

ISLE OF WIGHT OBSERVER Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July 1900

### **TERRIFIC THUNDER STORM TWO MEN KILLED**

The worst thunder storm we have had this season passed over Ryde and district the (Friday) afternoon. The dark thunder clouds obscured the sky to much an extent that the gas had to be lighted in some of the shops. The lightening was very vivid. Shortly after 2 o'clock the lightening struck the spouting over REED'S greengrocer's shop in High-Street, tearing half of it off, and bringing it to the pavement with a tremendous crash. Fortunately it was raining very heavily at the time, and no one was passing. The iron work which was smashed to pieces, was turned quite black where the lightening named struck it. Eight men in the employ of Mr. Isaac BARTON, builder and contractor, of Ryde, were engaged in building a stable in Nettlestone for Dr. GODFREY. It was a two-stall stable of the ordinary type with loft and room over, and was almost completed. When the storm came on the men went inside for shelter. Suddenly the building was struck by a terrific flash which seemed to cut it right through. **Martin GUY** (a painter, who lives in Surrey-Street, Ryde), who was working in the room upstairs by himself, was instantly killed. The other men below were all knocked down and one of them named COOKE who resided at Oakfield, was also killed. A man named WELLS who lived in Binstead, appears to have been badly injured and to be mentally affected, as he has since kept continually screaming and crying, another man, named JOLLIFFE, is said to have been badly burnt about the head, part of his hair having been taken off. All the other men are more or less injured. A horse which was in another part of the building quite away from the men was also killed. The building was an ordinary one, and there was no iron or anything to attract electricity. Strange to say Mr. BARTON had a horse injured the same day at Asheby by lightening as it was being driven along the road. When it was struck it was thrown right up in into the hedge and its leg broken. It was rather remarkable that another storm passed over the Island, but its affects were more felt at Ventnor and Godshell, at a latter place a herd of cattle being killed.

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ISLE OF WIGHT OBSERVER Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900

### **TWO MEN KILLED BY LIGHTENING**

We last week gave a brief account of the death of two Ryde men from lightening at Nettlestone on Friday afternoon. Mr Isaac BARTON was engaged in erecting stables for Dr. GODFREY, and at the time that the storm passed, seven men were working in or near the building. Their names were : Henry LEAL, foreman, Prince-Street, Ryde; Albert LEAL, his son, apprentice, Prince-Street, Ryde, **Martin GUY**, painter, Surrey-Street, Ryde; Edward JOLLIFFE, carpenter, Star-Street, Ryde; Francis WELLS, apprentice, Binstead; William COOKE, labourer, Oakfield; George WILLIAMS, labourer, St Helen's. a lad who is groom to Dr. GODFREY was also there. The building was practically concluded, and Dr. GODFREY had his horse in the stall which the groom had been attending to. The building was a two storied one, there being two living rooms for the coachman there, and a loft; and downstairs, a coach-house, harness room an stall for horses. The place was not painted, and the plastering was unfinished. Martin GUY was upstairs painting in one of the living rooms, and when the storm passed, the men working outside went into the coach-house. The flash seems to have struck the chimney of the room where GUY was working and to have knocked one side of it off. It went through the roof, and a small hole in the ceiling showing where it had penetrated. It appears to have divided and one part went through the coach-house, where the men were, and then it seemed to have skirted the side of the doorway, shaving off a small piece almost as if it had been done with a knife. In the loose box at the other end of the building the horse was found killed.

## THE INQUEST

On Saturday afternoon the Coroner for the Island (Mr. E.F. BLAKE,) held an inquest at the Wayside Inn, Nettlestone, touching the deaths of Martin GUY, painter of Surrey Street, and William COOK, of Oakfield, the victims of the extraordinary thunderstorm of Friday last. The jury, of which Mr. MAZEY was foreman, having viewed the bodies the following evidence was taken.

Henry LEAL, of 25 Princes-Street deposed. I am a bricklayer and was working yesterday at this house for Mr. BARTON. The deceased were working with me. GUY was a painter, and COOK was the labourer. There were eight altogether, and we were working there till the storm commenced. GUY was upstairs at work all the time, but COOK and those who were outside came in out of the rain. There was a considerable amount of thunder and lightening. About twenty minutes after the storm began, I was in the loft sawing a piece of wood.

