

**A RYDE FOOTBALLER'S TRAGIC END.  
Fatally injured when shooting a winning goal.**

[Reprinted from a special edition of the *County Press* of Saturday afternoon last.]

On Saturday morning E.F. BLAKE, Esq., Coroner for the Island, held an inquest at the Royal I.W. Infirmary and County Hospital on the body of **William JONES**, who died from injuries received in a football match played at Newport on the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult. Between Sandown Bay and Ryde.

Mr. J. L. BARTON, a member of the committee of the Ryde Football Club, was chosen foreman of the jury, and among those present were Col. F.J. SMITH, president of the Ryde Football Club, Mr. J.W. WALLER, acting hon. Secretary, Mr. F.W. RANDALL, hon. Treasurer, Mr. J.W. TRODD, hon. Secretary of the second eleven, as well as Mr. C.H. DENNESS, hon. Secretary of the Sandown Club. After the jury had viewed the body, which was lying in the mortuary, the first witness called was

William MILLS, the other witnesses being out of Court. The witness stated that he lived at 9, St. John's-road, and was an umbrella manufacturer. He went to the football match at Newport on Wednesday as an ordinary spectator. The match took place in a field at Church-litten, and was between Sandown and Ryde. Knew deceased, who was one of the Ryde football team. At about quarter to 5 witness saw the ball passed up the field from the centre by CHRISTIE to KING. He passed it back again to CHRISTIE, who ran up the field to the 12 yards line and passed it out to JONES. Deceased made a terrific run for goal, closely followed by SCOTT, a Sandown man. When within about eight yards of the left hand corner of the goal JONES shot. The ball passed REED and entered the net, REED ran out of the goal and met JONES. In running they both collided and fell. Did not believe that REED knew the ball had passed him when he left the goal. Witness jumped over the wire and went tot JONES, REED had then got up. Dr. PRESTON and Dr. MACKENZIE were there directly, deceased was quite conscious.

By the Coroner: Did he give any opinion as to how it happened ?

A. He said "Take me away; take me away." He was removed. Witness said he attended nearly all the matches of the season.

Q. Do you consider it was a pure accident ?

A. I believe it was a pure accident. I believe the goalkeeper lost his \*\*\*\*\* intended anything but save the goal.

By the Foreman of the Jury; I was at the back of the goal on the right hand, and could see everything that occurred. REED ran out with his hands up and as they collided REEDs knees went up. the ball was a regular "daisy cutter."

A Juror: Was it generally agreed ---- The Coroner (interposing): You must only ask his opinion.

The Witness said the two men separated in falling.

Did not see SCOTT touch deceased but could not say whether he did or not.

In reply to Mr. HOLMES: It would have been impossible to save the ball by REEDs hands because the ball went along the ground like a flash of lightening. He heard that REED had one finger broken as the result of the collision.

Frank Mozart WALKER, captain of the Ryde team, said that about 4.45 p.m. deceased received a pass and proceeded towards the Sandown goal, having only the goalkeeper, (REED) to beat. REED came out to meet him, but before they met JONES tipped the ball into the net, and REED must have seen it. As soon as JONES had tipped the ball both the players collided.

By the Coroner: The goalkeeper had a certain object in endeavouring to stop the opposing forward. REED had a perfect right to try and stop JONES. There was nothing unusual in the conduct of either player. Witness saw the collision. Both players fell. JONES fell back on SCOTT, who was running behind him. He did not see SCOTT fall. Witness ran up to the two men and found

JONES in awful agony.

The Coroner: Do you consider it was a pure accident---that both sides were only doing their best to win the match for their respective sides?

Witness hesitated.

The Coroner: Supposing there had not been a collision, would you consider they were both doing their duty for their own sides? Was there anything done by either that would be contrary to the rules of the game?

Witness: No, I think not.

The Foreman: If you had refereed in the match and there had been nothing but the collision, would you have given a foul? Did REED meet him in a fair way?

Witness said he did not rush out but advanced from his goal, because oftentimes the goal-keeper could cover a greater angle by advancing. JONES was going at an angle. REED advanced some four yards out and waited for JONES. He did not think anyone had time to avoid the collision. He thought REED would be the last man to have done anything intentional (hear hear)

William JENNINGS, of 18, Brunswick Square, Southampton, said he was the appointed referee at the match in question. At 3 ½ minutes to 5 JONES secured the ball, did a clever bit of work with it, and got clear of the opposing defences. He was dashing off at top speed with the ball in front of him. About 15 yards from the goal the ball went a little farther ahead than he (JONES) intended. At the same time REED dashed out of the goal, evidently being of the opinion that he could reach the ball first JONES made an extra exertion and reached the ball slightly before REED did. JONES tipped the ball past REED and then they both collided and fell. JONES was on the ground and all the players surrounded him. He was attended by doctors and then removed.

