

0838

PPL/DTH/1#24

MINUTE.

9th May, 1951.

To the Acting
Senior Medical Officer,
Stanley.

From the Acting
Coroner,
Stanley.

Ref. Certificate of Death (William Smith)

The death of any person who was not attended during last illness by a registered medical practitioner, is required by Statute to be reported to the Coroner.

Mr. Lewis, Manager, Douglas Station, is presumably the person who should have followed this procedure, and if the Coroner considers it necessary he may then order a post-mortem to be carried out upon the dead body in order to ascertain the cause of death.

As you did not attend the late William Smith during his last illness, I would be grateful to learn of the grounds on which this certificate was issued.

J.P. Bennett

Acting Coroner.

ACS

I promised A.P.M.O. that I would deal with this. We have other files on the subject, which P. L.

W. D.K./s.

*M/S pl
15/*

Minute.

From: Colonial Secretary.

To: Registrar.

Certificate of Death (William Smith).

Acting S.M.O. referred to me your minute to him dated 9th May, and we have since discussed. As far as this particular certificate was concerned, the S.M.O. issued it after he had spoken over the telephone with Mrs. Lewis of Douglas Station, and from his conversation with her had satisfied himself that there was nothing abnormal about the death.

2. We agreed that the Coroner has to satisfy himself that there is nothing unusual about any death reported to him, but that where it is a case of a straightforward death in the Camp it would be a waste of a medical officer's time to go out and hold a post mortem. A p.m. need only be held where there appears (either to the Coroner or to the M.O.) to be any abnormal feature in the case, or if the immediate relatives of the deceased want a p.m. I hope to take the opportunity of the next S.S.A. meeting to speak to Farm Managers on this subject and particularly to tell them the score as far as the wishes of the immediate relatives are concerned.

X /

M. R. RAYNER

2nd June, 1951.

Colonial Secretary.

Bu. (12 KIV X ARNE)
3/7/51
23/7/51
BW

YH
to remain as at X above pl
L.H. Jones
23/7/51

ACS
I did not get an opportunity to discuss with S.S.A. generally, but I have mentioned to me a few farmers.

P.A.

W. 16/7/51.

13th February, 1956.

From:



To:

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary,
Stanley.

I was instructed to proceed to Goose Green on Sunday 12th February, 1956, to hold an inquest into the circumstances of the death of William John Smith.

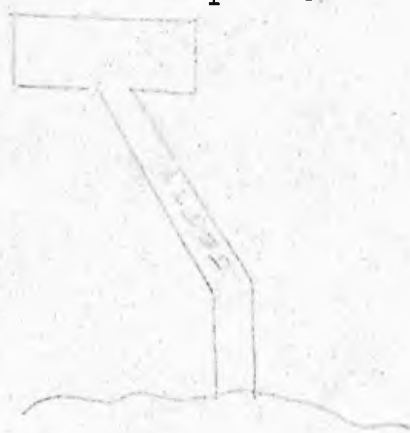
2. Death was caused by drowning, apparently due to the deceased having overlooked the deviation in the jetty and stepping overboard during the dark of night.

3. I would mention that there are no guard rails on the jetty and it is the second death at this jetty, in similar circumstances, in just over two years.

4. I would therefore suggest that this matter be taken up with the authorities concerned as the possible recurrence of similar accidents is prejudicial to the safety of the public.

J. Bennett

Justice of the Peace.



See 11

File

Dodge to Com. F.I.C. pl

*J.
15/2*

Y. L.

above.

*In the interests of public safety -
I consider we should take this up with
F.I.C. & a draft letter is submitted for
consideration at back cover pl.*

*accs. for ...
PH 22/01/56*

*J.
19/2*

23rd February, 56.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the recent death of William Smith by drowning at Goose Green. I am given to understand that the body was found near the deviation in the jetty on which there are no guard rails. As this is the second death at this jetty in similar circumstances in just over two years I am to request that steps be taken to erect guard rails on the Goose Green jetty in the interests of public safety.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd) J. Bound

ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY.

