

William Alfred Hiscock

The Evening News – 5 December 1912

A FATAL OVERSIGHT

NEWPORT CRANE ACCIDENT

THE INQUEST AND VERDICT

On Wednesday afternoon the Deputy Coroner for the Isle of Wight (Mr. F.A. Joyce) held an inquest at the West Medina Cement Mills, Newport, on the body of William Alfred Hiscock, 38, labourer, of Pyle-street, Newport, who was killed in a crane accident at the Mills whilst unloading a vessel there early on Tuesday morning.

Dr. Castle deposed to finding a large punctured wound just above the deceased's nose, which passed upwards and inwards to the left into the brain. Death must have been instantaneous. It was such a wound as would have been inflicted by the corner of the grab on the crane when the deceased suddenly looked up.

William Woodmore, of Hunnyhill, labourer, who was working on the barge Rochester with the deceased at 3 o'clock on Tuesday morning, said they had been working from 5 o'clock the previous evening. Deceased was in the hold with the witness when suddenly the grab came down and struck witness on the chest, knocking him backwards. When he recovered, he saw the deceased under the grab. He rushed to his assistance and called for help, but the deceased appeared to be dead. Witness had never known an accident with the crane before. There was plenty of light. The grab came down without warning. If they had had a stand-by, he did not think the accident would have been averted. The deceased was a temperance man, and was quite sober.

James Dawkins, master of the Rochester, said that the men on the barge usually sang out for the lowering or raising of the grab. It was explained that a "stand-by" on small vessels was unnecessary, as the crane-driver could see into the hold.

The Inspector of the Board of Trade said there were no regulations as to a "stand-by." On large vessels the "stand-by" was usually on the deck.

Edward J. Bull, the crane driver, stated that in getting up on the crane he accidentally kicked a nut and touched the footbrake, which had the effect of releasing the grab, and it fell. He had been on duty since 6.45 on the previous morning, but not wholly on the crane. He thoroughly understood the duties. The gear worked satisfactorily. He had made no complaint of the hours of working.

The Inspector said that a suggestion for protecting the brake from being accidentally released would be acted upon.

Witness said he forgot to put in the lifting pinion, and could therefore do nothing when the accident happened.

The Coroner said it was calamitous that the driver should have forgotten to put the pinion in, but they were not entitled to say that he had shown gross neglect. It was merely an oversight.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death," and expressed their sympathy with the bereaved family.

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NEWPORT

THE CEMENT MILLS FATALITY

The funeral of the late William Albert Hiscock, the victim of the sad crane fatality at the Medina Cement Mills on Tuesday, took place at the United Methodist Church on Sunday afternoon. The service was conducted by the Rev. D. Watkins and by Adjutant Cox of the Salvation Army. The church was crowded, and the route to the Cemetery was thickly lined with sympathisers. The mourners included deceased's fellow United Methodist [??] preachers from all parts of the Island and representatives of the local P.S.A. Society, the Salvation Army, and the Ancient Order of Foresters.

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