The Coroner: You have had a good deal of experience in this game ?

A. Yes, Five seasons I have been refereeing.

Q. Tell the jury whether they were both playing according to the rules of the game and whether you think it a pure accident. Supposing nothing had happened would you have complained of either player's conduct ?

A. No.

Q. In other words you look upon it as pure accident ?

A. Yes. In my opinion as a referee JONES was rather too adventuresome in doing what he did.

Q. In anxiety to win for his side ?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he a good player ?

A. A very clever player.

By the Foreman; If the goal had not been scored I should have given a foul against JONES for charging the goal-keeper, as he had not the ball in his possession. The collision could have been avoided if JONES had given way. He was studying the ball more than himself, he was watching the ball more than anything else.

Mr. HILLIER. (a juror): Was not this action on the goal-keepers part a dangerous one ?

Witness: Dangerous on the part of both.

Mr. HILLIER repeated his question.

Witness: It was.

Replying to the Coroner, witness said such a thing often happened. It was a dashing game, both sides being determined to win and to stick to the ball when they got it. He \*\*\*\*\* JONES and another down earlier in the game.

The Foreman expressed the opinion that REED, the Sandown goal-keeper, should be called.

The Coroner he did not see that REED could assist them. He thought the referee's evidence the best they could have.

It was, however, decided that REED should be called.

Robert REED said he lived at Lake and belonged to the Sandown team. He was engaged in the match in Question as goal-keeper. He saw deceased attempting to get the ball into the net. He was going very fast.

The Coroner: did you think you were putting yourself in a better position by moving outside the net.

A. I did . On going out a little way we both collided.

Q. Do you think the collision could have been avoided ?

A. No, I do not , JONES kicked the ball three or four yards in front of him, and I thought I could get there first. I knew the ball was not in the net. I believe I got there before he did. I kicked the ball and it cannoned off him (JONES) into the net. I did not see it go into the net. That is what I fancy.

Q. You were both intent on doing your best for your side ?

A. Yes.

The Foreman: You only met him in the ordinary way ?

Witness: Yes, I have never had a collision like this before.

By Mr. WEEKS (another juror): JONES might have got tot the ball first. I believe I laid out SCOTT, one of my own side, earlier in the game. I did not catch SCOTT in the stomach, but in the back.

Q, Did you put your knee up ?

A. Certainly not. When I got from the ground my left knee was hurt; there is a scar on it now. I believe I was knocked backwards, and in saving myself I broke my finger.

Kenneth INGLEBY MACKENZIE, surgeon practising at Ryde, said he was present at the match. He knew something about the rules of the game. He saw the accident happen, but could not say exactly how it happened.

The Coroner: Supposing this man JONES was attempting to get the ball into the goal and another man (never mind who) was the goal-keeper on the other side, had he the right to go out and put himself in a better position if he could not stop the ball going into the net ?

A. I suppose so, we have heard it stated today.

Q. But I ask you as one who knows the rules.

A. Yes it is the rule. Witness and Dr. PRESTON attended the deceased immediately. He was in great pain in his heart and in the pit of the stomach. From the time he saw the deceased he looked upon the case as a very serious one. JONES was in a very collapsed condition. Dr. PRESTON accompanied him to Ryde St. John's ambulance carriage. JONES was so ill at Wootton Bridge that they had to stop at the public-house and give him some hot brandy and water. He was pulseless then. Had no doubt that deceased died from the injuries he received . Witness was about 30 or 40 yards from where the accident happened . from where he was standing he saw nothing on the part of either player contrary to the rules of the game.

By the Foreman: He had told JONES fell on REED'S . He thought it possible that the injuries could have been brought about by such a collision.

Augustus KISSEY MORGAN, house surgeon at the Infirmary, deposed that he examined deceased with Dr. RICH on Wednesday evening and found him in a very collapsed condition. No post-mortem had been made. On Thursday evening , about 9.30, they operated on deceased and found he had a ruptured intestine, which of course would be fatal. It might have been caused by running into the man's knee.

By the jury: A fall without a blow would not have caused it.

