

**THE FUNERAL.**--- of Air-Mechanic John Frank HORSFORD, only child of Mrs. E. HORSFORD, of 25 Victoria-crescent, Elmfield, who met with a tragic death as a result of a motor-cycle accident when returning to Flowerdown Aerodrome after weekend leave on Sunday week, took place on Monday. In the morning the body was taken from the Royal Hants Hospital to Winchester station, accompanied by a guard of honour from the aerodrome to which he was attached. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, upon which lay the deceased's cap and belt. Among those accompanying it were two of the young man's chums, Air-mechanics Godfrey ELLIS and William LEWIS.

The interment took place in St. John's Churchyard, and was preceded by a short service at St. John's Church, where the Vicar (the Rev. J. Gillson GILL) officiated. A large body of sympathisers assembled in the Churchyard, where the Rev. Gillson GILL performed the last rites after the coffin had been lowered into the same grave as that of his father, following which Wireless Operator A. C. ADAMS sounded the Last Post and Reveillé.

The mourners were Mrs. E. HORSFORD (mother), Mrs. HORSFORD (grandmother), Messrs. Alan and Horace HORSFORD (uncles), Mr. and Mrs. H. HORSFORD (uncle and aunt), Mrs. W. MEADER (aunt), and Miss Lena HARRIS (fiancée).

Among others present were Major DENNIS, C.C., Mr. C. V. SMEE (secretary of the Ryde Y.M.C.A.), Mr. and Mrs. A. DALL, Miss STROUD, Mr. J. DARBY, Mr. E. TIDMAN, Mrs. CLARK, Mr. and Mrs. A. POCOCK, Mrs. BIGNELL, Mr. and Mrs. J. BLACK, Mr. R. DALLIMORE, Mr. W. MOORMAN, Mrs. LACEY, Mr. and Miss CHESSELL, Mrs. G. MOORMAN, Miss M. MOORMAN, Mrs. TOOGOOD, Mrs. MILES, Mr. and Mrs. COOMBES, Mr. CIVIL, and Miss BURT, representing the St. John's Cubs.

The large number of beautiful floral tributes included emblems of respect from the commanding officer and officers of the Electrical Wireless School, R.A.F., Flowerdown, the sergeants mess, the corporals of the same school, from B. Squadron, from Hut 6, from the 2nd Ryde Scouts (St. John's), and from St. John's Social Club.

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**RYDE MOTOR-CYCLIST'S DEATH**  
ADJOURNED INQUEST  
NO QUESTION OF RACING

The circumstances of the death which occurred at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester, on December 8th, of **John Frank HORSFORD**, 20, mechanic in the R.A.F. stationed at the Electrical and Wireless School, Flowerdown, Winchester, were further inquired into by the Winchester City Coroner (Mr. T. E. BROWN) and a jury at the Guildhall, Winchester, on Tuesday.

At the previous hearing on December 9th evidence of identification of the body was given by deceased's mother, Mrs. Ethel HORSFORD, a widow, of 25 Victoria-crescent, High Park, Ryde.

William UNDERWOOD, labourer of Shirrell Heath, near Shedfield, stated that about 8.45 p.m. on the night of December 4th he was walking along the road at Waltham Chase in the company of a Mr. RICHARDS. While proceeding along on their proper side of the road RICHARDS suddenly shouted "Look up, Bill, he's right on top of you." Almost immediately witness was struck on his right arm and leg by the motor-cycle. The impact knocked him down, and he was rendered unconscious, sustaining a fractured rib, while the muscle of his right leg was torn. There was no other vehicle about and there would have been about 14 or 15 feet to the other side of the road. Witness was unable to say anything as to the speed of the motor-cycle as he neither saw nor heard it coming. He did not personally report the occurrence to the police.

