

Walter George Dyer

1881 census, Gatcombe Cottage, Gatcombe

George Dyer	Head	25	Ag Lab	Godshill, Hampshire
Francis E. Dyer	Wife	27		Barwish, Dorset
Walter G. Dyer	Son	6	Scholar	Chawton Leigh, Devon
Fanny E. Dyer	Daughter	1		Gatcombe, Hampshire
William Withers	Visitor	24	Ag Lab	Portsmouth, Hampshire

Isle of Wight County Press - 7 September 1887

FATAL ACCIDENT AT BLACKWATER.

INQUEST.

The Deputy-Coroner, E. F. Blake, Esq., held an inquest at Marvel Corner, near Blackwater, on Monday last, touching the death of Walter George Dyer, a youth 13 years of age, who was run over by a wagon on the tramway connected with a neighbouring gravel pit on the previous Saturday.

Eli Blake deposed that he was employed by Mr. Coker at Mr. Ruffin Blake's gravel pit on St. George's Down. There was a tram line from the pit about 200 yards down the incline towards the high road. On this line two wagons worked, connected with each other by a steel rope running around a drum at the top. The loaded wagon in descending pulled up the empty, and their speed was controlled by an iron band acting as a break [*sic*] on the drum. It was only a single line rail, so before the wagons could pass the empty one had to be lifted off the rails. Deceased had been employed about the pit for some weeks. On Saturday his duty was to break stones. He was standing with a lad names Cotton at the bottom of the incline, and as witness, who had charge of the drum, started the wagons he saw them both run and get into the empty wagon to ride up. Almost immediately the band broke and the loaded wagon rushed down without control, at the same time dragging up that with the boys in it. Witness shouted to them to jump out, as the wagons would have been dashed together. Cotton jumped clear, but deceased fell back and the wheel of the empty wagon passed over his thigh. He went to deceased's assistance and had him taken home. – In reply to the Deputy Coroner, witness said he had warned the boys "hundreds of times" not to ride in the wagon. He could not account for the band breaking. It was possible that on seeing the boys get into the wagon he had put it on rather suddenly, and so strained it.

Maurice Cotton, of Shide, said he had worked at the pit for about two months. His duty was to lift empties off the line to allow the full wagons to pass. In this he was assisted by deceased and another youth named Grant. Last Saturday deceased and he got into the empty, as it started, to go up to the passing place. Had been cautioned not to do so by Eli Blake and Mr. Coker, but thought they might just as well ride as walk. After they were in the wagon they saw the full wagon coming down very fast, and heard Blake shout to them to

jump out. Witness jumped to the left and got clear, and deceased jumped to the right. Did not see deceased fall, but when he (witness) got up he saw deceased drawing himself off the line. He went up to deceased, who kept on saying his leg was broken.

Dr. Hutton Castle said on the day in question he was sent for between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning, and saw deceased on a sofa in his father's house, in that room. Found his thigh was fearfully smashed. He was conscious, and told witness how it had happened, that he had been cautioned not to ride, and that he did not blame anyone. Thinking amputation the only resource, witness went for assistance. He saw the patient again at 2 o'clock, and at 4.30 went out again with Drs. Waterworth and Coombs. They then saw that deceased was so weak that any operation was out of the question, and the other doctors returned to Newport. Saw deceased again at 7 and 10, when he had rallied and was somewhat better, and he had some slight hope of his recovery, but death took place at 12.30 that night. From the first he had regarded it as an almost hopeless case.

The Deputy Coroner having reviewed the evidence, said it had been shown that the deceased had been specially warned not to do the very thing from which his death had resulted. It was a very sad case, but it was a satisfaction he thought that there was no one to blame but the poor boy himself ; but as to this he did not wish to influence the opinion of members of the jury, who, being in the neighbourhood, might perhaps have knowledge of something that had not yet been shown in evidence.

Mr. Denness, one of the jury, was strongly of opinion that Mr. Coker ought to have provided a loop line, so that the wagons could pass each other.

The Deputy Coroner said he quite agreed as to the advantage of such an arrangement ; but they could scarcely impute the accident to the absence of the loop line, as it would never had happened if the boys had walked, as they were told to do ; they would then have had plenty of time to get out of the way.

Mr. Coker said a double line would shortly be laid down.

In reply to the Deputy Coroner, George Dyer, the father, said he imputed no blame to anyone.

The jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased was accidentally killed, and that no blame was attributable to anyone.

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