Did you see the lightening ? I didn't see anything. I must have been knocked down on the floor and must have been unconscious.

How long do you suppose you were unconscious ? I don't know - for some time I should think.

When you recovered what did you do ? I ran down the ladder into the coach-house, and there I found five of the workmen all lying on their backs. There was seven of us and the coachman, a lad. When I got inside a man named WILLIAMS was on his knees getting up.

Where was COOK ? He was in the corner, I went up to look at him, and thought he was dead and ran for the doctor.

Did you notice on the wall where the lightening came through ? Yes, afterwards, I went upstairs as I knew GUY was working there and found GUY he was lying on his back, or sitting in the corner.

Do you believe he was then dead ? Yes, I took hold of his hand and called "Martin!" he did not reply, and I have no doubt he was dead.

Dr. GODFREY lives on the premises near at hand. Yes, and I went for him and he came at once.

Have the other six recovered ? Francis WELLS is still very bad. He was an apprentice lad. I think he was rather seriously injured. He was delirious.

Was he taken home ? Yes, to Binstead.

Dr. Frank GODFREY deposed. I am a surgeon living at Nettlestone. I was building these stables, and got Mr. BARTON of Ryde to do them. The stable was sufficiently finished for me to occupy, at least my horse was there. The roof had been completed for some time, and only the doors were waiting to be painted, the coach-house was also completed. They were decorating the doors and painting them, I was at home when the storm began about half- past one. There was a very heavy clap of thunder about half-past two. It came when I was close to my own door, and I knew something had happened. Directly afterwards LEAL shouted and came over to me, he said "Come at once ! They are all down." I went to the coach-house and found my gardener and four workmen lying the ground. I found that a lad named COOK was dead and another lad stunned and delirious, I then went upstairs into the loft of the stables and there found JOLLIFFE, a carpenter badly stunned, the body suffering from great shock and all the limbs jerking. I noticed the strong fumes of sulphur and the smell of burning. I went to the other part of the building, and found GUY reclining against the wall with his head resting in his hand. He was quite dead. The other four men kept getting up and falling down again. I did what I could for them, and sent for a carriage, and when they were sufficiently recovered sent them home.

The Coroner in summing up, said it was satisfactory to know that in the deplorable occurrence there was no one to blame, also that no more were killed. It was very fortunate that a doctor was at hand to render assistance to those who were helpless.

A verdict was returned that the deceased men died by being by being struck by lightening. The doctor said he should be pleased to give his fees to the relatives of the deceased.

## THE FUNERAL OF PRIVATE GUY

The funeral of the late Private **GUY** took place on Monday at the Ryde Cemetery. There was a large crowd of spectators. Deceased was accorded a Volunteer funeral, the officers present being Major C. SWEETMAN, Captain J. FARDELL, and Lieut. M. WHITTAM. The band under Bandleader ALEXANDER, played CHOPIN'S "Marche Funebre," and the German Dead March. The coffin, which was one of polished oak with brass fittings, was covered with the Union Jack, upon which deceased's busby, and signalling flag, and a number of wreaths.

The principal mourners were deceased's father and wife. Amongst those who also followed were deceased's fellow workman, including the foreman, Mr. Henry LEAL, and a number of Oddfellows, including Messrs, A. JOLLIFFE, H. MORRIS, G. DAISH, G.A. MILLETT, E.L. TUFFNELL, CHANDLER, E. WHEELER, TUTTE, etc. The ceremony was performed by the Rev W.M CAMERON, the Oddfellows service was read by Br. DAISH, and the Volunteer firing party fired three volleys over the grave. The coffin bore the inscription, "**Martin F. GUY**, Died July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1900, aged 38 years."

There were wreaths from the deceased's wife, "Sally," Mr. Isaac BARTON, "with deepest sympathy from the officers and brethren of the Loyal East Medina Lodge of Oddfellows," "With sincere regret from his fellow workmen," the Vectis Cycling Club, and the Volunteer signalling section. Mr. Isaac BARTON, deceased's employer, was the undertaker.

COOK was buried in the Cemetery at High Park on the same day

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Researched & typed by  
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