

# BUCKINGHAM ADVERTISER AND FREE PRESS

SATURDAY 31 DECEMBER 1932

## **CHRISTMAS TRAGEDY AT TWYFORD. Man Found Dead on' Railway Line Thought there were "Stories" about him.**

### **VICTIM OF MELANCHOLIA**

A pathetic tragedy on the railway line cast a cloud over the Christmastide celebrations in the village of Twyford. On Christmas Eve, the Coroner (Mr Philip Wood) conducted an inquest concerning the death of Arthur Alfred Wise, 61, who had been suffering from melancholia and was found dead on railway line near Twyford after the passing of a train. At the inquest the Jury returned a verdict of "suicide while of unsound mind". The Village Hall, in which the inquest was held had been decorated for the children's Christmas festivities and the appearance of these struck a pathetic note against the sadness of the sudden circumstances in which the hall was required to be used.

Mr W F Wood was foreman of the Jury which was composed of Messrs T G Thorpe, F Hodges, A J Hall, F Rawlings, H J Allen, A J Kirtland and O Thorpe. Mr A Standing of the LNER, Police Offices, NW1 attended and District Assistant Surveyor represented the Bucks County Council by whom the deceased, who was highly respected in the village, had been employed as a road worker.

#### **"DID NOT KNOW WHY"**

The first witness was Mrs Sarah Ann Wise, widow of the deceased, who said that she last saw her husband, who was a roadman in the employ of the Bucks County Council, at about 2.30 on the previous Friday afternoon. He was then walking down the field outside witness's house. Her husband had been in good health until about three weeks ago when he became very depressed. Witness did not know why her husband was depressed. He gave her no hint and would not tell her what was the matter. On Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> he said: "I have come home from work, never to go again". He gave witness no reason as to why he was not returning to work and this did not mean that he had "lost his job". He was first attended by the doctor on the previous Wednesday and Dr Creighton, of Steeple Claydon, had attended every day since then.

#### **"WATCH HIM CAREFULLY"**

Witness said that her husband was not confined to bed during this time. She thought that the doctor took a serious view of the matter. He said to her "watch him very carefully" and witness did so. Several times she had tried to stop him from going out alone; but she did not stop him on the last occasion. Witness's relations had been with him before; but there was no one to go with him then. He had threatened to take his life on the railway line and he had also threatened to shoot himself; but he had never threatened to take his life until that last week. He had no domestic worries at all and was quite happy at home. He first threatened to take his life after he had left work last Tuesday and had done so since then on several occasions before he died.

Witness further stated that arrangements had been made for her husband to go away from home and stay with an uncle. Her husband had not agreed to go and did not want to go. They were

trying to force him to do so because they thought that the change might do him good. The doctor had advised a change.

### **“VERY SENSITIVE”**

David Benjamin Wise, brickyard labourer, Rose Cottage, Twyford, said that he had been looking after his brother, the deceased, a good deal lately, especially at night. He was with him on the previous Tuesday and Thursday nights when he found him very depressed.

The Coroner: About what?

Witness: It seemed chiefly about his character, from what he had said to me. He said that everything had gone and that he was “no good”. I told him that he had the best of characters and that I could not understand him talking like that. He was very sensitive and I could only think that it must be due to something or other that he had heard.

The Coroner: When you were with him did he threaten to take his life? – He said it would have to come to that.

Witness further stated that his brother never went to bed at all during the first night that he was looking after him. Answering the Coroner, he said that he had never heard a word against his brother’s character.

The coroner: Did you hear that he wanted carefully watching? -- I did; but I never thought he would do anything like that. I was with him for company. That was how I put it to him.

Do you know of any business that would take him across the line? -- No, none of any kind.

### **FARMER’S DISCOVERY**

Evidence of finding the body of the deceased was given by Thomas Edward Rose, farmer of Church View, Twyford, who said that at about 3.30pm on the previous Friday when he was approaching the level crossing of the LNER at a distance of about two miles from the Calvert Road, he saw the body lying on the up line with the head close to the outside rail. There were signs of injury about the head. Deceased was then quite dead. There was no evidence of anybody else having been to that place. He had seen him previously in the morning, further up the lines looking ill and with nobody with him. That was the first time he had seen him on the lines. The gates there were kept locked. After seeing the body, witness informed the police.

