

## BAKEHOUSE FATALITY

### ADJOURNED INQUEST AND VERDICT

The said circumstances attending the death in the County Hospital of **Gilbert RANDALL** (28), married, who occupied a flat at Spencer Lodge, Market Street and which followed injuries received at a bakehouse (late Shaplands) in Union Street, were inquired into at the institution on Monday by the Deputy-Coroner (W. H. P. F. THIRKELL, Esq), and adjourned for the attendance of H.M. Inspector of Factories. Mr. H. R. PALMER represented Mrs RANDALL and Insp. MORRISON the police.

Mrs Annie BLANCHARD, 52 Alistree Road, Fulham, S.W., wife of a painter invalided from the Army identified the body as that of her son who was 28 years of age and employed as a baker at 19 Union Street. She came to Ryde on the previous Monday owing to her son's illness. He had been in hospital since August 24<sup>th</sup>. She stayed up all night with him prior to his death which occurred at 1.55 on Saturday morning. He did not tell her about the occurrence all he could complain of was his "poor head."

Mrs. Emily McKENNA, of Fulham, deceased's mother-in-law and wife of a retired hall-keeper at Kensington said she had been staying with deceased and his wife for the last five weeks. His birthday was on July 28<sup>th</sup> and on the following day he came home and complained of being injured at the bake-house of HOBLEY's Ltd, 19 Union Street.

The Deputy-Coroner at this stage, said the accident had occurred at which was technically a factory. He had been in communication with H.M. Inspector and by an arrangement with him would adjourn the inquest until Wednesday for a full investigation.

The adjourned inquest on Gilbert RANDALL was held at the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom, High Street. On Wednesday before the Deputy Coroner (W. H. P. F. THIRKELL, Esq), and a jury of which Mr F. G. WHITTINGTON was foreman. Mr H. R. PALMER represented the family of deceased, Mr R. PROUDFOOT (Southampton), the employees, HOBLEY's Ltd., Union Street and Mr W. T. HEWINS (H. M. Inspector of Factories, Southampton) the Home Office.

Mrs. McKENNA, recalled, said that when deceased (her son-in-law) returned home on the day of the accident July 29<sup>th</sup> he remarked "I have had a very nice present today (referring to his birthday), I was nearly 'knocked out by the oven door.'" He declined his dinner but had a cup of tea. She suggested him staying at home but he said they were too busy at the bakery and he would stand it. He returned to the shop about 3 p.m. and when he came back at night he was very bad and complained of his head. He had a cup of hot milk. Deceased continued at work until Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. On that day he came home just after on o'clock and was too ill to go back but went to bed. He got worse and she sent for a doctor on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> who attend him that day and Monday. Two doctors saw him on the Tuesday and advised him to be X-rayed for his head. On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> he was admitted to the County Hospital. Deceased had a wife and child the latter born in 1922.

In reply to Mr. PROUDFOOT witness said deceased told them that the oven door was on the swivel and fell on his head. He said it was fortunate he was wearing his cap or it would have had his off. He only had one good meal and was on a light diet. Two or three days after the accident blood came from his nose. He worked up till 10 o'clock at night after the accident but had a difficulty in getting to and fro and all the time he complained of pains in his head.

Replying to the jury witness said deceased was in good health and was a steady man.

Lilian Henrietta BROMLEY, 19 Union Street said she was manageress at HOBLEY's who were bakers and confectioners. She did not hear of the accident until the Monday after he left work namely August 22<sup>nd</sup>. They heard he could not come in that day. On the 19<sup>th</sup> he complained to her of his head saying the pain was unbearable but he told her nothing about the accident. She saw him at the Hospital on the Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>, when she asked if he thought the blow he received was responsible for his illness and he replied "Yes I do"

In answer to the Factory Inspector witness said she received no complaint of any defect about the oven. She had examined two doors since and noticed they did not catch very easily.

The Deputy Coroner told the jury that there were a nest of ovens the doors of which opened like lockers, the fires being underneath so that if he was working there it could drop upon him.

Witness said that no-one had been injured by the ovens. He was apparently putting coke on the fire and the vibration caused the door to open.

Chas. TAYLOR, pastry cook employed by the firm in Union Street stated that he was in the bakery with deceased on Friday July 29<sup>th</sup> about 11 o'clock in the forenoon. Deceased was stoking one of the fires which were underneath the ovens. This must have shaken oven and he saw the door fall open and strike his head. It was an iron door but he would not like to say it weight 20 lb.

The Inspector believed it weighted from 20 to 30 lb

Witness continuing said after he was struck he stood back and held his hand to his head for a short time and started working again. There was a knack in shutting the doors.

In answer to the Coroner witness said he had known the doors to fall open when they were not shut properly before. Deceased remained at work some days and he heard him frequently complain of head-ache which he had not done before the accident. On August 19<sup>th</sup> deceased became much worse and left work,

Replying to the Inspector witness said one lug did not catch properly and the catches were worn. He did not report it. He agreed with the Inspector that the oven door was warped. The door could be closed securely by giving careful attention. They only opened one door at a time.

Dr. A. M. V. BONHOE, the lady house surgeon at the County Hospital stated she found two cracks in the bone of the skull each an inch in length. The coverings of the brain were studded with tuberculous disease condition at the base and sides of the cerebrum. There was a tuberculous mass about the size of a small nut in each of the two ventricles of the brain the lungs being also affected. She considered that death was due to tubercular meningitis and it was a matter of opinion that if the injury of the skull could precipitate that condition but it was significant that his headaches commenced from the date of the accident.

The Deputy Coroner remarked that it was evident that the deceased was not in a normal state of health.

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