

## RUN OVER BY TRUCK.

### Meldreth Boy's Fatal Attempt "To Get a Ride."

#### INQUEST AT ADDENBROOKE'S.

A sad story of an adventuresome boy's death was related to the Borough Coroner (Mr. H. Saunders French), at an inquest at Addenbrooke's on Monday night, on Harold Reginald Croxall, the eight-year-old son of a widow living at Meldreth. The lad died in the Hospital from injuries sustained through being run over on the British Saxon Cement Company's railway at Meldreth.

Mr. H. E. King watched the proceedings on behalf of the British Saxon Cement Company.

Mrs. Croxall, mother of the deceased, said that on Friday morning last her son went to look for a hen they had missed. Shortly after the boy left the house, witness heard a cry, and later found that her boy had been run over. He had been taken to the Hospital, where he died from his injuries. There was a light railway line near to witness's house, and it was quite open. There was no public way across the part where the boy was run over.

In answer to Mr. King, witness said there was a fence and a hedge around her house.

Mabel Maud Croxall (14), sister of the deceased, said she was staying with her mother at home on the Friday. Harold went to look for a hen, and witness went to look for Harold. She found him with a man named King, and witness and Harold went together in search of the hen. Witness walked about nine yards in front of her brother. Suddenly witness heard her brother shout, "Maudie, Maudie, come here, I want you." Witness at once ran to where her brother was lying near the railway line. He had been knocked down by a truck. Witness saw the truck go by. There was no one with it, and it was going from Meldreth Station to the Cement Works. Witness did not hear anyone shout, nor did she hear the noise of the truck.

John King, a Meldreth labourer, said he heard someone shout, "Look out, there's a truck coming." Witness afterwards heard there had been an accident, and he found that the little lad Croxall had been knocked down by a truck. At the side of the railway track there was four feet of pathway and grass.

In answer to the Foreman, witness said the children played about the line, and often attempted to get on to moving trucks. It was just possible the boy was attempting to get on to the truck. The place where the accident happened was private.

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Mr. King said that witness seemed to give the impression that the footpath at the side was public. It was strictly private. There was a public footpath further away.

Samuel Waldoek, a labourer, of High-street, Meldreth, said he received instructions to take two trucks from Meldreth Station to the Cement Works. When nearing a decline, witness took his horse off the truck and let the waggon go. That was about 100 yards from the level crossing. Witness went down the line, and found the little boy lying near the metals. He had been run over by the truck, which had stopped. Witness said, "How came you to do it, sonny?" The lad replied, "I was trying to get on, to ride." Witness believed the boy had tried to ride on the brake, and his legs had been caught by the back wheels. It was a practice of boys to ride on the moving trucks. Witness could not see down the line from where he released the truck to where the accident happened.

George Disberry, caretaker at the Cement Works, said the length of the line was a mile and a half. It was all private, and there had never been an accident on the line before. Witness said the children were a great trouble.

Dr. Brash, house surgeon at Addenbrooke's, said the boy was admitted on Friday morning. Both his legs were broken, and he was in a state of collapse. Restoratives were administered, and later the boy's legs were amputated. The lad, however, died an hour later, from shock.

The Coroner said there was no doubt the boy met his death when attempting to have a ride on the moving truck. It might appear to some of them that there ought to have been some more protection with regard to the trucks, but there had been a certain amount of precaution. The shunter gave a warning, and this was corroborated by the other witness. The whole of the line appeared to be private property, and the boy had been trespassing. He (the Coroner) did not think there was blame, so far as he could see, attaching to anyone.

The jury, in returning a verdict of "Accidental death," added a rider that there should be a man constantly in attendance on the moving trucks, and no truck should be let go by itself. A man should be there to apply a brake.

Mr. King said the jury's suggestion would be conveyed to the British Portland Cement Company. The Company desired through Mr. King to express their sorrow at the sad tragedy. The Coroner and jury also expressed their sympathy.