

Frank Arthur Seaman

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SHUNTING ACCIDENT AT NEWPORT RAILWAY STATION.

RAILWAY GUARD'S TRAGIC DEATHS.

The shocking accident at the Newport Railway-station on Wednesday week was the subject of an inquiry by the Deputy Coroner (R. E. A. Webster, Esq.) at Ryde on Saturday. The deceased was Frank Arthur Seaman, aged 51, of 41 West-street, Newport, a guard in the employ of the Southern Railway, who died shortly after admission to the County Hospital from severe injuries caused during a shunting operation. Mr. G. Page was foreman of the jury. Mr. H. R. Palmer represented the Southern Railway, Mr. H. W. Lane the N.U.R., and Mr. H. E. Bidwell the Associated Locomotive Engineers.

Reginald Harry Frank Seaman, a railway porter employed at Yarmouth Quay, of the Coronation-cottages, South-street, Yarmouth, said his father had been employed by the Railway for over 30 years. His health, hearing, and sight were good.

P.S. Stear said no one appeared to have witnessed the accident. Deceased was the guard of a train of three carriages, which arrived at the Newport Station from Sandown at 6.30 p.m. on the previous Wednesday. After the passengers had alighted at the Cowes-line platform deceased apparently gave a hand signal to the driver of the train to move towards the north signal box for the purpose of shunting. After this had been done the engine was detached and the signal was apparently given by deceased for the carriages to be shunted into the up-loop line. No one appeared to have seen him leave the train between the time the signal was given for the carriages to be shunted and when he was found on the permanent way. After deceased had been removed witness found bloodstains and small pieces of bone and flesh on the line near the platform and 48 feet from the end of the ramp of the platform. He examined the platform and found drag marks on the surface which might have been caused by a person being dragged along the platform. They were about 18 inches from the end of the platform, and extended for 22 feet. Later officials at the station demonstrated to witness the actual running of the train and he took photographs (these were issued to the jury.) Witness said he got into the cabin of the engine after the train had stopped at the crossing in the position it did on the day of the accident. He locked out of the cabin towards the carriages, but was only able to see the full length of one of the carriages, the other two being obscured from view owing to a curve in the line. Witness examined the Westinghouse cord or wire, and found that a person operating the cord would have to get out of the train to do so. – By Mr. Palmer: He received every assistance from the Railway Company, and interviewed all the employees on duty, but the accident happened in a remote part of the station.

James Thomas Sewell, engine driver, of Lyme Regis, Palmers-road, Wootton, said that on arriving in Newport at 6.30 he received a signal from the guard to proceed to the north signal box. When the passengers had gone he received a signal from the guard to make a shunting operation. He drove the train through the crossover, and his fireman got down and uncoupled the three carriages. After that he got a tip from the guard passed on to him by the fireman that it was all right to shunt the empty train. He did this, but as the train came to a standstill on the crossing he followed it up to complete the shunt, after giving it another start they saw the train move on, and then went back to the north box. After he had gone back with his engine to the north box they saw the train running on through the station and come to a stop against the down home signal to Ryde. The signalman informed them that the train had gone on, and they decided to go after it, but on nearing the platform to his surprise he saw deceased sitting between the rail and the platform with his hands held aloft. First aid was rendered at once. When witness gave the second shunt he could only see the back of the first coach, as they were on an "S" bend. Deceased would have been in the coach farthest away.

William Hayward, of Omar, Fairlee-road, Newport, the fireman, said that when he got down to

uncouple the carriages he looked forward along the train, and deceased gave him a hand signal, and he saw the points go over. At that time deceased was in the guard's van leaning out of the window.

William Herbert Lamar, carriage and wagon examiner, of 5 Blackwater-road, Newport, said that on the following morning he examined the three carriages and found fragments of clothing and bloodstains, from which it was evident that two carriages had gone over deceased. He found the Westinghouse brake in perfect order on all three carriages. Witness explained that if there was not sufficient time for the brakes to be completely taken off by the engine they would leak on, and it would be necessary for the cord to be used to release them, and to do so the guard would have to leave the train. Next day the same shunt was made and the train ran free.

Percy Edward Primmer, a railway porter, of Bellmead, East Cowes-road, Whippingham, said he was on the Cowes line platform and saw the train shunted up to the north signal box, but did not see it come back. He next heard a shout from the up line, and on going there saw deceased lying on the track between the platform and the line. He said to him "I was pulling the wire." He made another effort later to explain the accident, but was advised not to talk, owing to his condition. Witness said the same shunting operations were often made twice a day.

Dr. Alfreda Patterson, house physician at the County Hospital, said deceased was admitted in a very shocked condition but conscious. There was severe crushing of both legs just below the knee, the legs being almost completely severed and badly crushed above that. Tourniquets had been applied to both thighs. Deceased died soon after admission from shock and very severe haemorrhage.

The Coroner said it appeared quite clear that the poor man got down to release the brakes, which leaked on, and whilst he was doing that the engine driver, not knowing he was there and not being able to see what was happening, saw the carriages stop, and came up and gave them another push to send them through.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased met his death by an accident whilst performing his duty.

In expressing the Company's deep sympathy with the relatives, Mr. Palmer said he was an old and trusted servant.

The Coroner, jury, and representatives of the two Trade Unions present expressed sympathy with the relatives.

THE FUNERAL

Uniformed colleagues in the service of the Southern Railway formed a guard of honour at the church door and others acted as bearers when the funeral took place at Newport on Sunday. The Rev. W. M. B. Hogg (vicar) officiated at the service in the Parish Church and at the interment in Carisbrooke Cemetery. The mourners were Mr. and Mrs. R. Seaman (son and daughter-in-law), Mr. R. Seaman (brother), Mrs. Jones (sister), Messrs. F. and H. Draper (brother-in-law and nephew), Mr. and Mrs. A. Smith (uncle and aunt), and Mr. D. Seaman (nephew). The widow and Miss P. Seaman (daughter) were unavoidably prevented from attending. The bearers were Guards A. Pullinger, G. Pocock, H. Fallick, and S. Hebbes, and Signalmen H. Blundy and W. Symes, and other representatives of the Southern Railway attending were Messrs. G. H. R. Gardener (divisional superintendent), E. W. Landon, J.P. (area inspector), W. Bale, A. E. Smart, and C. Joiner (locomotive department), A. Wheway and W. Dibley (stationmasters), J. Fish (station foreman), H. Bell, G. Eves, C. Matthews, T. White, G. Brown, and F. Richardson (guards), D. Marshall, H. Lacey, R. Hollands, J. Stones, J. Sewell, P. Rogers, W. Gear, and A. Chiverton (drivers), T. Carn and R. Southwell (branch chairman and secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen), G. Ellis, H. Watson, A. Wiltshire, W. Hayward, W. Read, and F. Cant (firemen), W. Lemon and A. Cassell (C.M.E. department), Harley (Sandown), A. Jolliffe, C. Kennedy, B. Owen, F. Primmer, W. Day, H. Pragnell, and H. Hall. Others present included Messrs. ?? Burgess, W. Matthews, E. Pragnell,

J. Peirce, F. Young, and T. Harley (retired members of the railway staff), and Mesdames Wheway, Wall, Buckett, Pullinger, and Ellis.

Messrs. O. C. Hamilton and Son made the arrangements.

Mrs. Seaman, son, and daughter wish to thank the stationmaster, Dr. Dowdall, Mr. Barton, Mrs. Whittington, Mrs. Ellis, and all who gave assistance, and also all who sent letters of sympathy and beautiful wreaths. Will they please accept this as an acknowledgment.

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