The Coroner summed up the evidence, and in the course of his remarks said there was no doubt that this was a very unfortunate accident, but with that point they had not to deal. They had to decide whether they believed this was a pure accident , or whether anyone was to blame in the matter. The jury heard the evidence of several witnesses, but the evidence that he principally relied on was that of the referee, who came with a purely unbiased mind and was a man who had officiated as referee for the past five years, and he positively stated that from his knowledge of the game both men were only doing their best to win the game , and that there was no foul play whatever. If the collision had not happened he would not have stated that there had been any breach of the rules by either of the men. In other words the referee looked upon it as a pure accident, and that was his (the Coroners) opinion.

## THE VERDICT: "A STRONG RIDER".

Mr. HILLIER thought it desirable that the jury should retire and consider their verdict.

The Coroner, before the jury retired, told the Foreman to be careful not to be influenced by anything he might have heard outside. The jury should rely only on the evidence that had been given.

After five minutes of deliberation.

The jury found that the death was purely accidental and that no blame was attributable to any one in respect to it. They wished to express a hope that this sad and melancholy death would stop any semblance of rough play or bad feeling in these English sports. They also added a strong rider to the effect that a communication should be sent to the English Football Association urging that more stringent rules should be adopted, giving powers to referees to prevent rough play. They further expressed deep sympathy with the family and the friends of the poor young fellow who had met with such a melancholy end.

## THE FUNERAL

A more universal expression of respectful sympathy on the part of the community than that made on Monday on the occasion of the interment of the remains of the late William JONES, the Ryde footballer, who met his death as a result of injuries received at the Ryde v Sandown match, at Newport on the previous Wednesday could hardly be conceived. The whole town, indeed practically the whole island, was represented by a large crowd which filled Holy Trinity Church, lined the streets and thronged the Cemetery, and at many points in the sad ceremony the great majority were moved to visible grief. The body had been moved to deceased's lodgings at Mr. KING's residence in Surrey-street, which is the Holy Trinity parish and JONES had been in the habit of attending that church.

The remains were enclosed in a polished elm coffin, with brass fittings. On a plate on the lid was the inscription: "William JONES, died March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1899, aged 25 years." The coffin was placed on an open hearse and surrounded by lovely floral tributes, and another vehicle followed covered with flowers. The members of the team ----Messrs. WALKER, MAIDMENT, PONTING, MELLANBY, WOODHOUSE, HALLIDAY, JUDGE, and HAMMETT ---acted as pallbearers.

Behind came carriages containing the mourners, the brothers and sisters of the deceased, Miss WHEELER, and Mr. and Mrs. KING. At the church the Vicar ( the Rev. W.M. CAMERON) and the choir met the body at the west door. Before its arrival Mr. A. Percy JAMES, the organist, played "O rest in the Lord." After the opening sentences, the hymn " When our heads are bowed with woe" was sung and Psalm 39 was rendered to a single chant by BLOW. The lesson having been read, the Vicar gave a short address from the lectern, in which he said it was not often that the heart of a whole community was stirred as the heart of one man. So, undoubtedly, it was that day, because they desired to show their sorrow at the accidental cutting off a life so bright in itself and so fertile in brightness to others; it was because it was their desire to show their sympathy, respectful and sincere, with those to whom that loss had come as a personal grief. It was that which had brought them all there that day. Surely, if there was one thought which was suggested to their minds by that sad catastrophe it was that which was enshrined in their burial service. "in the midst of life we are in death." Who would expect to meet death on a field of amusement, in strength and vigour, in the enthusiasm of youth, in the flush of victory. And yes there death had stepped in and laid his hand upon one whom they loved. Did it seem incongruous there, in the presence of God, to speak of their recreations? Surely not. If death could step in in the middle of their recreations, surely they ought, sometimes at any rate, to be the subject of their serious thoughts. It was related of a great Italian Archbishop who for nearly three centuries had been held in high regard because of his great self-sacrifice on behalf of the poor at the time of the plague, that he was once asked by a friend what he would do if the last trumpet were to sound and find him engaged in the game of billiards.

