

FATAL ACCIDENT ON THE G.W.R. AT SWINDON.

MAN KNOCKED DOWN DURING SHUNTING OPERATIONS.

THE CORONER'S ENQUIRY.

Yesterday (Friday) afternoon Mr A. L. Forrester, the Coroner for North Wilts, held an inquest in the Council Room of the G.W.R. Mechanics' Institution, Swindon, touching the death of John Tucker, aged 60 years, of Coate, near Swindon, who was run over and killed by an engine crane on the G.W.R. line at Swindon on Wednesday morning.

Mr Frederick Booker was appointed foreman of the jury.

Mr Gerald B. Snape, H.M. Inspector of Factories, of Carlton Chambers, Bristol, attended the enquiry.

Mr Albert Lewis and Mr Wm. Barrett were present representing the Loco. Department of the G.W.R.

Mr W. S. Jones, from the office of Mr A. E. Withy, was present representing the widow.

The first witness called was Edmond Thomas Tucker, living at Upper Wanborough. Witness, a labourer in the G.W.R. Works, said the deceased was his father, who was 60 years of age last birthday. The deceased was a labourer. When deceased left home for his work on Wednesday morning, he was in good health and spirits. Witness walked with his father to work. Deceased did not suffer from deafness nor was his sight defective.

The next witness was George John Morris, living at 100, Gladstone Street, Swindon, an engine driver in the employ of the G.W.R. He said that on Wednesday, the 20th inst., he was shunting in the loco. yard. He was proceeding back on the down road next to the wall towards the weighbridge. He happened to glance across, and saw the deceased struck by a truck and fall. He immediately blew the brake whistle of his own engine and shouted. Witness then jumped off his engine and ran down to the steam crane and told those about that there was a man under the engine. He looked underneath and saw the man pinned down by the girder stay of the bogey of the engine. Witness took his coat off, got underneath, and helped to extricate the man, who breathed his last as he was put on the stretcher.

The Coroner: Was it the steam crane that pushed the trucks that knocked the man down?

Witness: Yes.

Witness said he had seen the deceased cleaning other points that morning. It was the deceased's general duty. Deceased was not new to the job.

In reply to Mr Jones, witness said that he had seen watchmen with the men attending to the points in connection with the traffic department. At the spot where the accident happened, there were generally a lot of men attending to the permanent way.

Henry Roach, of Gorse Hill, a shunter in the employ of the G.W.R. Works, said he was engaged as a shunter in the loco. yard. About 7.15 on Wednesday morning he was talking to the deceased, and Tucker asked him to "turn the points over so that he could clean the other side." Witness turned the points—hand points—over, and he then turned round to couple on two waggons on to the road next to the wall. The next moment he heard a shout, and turning round, he saw that Tucker was under the steam crane engine. Driver

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In reply to Mr Jones, witness said it was a very rough and nasty morning. There was a high wind, which would prevent the deceased hearing the approach of an engine, as it was blowing against the deceased and the engine. There were the driver, fireman and shunter in charge of the engine with the trucks.

The Coroner: Which side was the deceased standing when you spoke to him?

Witness: On the driver's side.

Witness was not sure whether or not Tucker was in the four-foot way when he was knocked down, but witness did not think the shunter could see Tucker.

David William Spanswick, a shunter in the employ of the G.W.R. Co., in the loco. yard, said that on Wednesday last about 7.15 a.m. he was engaged shunting with the steam travelling train. They were coming off No. 15 road with two trucks in front of the engine. Witness was riding on the shunting truck next to the engine. He was riding on the right-hand side of the truck. This was on the outside of the curve, the same side as the driver. Witness did not always ride on the same side as the driver when shunting. In this case they came upon No. 15 road, and about 50 or 60 yards off from where the man was knocked down, witness would lose sight of the spot. When witness was 50 or 60 yards off he saw the road was clear, and no one standing there. He noticed, however, Roach go and turn the points over to the road through which he would go. Witness saw no one else. Witness then heard the brake whistle from the other engine.

In reply to Mr Jones, witness said it was possible for a man to be in the four-foot way without witness seeing him just before the accident.

Dr George Rodway Swinhoe said that on Wednesday morning he was called to the Medical Fund Hospital, and he there found the body of a man identified as John Tucker. He was suffering from a severe scalp wound on the left side, fracture of the skull, compound dislocation of the left hip, and other injuries. Tucker died from injuries he received as the result of being run over on the line. The man was so badly knocked about that he must have been in the four-foot way.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

The Coroner: I don't think you could come to any other conclusion.