



# *Inquest Report*

## **John Richard Lever 1937**

### **Boys Death After Hospital Discharge**

#### **Gillingham Driver Exonerated**

A road accident which resulted in the death of John Richard Lever, aged 16½, of Ansty, was described to the Wilts County Coroner, Mr. Philip Johnson, at an inquest held at Ansty Recreation Hut on Tuesday afternoon.

The boy ran into a motor car whilst playing in the road at Ansty on January 28th, and was taken to Salisbury Infirmary. On February 10th he was discharged and returned to his home where he was attended by Dr Clay of Fovant, but unforeseen complications arose, and he died on Saturday.

Miss Louisa Ena Lever, of Ansty, the boy's sister, stated that after the accident John was taken straight to Salisbury Infirmary. The boy had previously been knocked down by a lorry about 3½ years ago, but on that occasion he was not seriously hurt.

#### **Darted Across the Road**

The driver of the car, Harry James Green, of Floramop, Gillingham, a commercial traveller employed by Messrs. Hudson & Martin of Gillingham, stated that on January 28th he was proceeding through Ansty village towards Tisbury. He slowed to pass a road obstruction and then saw John Lever running in the middle of the road in front of him. He sounded his horn, slowed down, and kept his eye on the boy. As far as witness could remember the boy did not look back, but continued to run and kick at a ball or a stone. As he ran he edged slightly towards his left. Witness pulled to his extreme offside and was about to pass when the boy darted across the road and ran into the near side of the car. He was still dribbling the ball or stone. Witness stopped and went back and found the boy lying face downwards in the middle of the road. The boy was taken in witness' car to Dr Du Pre, of Tisbury, who attended him and ordered his removal to Salisbury Infirmary.

The Coroner: What pace were you doing when you collided with him?

Approximately 20 miles per hour.

Did you know the boy?

Yes, I knew he was not quite normal, and because I thought that he might do something foolish, I took extraordinary precautions.

#### **Fractured Skull**

Dr. P. B. Barker, resident medical officer at Salisbury Infirmary, said Lever was admitted on January 28th. He was unconscious and suffering from a fractured skull. The boy was treated for shock and receive the usual injection of anti-tetanus serum. For the next two days he remained more or less unconscious, but following this he gradually returned to normal except at nights when he was apt to be a little restless. Three or four days before his discharge the question of getting the boy into a home for mental defectives was considered but his relatives preferred to look after him themselves. He was discharged in a satisfactory condition as far as his injuries were concerned on February 10th.

Answering further questions by the Coroner, Dr. Barker said the arm in which the boy was inoculated

©Wiltshire OPC Project/2018/Christine Brooks

was normal whilst he was in hospital and he never complained about it. There was no sign of anything like incipient pneumonia.

### **Blood Clot on the Heart**

Dr. H. D. Thornton, the Wilts County Pathologist, stated that the body was very thin and under-nourished, and the left forearm was swollen. Internal examination revealed a depressed fracture of the skull just behind the right temple, but this was well-nigh healed and the brain was not seriously affected. There was a blood clot by the right side of the heart, and this must have seriously embarrassed the heart. In witness' opinion it was due to a piece of blood clot becoming detached from the head region soon after the accident. The left forearm was distended with fluid in which were septic-bacteria. Such condition could not have originated from an anti-tetanus injection. Death was due to toxic absorption from an abscess in the forearm occurring in a person suffering from embolism of the heart, which was due to the accident.

Replying to the Foreman (Mr. T. W. Wright), Dr. Thornton said he could find no cause for the abscess in the forearm. He thought that the boy would have died if he had remained in hospital.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death" and exonerated the driver.

Sympathy with the relatives was expressed by the Coroner and the Foreman, and the jury handed their fees to the boy's sister.

**Western Gazette, Friday, 19 February 1937**