

YOUNG FARMER'S TRAGIC DEATH

TRACTOR OVERTURNS ON STEEP HILL.

Mr. David Alfred Victor LOVEGROVE, aged 23, of Barnsley Farm, Ryde, died on Tuesday shortly after being removed to the County Hospital with grave injuries as a result of a farm tractor accident at Knighton Shute. Only recently he and a younger brother became the tenants of Hill Farm, which adjoins their father's holding at Carpenters Farm, St. Helens.

An inquest was conducted by the Acting Coroner (Mr. J. G. FARDELL) with a jury at the Town Hall, Ryde, on Thursday, Inspector J. TURNBULL represented the police.

Mr. Alfred Hedley LOVEGROVE, of Carpenters Farm, St. Helens, said that the deceased, his eldest son, had been driving a tractor, at which he was expert, since 1940. On Tuesday, accompanied by a driver named YOUNG, he took the tractor from the farm with a baler and trailer to go to Knighton. The tractor had recently been over-hauled.

Jack Hylton YOUNG, a tractor driver, of 1 Fern Cottages, West Street, Brading, said that at 8.15a.m. on Tuesday he left Carpenters Farm with deceased, who was driving the tractor. Witness was standing on the front of the baler, which was attached to the tractor, and applied the brake when necessary. At the top of Knighton Shute LOVEGROVE stopped and went down the hill to inspect it. After doing so he said "I think it will be all right if you put the brake on the baler." Witness stood on the draw-bar of the baler and pushed the brake down as far as he could and pushed the holding pin in. LOVEGROVE then put the tractor in first gear and started going down the hill. The tractor started to skid and LOVEGROVE shouted to him "Give her more brake." Witness then pulled out the holding pin and put the whole weight of his body on the brake bar, but could not get it down far enough to put the pin in the next hole. The tractor started to wobble so he jumped off. Before he had time to look in the direction of the tractor he heard a crash and saw that it had run into the hedge on the off side of the road and was upside down facing up the hill. The baler was lying across the road on its side and the trailer was upright on the nearside. He ran to deceased, who was lying in the gutter close to the tractor, and saw that he appeared to be badly hurt, and went for help. In reply to the Coroner, witness said that had he stayed on the baler he would probably have gone underneath it. – When witness, in reply to deceased's father, said his son never suggested taking off the trailer before going down the hill, Mr. LOVEGROVE remarked "I can't understand why he never did it."

Stanley Harry ORCHARD, tractor foreman, employed by Messrs. Frank CHEVERTON, Newport, and living at The Cottage, Brighstone, said that on May 19th deceased took delivery of a new baler, weighing 4 tons. Witness tested the brakes and found them in perfect condition. On Tuesday after the accident he tested the brakes of the tractor, which were in good condition, as was that tried on the one undamaged wheel of the baler. The trailer would be just under two tons. The tractor was sufficient to manage both vehicles up or down any hills. – Answering Inspector TURNBULL, witness said the reason why YOUNG could not get the pin down in the next hole was that the brakes were new and fully adjusted. If the pin was out when YOUNG jumped off there would be no brake acting on the baler. The weight of the tractor was 30cwt.

P.C. COOK said the hill had a gradient of one in seven.

Dr. David C. MORLEY, house surgeon at the County Hospital, said deceased's condition on admission at 10.30 a.m. was critical and, in spite of attempts at resuscitation, he died at 1.30 p.m. Death was due to shock arising from a multiple fracture of the pelvis.

Addressing the jury, the Coroner said questions arising were as to whether the vehicles were suitable for the road and whether deceased made a mistake, or was it one of those accidents in which no one was to blame. Deceased was an experienced tractor driver who showed caution in getting off and looking at the hill. He had the brake put on the baler, but not on the trailer, and he may have well thought that it could not possibly have made any difference. Coming down the hill the baler, for some reason, took charge. In his opinion, if YOUNG had stayed on the baler they would have been inquiring into the loss of two lives. He did not think YOUNG could have done any more than he did.

The jury returned a verdict of death by misadventure and exonerated YOUNG from blame. They expressed sympathy with the family, and the Coroner said it must indeed be a great loss. Deceased was a young farmer doing most valuable work and they could ill afford losing a man like him.

The funeral took place yesterday (Friday) afternoon, following a service at St. John 's Church, Ryde.

Researched & typed by
Ann Barrett
Margaret Truckel