

## **Samuel Mersey Barrat**

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 2 March 1946**

### **ROAD FATALITY AT PARKHURST**

#### **INQUEST VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER**

A verdict of manslaughter against the driver of the car involved was returned by the jury at the inquest at Forest House, Newport, on Tuesday, into the death of Mr. Samuel Mersey Barrat, a Ryde man, who had been an inmate of Forest House and employed as a clerk there for about 12 years. The inquiry was conducted by the Coroner (Mr. R. E. A. Webster), and Mr. A. B. Shaw, M.B.E., was elected foreman of the jury. Inspector A. R. Bird was the police officer present, and Mr. F. W. H. Cool, of Newport, appeared for the driver of the car, Mr. Ernest Luton Marshall, aged 23, a farmer, of Luton Farm, Northwood. Mr. Barrat was 78.

Medical Evidence was given by Dr. Richard Russell Brewer, medical officer at Parkhurst Prison, who was called to the scene, on the main Newport-Cowes road near the entrance to Parkhurst Prison, at 8.20 pm on Saturday. He found Barrat lying on the road dead. Next day he examined the body and found multiple abrasions and bruises. Blood from both ears was consistent with a fracture at the base of the skull. The right arm was fractured, and there was the possibility of a fracture of the right elbow. Both bones in the right leg were broken. Death was due to multiple injuries and must have been almost instantaneous.

William Cecil Jolliffe, of Messrs. Canning Day, Ltd., gave evidence of testing the car involved, a 14 h.p. saloon, on Monday. He stated that the brakes were most efficient. Under test the car stopped in just under two lengths at 30 m.p.h. and just over two lengths at 35 m.p.h. In answer to a question from the jury, Mr. Jolliffe said that the steering and engine were in perfect order, and car was thoroughly fit to be on the road.

Evidence of identification was given by Edgar John Hunt, assistant master at Forest House, who said the deceased's hearing and sight were good. He often took a walk between tea and supper, and was always most careful when on the road. By Mr. Cool: Witness had walked with Mr. Barrat into Newport and along Forest-road several times. He always walked on the pavement and would not walk along Forest-road at night because there was no pavement there. He was affected more than the average person by the lights of cars.

P.C. King, who was congratulated by the Coroner and the jury on the manner in which he gave his evidence, stated that he was called to the scene of the occurrence. Both the car and the body had been moved. He found a parallel skid mark 29 yards 2 feet long towards the off side in the direction of Newport. He found a bloodstain 3ft. 6in. from the off-side pavement, and the car mascot 12 yards from the bloodstain. The near side of the V-shaped radiator was bent inwards, and there were bloodstains on the wing and top of the bonnet. The weather at the time was clear and fine, but dark. There was no street lamp near the scene. There were four occupants of the car, including the driver. Mr. Marshall told witness he was proceeding to a dance at Newport.

Henry James Shippani, of 94a Pyle-street, Newport, a demolished Serviceman, said he was in the road leading up to Camp Hill at the time. He heard a car breaking with a terrific

screech and there was a heavy thud. The car had turned round when he reached it, and in the headlights he saw the body of a man lying in the road. He asked the driver what had happened, and Mr. Marshall said "I couldn't avoid him. He was walking in the middle of the road." He went with Mr. Marshall to the prison to obtain a doctor and telephoned to the police. He asked Mr. Marshall what was the matter with the lights, and he replied that he only had his "pointer" on, and that his speed was about 30 m.p.h. The driver also added that he was coasting down the hill to save petrol.

William Edward Way, of 27 Western-road, Shanklin, who was waiting for the Camp Hill bus about 200 yards away, said he saw a car with a smallish light coming down Horsebridge-hill. It did not appear to have headlights, but his view was obstructed by the trees along the edge of the sports field. He heard the brakes being put on and the car appeared to swing round in the road. He did not go to the scene of the accident as his bus came along at that moment. There were no other vehicles on the road at the time.

Mr. Marshall said he was going to a dance at Newport with three friends. Descending Horsebridge-hill he pressed his clutch, putting the engine out of gear, and his speed was about 30 m.p.h. About halfway down the hill he used his brakes slightly. He had his side lights and one headlamp, the near side one, which was dipped towards the near side of the road. When he reached the bottom of the hill he saw a figure in the middle of the road. The man was more or less on the left hand side, and as he could not pass him on the near side he bore to the right. He braked slightly as he drove towards the right. In reply to Inspector Bird: He was about 20-30 ft. away when he first saw the man, and by driving to the right he tried to get round him. Further questioned by the Coroner, Mr. Marshall was not able definitely to state the point of impact. He added that he had braked slightly because he always understood that to brake sharply would result in being thrown through the windscreen.

Miss Joan Parsons, of 29 Tennyson-road, Cowes, who was sitting in the front seat beside Mr Marshall, said that the man just loomed up in front of the car. They were in no hurry to get to the dance.

In his summing up the Coroner said that Mr. Marshall did not appear to be sure at what point he struck the man, and had stated that he only braked slightly on seeing him in order to get round him. But he had not done so. He had carried deceased forward to a point where the pool of blood was found. Mr. Marshall had given his evidence rather vaguely. The jury had heard evidence of the excellent condition of the brakes of the car and the results of tests made, but the skid marks at the scene were 39ft. in length. It had been laid down by the highest authority that a driver should not drive faster than to be able to pull up within the length of his vision. A driver was at fault if he did so. There must have been a considerable blow to have smashed up the old man, and for the mascot of the car to have been flung across the pavement.

The jury retired, during which they inspected the car, and on their return Mr. Shaw read their unanimous verdict that, taking into account the medical evidence and the multiple injuries sustained by deceased they had come to the conclusion that Mr. Marshall's speed must have been very excessive. Taking all things into consideration, they returned a verdict of manslaughter against Mr. Marshall.

## ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 9 March 1946

### NEWPORT

#### ROAD FATALITY VICTIM'S FUNERAL

The funeral of Mr. Samuel Mersey Barrat, former inmate and member of the office staff of Forest House, the victim of the road fatality at Parkhurst last week, took place on Friday week. The first part of the service was held in the Institution Chapel, the Rev. A. G. Woodcut officiating. The interment followed in the burial ground. The mourners included Miss S. Barrat (sister), Mrs. M. C. Barton, C.C., who also represented Mr. G. Moody (chairman of the Public Assistance Committee), the Master and Matron, and members of the staff of Forest House and St. Mary's Hospital. The floral tributes included wreaths from those named.

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*The Isle of Wight County Press, 23 March 1946 records that Mr. Ernest Luton Marshall appeared before Newport Borough Magistrates charged with manslaughter of Samuel Mersey Barrat. After hearing the evidence the magistrates dismissed the case.*

*Transcription by Rosemary Stewart for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries  
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