their duties.