PC Trevener, stationed at Twyford, said that at 3.40pm on the previous Friday, as a result of information received, he proceeded to the LNER where at a distance of about two miles from Calvert Station, he saw the deceased lying on the up line, with his head on the line. Deceased, who was then quite dead, had extensive injuries. He searched the place at which deceased was lying, and found no signs of any struggle. He searched the body, but found no property on the deceased. The body was removed to the vicarage Lodge, Twyford.

### **“GETTING ON MY NERVES”**

Witness further stated that on Saturday morning, 17<sup>th</sup> inst. He saw Mr Wise working on the road at Poundon. He spoke to witness and said, “have you heard the tale that is going round about me? I can’t understand it. It is getting on my nerves”. “I told him” said witness, “that I had heard nothing whatever about him and that he was probably suffering from the imagination. He looked very strange.”

Answering the Coroner, witness said that in so far as he knew, the deceased had a good character.

The medical witness was Dr John Alexander Creighton, of Steeple Claydon, who said that when he was called to Mr Wise on the previous Tuesday, he found him to be suffering from melancholia. Witness discussed asylum treatment with the relations of the deceased, but they preferred to keep him at home, if possible. Witness said that he was prepared to treat him at home and that he would require careful watching. On the previous Friday, he seemed rather better and his wife asked if a change would benefit him. Witness gave permission for him to be taken for a change.

### **DOCTOR SURPRISED**

Dr Creighton said that deceased's death would almost certainly be instantaneous. He found a large wound in the head and a fracture of the skull.

The Coroner: Did it surprise you what had happened? — I was surprised. I did not think it was as bad as that. He had threatened to commit suicide to me.

Have you ever heard anything against his character? — Never.

Also answering the Coroner, the doctor said that deceased's remarks with regard to latter subject suggested a symptom of melancholia. He added that deceased's injuries were consistent with those of one who had been knocked down by a railway train.

In reply to a question by the Foreman of the Jury as to whether the doctor had been acquainted with deceased's threat to take life, Dr Creighton said that he had been so acquainted and that that was why he had said that the patient must be carefully watched. At this point in the enquiry the Coroner mentioned that the Railway Company was represented adding that they must realise the railway company could not possibly be responsible for what had happened.

Mr. Standing: Neither the fireman nor the engineer knew anything about it.

### **ENGINE DRIVER'S EVIDENCE**

It was decided to call as a witness a locomotive driver in the employ of the LNER and this witness, John Henry Cooper of London WNW10, stated that on the previous Friday he was driving the 1.20pm passenger train from Leicester to Marylebone. It arrived at Calvert at 3.25pm. He saw nothing of the deceased and had no knowledge that the train had run into anybody. Witness thought that the deceased would be out of view on that occasion, but in the ordinary course of events, they would probably see anybody. Witness said that he was relieved at Harrow and that there were no marks on the engine when it was examined at Marylebone.

The Coroner, in summing up, said that there appeared to be no doubt about the fact that the deceased deliberately committed suicide under a train. Neither the driver, the fireman, nor the railway company could be held in any way to blame if a man went on to the railway with the intention of taking his life. The relations had been advised that the deceased should be carefully watched and the doctor had suggested that he should be sent to an institution. If the relations could not look after him at home, he would have been looked after there. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient attention for him at home. He thought that they were bound to agree, on the doctor's evidence, that the deceased was unsound-minded at the time of the occurrence. The Foreman said that there was no rumour against him and they were glad to hear that; for there was nothing more sinful than the starting of such rumours.

### **FOREMAN AND RUMOUR**

The Foreman: I am sure none of us have heard anything against his character of any description whatever. After the Jury had returned their verdict, the Coroner, and representatives of the Railway Company, of the Bucks County Council and the witness who discovered the tragedy expressed sympathy with the relations of the deceased.