His answer was , “ I should try to make my next stroke as good as possible.” Surely that was what their friend had done. His last kick was a good as possible. It was in that that he gave his life to gain victory for his side. If they might bring their recreations into their serious thoughts there was one thought which that event suggested, that they ought in their recreations to follow after that which ennobling, to follow his example, to think not of themselves, but of their side. Let them follow out their English games in that they were capable of promoting nobility of character. There was nothing where character could be so much reflected as in their amusements. There they saw the difference between a noble spirit and a mean, sneaking spirit; between the man who was selfish and the man who thought of others. If their recreations could be expressions of their character, so they bended to mould it. There were many who had influence in this matter there that day. As wise and responsible men they should take it seriously to heart whether they should not use their efforts to promote in their games all that was manly and ennobling and that made men unselfish; to try to free them from that selfish, sordid spirit of gambling, which was such a canker in so many of our English sports to-day. There was one comfort that they had that day, the greatest they could possess in the sadness of that moment , that all one heard on him who was gone was couched in terms of the greatest respect, admiration, and affection. A life of self-control, a life which sought the brightness and happiness of others, was a life that rightly won their admiration. They had been told that in his early days their friend was a member of the church choir, and therefore their choir had thought it right to claim the privilege of giving him a choral funeral. There might be some present who, looking back on their early days, wished they could begin them once more. They would lay their rest; he was taken from their sight. But he would live in the memories and admiration and regard of all who were there. Might he not also say that he would live in their hearts as one whom they might well imitate If his example should stir up even one who was there to a nobler, manlier life, a life more unselfish, less sordid, more self-controlled ; if his example should stir up one to be more regular in his attendance at the House of God, to be more careful in preparing for that last hour which might come, as they saw so suddenly; if his example should bear fruit in the life of even one there, then he would not have lived and died in vain. The hymn “Nearer my God, to thee,” was next sung to a tune by Sir A. SULLIVAN, and after the prayers “On the Resurrection morning” to the tune Melton. Mr. JAMES played the “ Dead march” as the body left the church, and a very impressive service closed.

The cortege moved by way of Star-street, High-street, John-street, and West-street to the Cemetery. Many of the blinds of the windows *en route* and in other parts of the town were drawn and several shops had their shutters up.

At the Cemetery the Rev. Kean F. PITT said the sentences of committal and the Vicar pronounced the Benediction. It was a very long time before the crowd had finished taking the last look at the coffin. Amongst those present were: Lieut. Col. F.J. SMITH (president), Mr. F.W. RANDALL (hon. Treasurer), Mr. J.B. PURNELL (chairman of committee), Mr. J.W. WALLER (acting hon. Secretary), Mr. J.W. TRODD (hon. Secretary of 2<sup>nd</sup> eleven), Mr. E. SHELDRAKE (captain of 2<sup>nd</sup> eleven), of the Ryde Football Club; Mr. H. SWEETMAN, J.P., Capt. C. SWEETMAN, C.C., and Messrs. John I. BARTON, K. INGLEBY-MACKENZIE, E.SWEETMAN, jun., TOMBE, JAMES, L.L. PRESTON, Clyde PURNELL, A.G. PURNELL, T.F. ELLERY, H. Percy CHIVERTON, H.G. JOLLIFFE, P. ALLEN, WHITTINGTON, I. BARTON, F.G. FLUX . J.P., C.C., A. EDGELL. W. DEBENHAM, G.POCOCK, W.BEAZLEY, W. HOWARD, F.N. BRODERICK, FARRAND, MILLS, J.N. BENNETT, O. CROMWELL, W. MILLS, F.W. FLUX, A. HOLMES, PIGOU, P. MCLEAN, BRADING, AUSTIN, C. MATTHEW, W. WHEELER, E. WHEELER, A. BARTON, C. COPELAND, FISHER, C. DAISH, WHITNEY, BARBER, GRIMSDICK, C.H. FLUX, TEAGUE, CURRY, A.P. JAMES, D.D. PALMER, GRIFFEN, GALLOP WHITTLE, W.HOPOOD, H. MEADER, and Leslie); Mr. WALL and Capt. WEST, Cowes Club; Messrs. C.G. MURSELL and A.H. HART, I.W. Football Association; Messrs. C.H. DENNESS, L. HUMPHRIES, G.W. FLUX, YELF, WALDIE, HOLMES, and CHILD, Sandown Club; Messrs. A.W. SPANNER (hon. Sec.), W. BLAKE (hon. Treasurer), H. SMITH (captain ), and C. HANNAM, Newport Club, Messrs. F.W. PURNELL, A. WEAVER, P.

SAUNDERS, SKEN, LEATHERBARROW, THOMPSON, HAXTON, PHINN, Mr. M.J.  
OSBORNE, A. TUTTE, A. DARK, H. LININGTON, H. BURT, AND W. WINDOVER,  
W.PINCHARD and C. LINDEN.

The route taken by the procession was admirably kept by Supt. HINKS and the borough police. The demeanour of the crowd was most orderly and the whole proceedings passed off without a hitch.

Mr. C. LANGDON was the undertaker.

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Researched by  
Ann Barrett