



SOUTH WILTSHIRE
CORONER'S INQUESTS
(Dinton extracts)



Louisa BROOKS 27th October, 1905

Dinton – Wife found on Railway Line

An inquest was held by Mr R. A. Wilson (Coroner) at the *French Horn*, Dinton, on Tuesday evening, on the body of 59 year old Louisa Hannah Brooks, the wife of sub-postmaster at Dinton, who was found dead on the railway line on Monday morning, near what is locally known as Church Lane crossing.

William Thomas Brooks, of Dinton, the husband of the deceased, stated that he was a bootmaker & sub-postmaster & that he had last seen his wife alive at about 9.30 am on Monday morning, when she was dressing to go out to Baverstock to collect some money. He stated his wife was not deaf & was in her usual health.

Mr Trethowan, representing L and SW R Company stated she had collected the money & must have been returning home by a shortcut through the fields, when she was knocked own.

John Baker, the landlord of the *Penruddocke Arms*, better known as the *French Horn*, said he saw Mrs Brooks at 9.45 am on Monday morning. She had a glass of beer, which she drank on the premises & also a pint of beer which she took away in a bottle. Mr Baker stated that Mrs Brooks was only there for a few minutes & she seemed jolly, but did not say where she was going.

Harry Lush, of Yeovil, stated that he was the driver of the 9.55 am train from Salisbury to Yeovil, on Monday. It was due at Dinton at 10.11 am & when he passed Church Lane crossing at 10.09 am he saw the body of a woman lying on the outside of the up-line. He saw that she was clear of the line & ran on & informed the Stationmaster at Dinton.

James Vanstone, parcel porter at Dinton Station, stated that on Monday upon the arrival of the 9.55am train from Salisbury, information was given that the body of a woman had been seen on the line. He informed the police & afterwards accompanied the Stationmaster to the spot where the body lay. Mrs Brooks, he stated, was quite dead. Her body was several yards from the crossing & there was evidence just near the path that she had been struck whilst crossing the rails. The line at that point was very straight with a clear view of 2 miles on the Dinton side & 1 mile on the Salisbury side.

John Richard Jones, of Exeter, stated that on Monday morning he was the driver of the 7.40 am express from Exeter to Salisbury – due at Salisbury at 10.01am. He was on the left side of the engine but did not see anything of the deceased. At Salisbury, he was informed that a person had been knocked down at Dinton. He then thoroughly examined the engine but could find no traces of the accident.

William John Stanbury, of Exeter, was a fireman on the express engine & stated that when he was passing Dinton, he was attending to his fire & saw nothing of the accident.

Dr Clay stated that he had a telegram on Monday morning from the Stationmaster, with reference to the accident. Dr Clay examined the body & found the principal injuries were on the left side. There was a fracture of the skull, the left arm was broken above the elbow, as were practically all the ribs on the left side. The left leg was broken more than once below the knee & there were also more serious injuries to the body. Death must have been instantaneous.

Mr Brooks, in answer to Mr Trethowan, said that he did not know till now that his wife took "anything" to drink. She had promised him- in fact they had both agreed – that they would be abstainers. He now found that she had taken "something" every day.

The Coroner remarked that the crossing was not a dangerous one. All the jury knew that this poor woman met her death whilst she was crossing over the line.

The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death" and that the railway company was in no way responsible for the accident, but the officials were rather to be commended on the promptness with which they dealt with the sad affair.

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