Henry RICHARDS, market gardener, of Shirrell Heath, spoke to walking along the road

with the last witness. He heard a motor-cycle approaching from behind, his attention being attracted by the noise it was making. Seeing it was nearly on them he caught hold of UNDERWOOD's arm to pull him on one side. He was not, however, quick enough, and the motor-cycle struck UNDERWOOD, knocking him down. It then went on a further 10 or 15 yards, when the cyclist was pitched off. There was plenty of room for the motor-cycle to have passed them.

By the Coroner: He could not accurately estimate the speed of the motor-cycle as it was all so sudden, but he should say that it was 30 miles an hour at least. Another motor-cyclist was coming along behind, and witness stopped him. He did not see deceased thrown off.

John PERRY, labourer, of Shirrell Heath, who with a man named SYME was walking along the road behind the two previous witnesses, said he heard the shout "Look out, Bill," and at the same moment the cycle struck UNDERWOOD and the rider was pitched off. Witness and SYME picked up the cyclist and carried him to the side of the road, where they made him as comfortable as they could, at the same time sending for a doctor. After the motor-cycle struck UNDERWOOD it turned to the right, and the rider was thrown off in the middle of the road.

By the Coroner: Witness had no idea that a motor-cycle was approaching them until he heard RICHARDS shout. The bend in the road at the spot would obscure the light of a cycle until it was quite close.

Frank Reginald Godfrey SYME, a chauffeur, gave similar evidence, adding that the road at that spot had been recently remade. He could not say whether the cyclist had applied his brake or not.

George Denis MILLETT, a fitter, of Basingstoke, the rider of the second motor-cycle said deceased and himself were returning from Portsmouth. They had crossed from Ryde by the seven o'clock boat, and left Portsmouth just after eight o'clock. They reached Sandy-hill, Shedfield, about 8.45, and up to that point witness had been leading. About five minutes before the accident occurred deceased took the lead. Both knew the road well, and witness had travelled along it most Sunday evenings for two years. That was the reason why he took the lead. There was no reason for HORSFORD taking the lead; he simply passed witness on the road just prior to the accident. They had not been racing. Witness put their speed at from 25 to 30 miles an hour. Having repeated his statement that they were not racing witness went on to say that they had had no trouble whatever with their machines. He saw deceased strike someone, and a moment afterwards his cycle overturned. HORSFORD had a very good head light, and the road was dry. Witness could not understand why he did not see the men walking in the road.

By the Jury: Deceased was riding a 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-h.p. machine.

P.C. CRIPPS, of Shedfield, said he first received a report of the accident on the evening of Wednesday December 7th. He lived within half a mile of the scene of the accident and could not say why he did not hear anything of it for three days. The doctor did not report the accident to him.

The Coroner interposed that he did not wish to blame the constable, but it could not be too widely known that all accidents should be report to the police without delay.

P.C. CRIPPS then spoke to an examination he made of deceased's motor-cycle, which was but very little damaged, and the brakes were in good order. The road at the spot was 20 feet wide, and the surface good.

By the Jury: The cycle had been garaged at a neighbouring house for three days.

Dr. E. A. PYE, house surgeon at the County Hospital, said deceased was admitted to the institution on the night of December 4th. He was suffering from a fracture of the base of the skull, and died on the following Thursday, December 8th. He was conscious for two days, during which time his mother was constantly with him.

This was all the evidence, and the Coroner in summing up, said it was difficult to understand how deceased could have run into the men when they were walking on their proper side of the road. He had questioned the witness MERRITT rather closely because if there were not any real grounds for saying that the two motor-cyclists were racing, it was possible that the jury might have requested that MERRITT should be censured. In justice to MERRITT he should say that he gave his evidence well. They were not racing, and therefore it could only be suggested that HORSFORD,

suddenly seeing someone in the road, lost his head. He (the Coroner) hoped the time would come when the insurance of all motor-cyclists would become compulsory.

The Jury gave their verdict as "Accidental death," the foreman stating that they thought there had been an error of judgement on the part of the deceased. They also commended RICHARDS for his prompt action in pulling up the second cyclists.

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Researched by  
Ann Barrett