

KILLED BY STEAM JET

TELEGRAPH—29.4.20

TRAGEDY AND HEROISM ON GRIMSBY TRAWLER.

The circumstances in which James Dolby Clayton, second engineer, came to be scalded to death on board the trawler Wyndham on Monday afternoon, were inquired into by the Coroner, Mr. T. Mountain, at the Hospital yesterday afternoon.

Mr. W. West appeared for the owners of the trawler, while Mr. Collinson represented the deceased's family.

Clara Firman, of No. 99, Stirling-street, identified the body, and said that deceased lodged at her house. On Monday morning he left to join his ship at the Fish Dock, and he was then in the best of health.

Archibald McDonald Ross, of College-street, Cleethorpes, first engineer of the steam trawler Wyndham, said that on Monday afternoon he was on board the ship in No. 2 Fish Dock. Just before 2 o'clock the Wyndham was under way, under about 185lbs. steam pressure, preparatory to going to sea. He was with the deceased in the engine room, the latter being on the back platform attending to the pumps.

STEAM PLUG BLOWN OUT.

Witness was at the valve, attending to the engines. The bottom shuttle plug on the gauge standard blew out. This plug was in direct contact with the boiler, and a great stream of water and steam blew out. From that moment he only caught a glimpse of the deceased, whom he presumed had been knocked down by the escaping steam. Witness himself had to run for the ladders to escape. It was absolutely impossible for him to render any assistance, and as it was, he only just escaped. Later he tried to get down to the stokehold by way of the boiler top, but the heat was so intense that he could not do it, and an hour had to be allowed to elapse before anyone could venture into the engine room. By this time, when Clayton was reached he was quite dead. Witness did not know when the boiler was last inspected, and he had never known an accident of this kind to happen before.

RESCUE ATTEMPT FOILED.

The plug which blew out had been removed the day before, when the fitters were at work, but he could not say whether it had been correctly fitted. It was usual to remove these plugs occasionally to see if they were all clear. He had been on the ship since January 28th, and had never known steam escape from this plug.

George Wm. Eratt, 26, Coronation-road, Cleethorpes, boilermaker, said that on Monday afternoon in the Fish Dock he went on board to the engine-room which was full of steam. It was impossible for anyone to enter. After several attempts he found deceased about seven feet from the point where the plug had blown out of the boiler, lying under the donkey engine. In that position he would get the full force of the escaping steam and boiling water.

Dr. Harris, House Surgeon at the Hospital, said that after making a post mortem examination of the body of deceased he concluded that death was due to acute suffocation caused by steam. The body was badly scalded and death would be very speedy.

STUNNED THEN SCALDED.

There was a slight lacerated wound under the left ear apparently caused by the head coming into contact with a solid body with considerable force, sufficient in his opinion to have caused unconsciousness.

William Sandall, of Park-avenue, Grimsby, skipper of the Wyndham, examined by Mr. West, said his vessel was about to proceed to sea on Monday afternoon. He had been in charge of the vessel for fifteen weeks during last year, and had made three Iceland trips this year. He had never had any complaints to him about the boiler plugs; it was the engineer's duty to see to matters in the engine room. He did not know when the boiler was last inspected.

The Coroner returned a verdict that death was caused by accidental suffocation, due to the escape of steam following a plug being blown out of the gauge pipe. There was no evidence to show whether the plug had been properly replaced, but in any case the man's death was purely accidental. It was some relief to know from the doctor that death would be speedy. He sympathised with anyone who was connected with the unfortunate man.

Both Mr. West and Mr. Collinson expressed their sympathies.

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