

Bolton Journal

A Farnworth Publican Killed - Conflicting Evidence, Inquest Adjourned

The District Coroner (Mr S. F. Butcher) held an inquest at the Lancaster and Yorkshire Café yesterday, to inquire into the surroundings of the death of William Dean Burgum (43) landlord of the Egerton Arms, Egerton Street, Moses Gate, who was killed on Horwich Station platform on Wednesday night after falling between the train and the platform. Thomas Burgum, Great Lever, spoke to his brother having attended a presentation at the Bridge Hotel on Wednesday evening. Walter Hamer, porter at Horwich Station, said he saw the deceased in a second-class compartment of the 9.59 train from Horwich. He was lying on the floor. Witness did not see him get into the train, but he went to him and asked him for his ticket. He could not get anything out of the deceased, however, and so he only lifted him onto the seat as he was helplessly drunk.

Witness had his attention drawn to the fact the deceased had gone to Blackrod by that train, which returned to Horwich at 10.09. On the arrival of the train was told that a man required assistance. He then went to the far end of the platform and found deceased down between the train and the platform. Witness did not think the carriage had moved again since coming to a standstill on its arrival, and could not account for him being there. Inspector Grassham and Dr Jackson then came down, the latter pronouncing life extinct.

John Archibald Collier, guard on the Blackrod train, spoke to finding deceased between the platform and the train and described the position of the body on the rails. There was not room for the deceased to have fallen between the footboard and the edge of the platform. Mr Hibert, Pioneer Street, Horwich, said he saw deceased being dragged along the platform between the carriages whilst the train was being backed about twenty yards to the rear of the platform. Witness made a rush, but the deceased dropped before he could get near. Witness then called to the driver to stop and he did so instantly. Witness did not see any signal given to the driver to set back. Thomas Ellison, 43, Siemen Street, Horwich, said he was the engine driver on the train, which killed the deceased. He worked the engine round, coupled up and the blew off the brake. That caused the carriages to give about an inch. Witness would swear he did not back the train.

William Dale, 41, Mason Street, spoke of being with deceased in the Bridge Hotel and said he was able to take care of himself, although he had had a glass or two. Inspector Grassham spoke to seeing deceased after the accident. The Coroner said if the jury wished to defer their verdict, they could do so. He commented on the conflicting character of the evidence and said that if the system of setting back was to go on at Horwich something should be done. The jury retired to consider their decision and on returning announced that the inquest was adjourned until next Tuesday morning at the Public Hall at 10.15."