*See 10**Reply at 12**Correspondence leading up to letter*

The Manager,
Falkland Islands Company, Limited,
STANLEY.

R.M. 2/2/56 m
24/2/56

JB/VP

Copy to Registrar, Supreme Court. 24/2/56

The Falkland Islands Company, Limited.

(INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER 1851.)

REGISTERED 1902.

AGENTS FOR LLOYDS.

TELEGRAMS "FLEETWING PORTSTANLEY" VIA RADIO.

Stanley,

22nd March

12
19 56

The Hon. Acting Colonial Secretary,
STANLEY.

Sir,

re William Smith (deceased)

11 Your letter No. 1287 of 23rd February was referred to the Camp Manager at Darwin who has the following comments to offer:-

1. There has been a deviation in the Goose Green Jetty for a long, long time, and there is no record here of a sober man ever having fallen off the jetty into the sea. I would further point out that the Jetty is 15 ft. wide and in first class repair.
2. If rails were to be erected anywhere along the sides of the Jetty it would interfere with the loading and unloading of our Farm craft which normally lie on one side or the other when goods and materials have to be passed by hand.
3. Guard rails at the bend in the Jetty are impracticable when using tractors and trailers with overhanging loads. This Jetty was built mainly for the purpose of handling cargo and for small vessels to moor alongside when beaching for repairs.

The Camp Manager concludes his letter by enquiring whether all Jetties in Stanley and the Camp, at some of which there have been fatal accidents in the past, are to be fitted with guard-rails.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

A. R. Darwin

MANAGER.

Copy to:-

Registrar, Supreme Court.

Reply at 15.

R.S.E.
10.

Please see 11 & 12 - grateful
for your observations re - in
particular are we in a position
to ~~enforce~~ them to erect railings?

Q
25/5

Hon. Col. Sec.,

The F.I.Co., freely allow the public access to the Jetty (in most cases for their own interest) therefore, they could reasonably be expected to make it safe for public use.

2. Guard rails are not the only solution, as I believe an electric generator has been installed at Goose Green, which could supply, say, two lights on the jetty - when required. Alternatively rails of a non-permanent nature could be erected.

3. To my knowledge all jetties in Stanley are provided with guard rails and reasonably well lighted, with the exception of one F.I.Co. jetty.

4. I would mention that there was a fatal accident at the "Public Jetty" several years ago and as a result of a recommendation from the Coroner the jetty was lighted.

5. I have no doubt that in the event of similar accidents occurring either in Stanley or the Camp, any Coroner would inform the appropriate authority of any evidence of any defect having caused or contributed to the accident.

6. Although evidence was given that both drowned men had had drink, in neither case was evidence offered to support the suggestion that they were intoxicated to the extent of being incapable of their faculties.

7. We apparently have no power to enforce them to erect railings (this was merely a suggested remedy) but I have no doubt that as this matter has been brought to their attention, should a similar accident occur at the same

jetty the owners would be liable at tort.

R.S. requires
29.iii.56.

Bu. 10/4 1954

10th May,

56.

Sir,

12.

I am directed to refer to your letter of 22nd March, 1956, regarding the suggestion that guard-rails should be erected on the jetty at Goose Green following the drowning of William Smith and to state that if guard-rails are not a practical proposition it is suggested that in the interests of the Company, and the public safety, a light or lights should be installed where the jetty deviates. Lights have been installed on the Government and Public Jetties in Stanley and they are also where practicable fitted with guard-rails.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd) A. G. Denton-Thompson

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Reply at 16

The Manager,
Falkland Islands Company, Limited,
STANLEY.

JR / CM

There is a letter? 30/5/56
Bull 7/6/56

The Falkland Islands Company, Limited.

(INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER 1851.)

REGISTERED 1902.

AGENTS FOR LLOYDS.

TELEGRAMS "FLEETWING PORTSTANLEY" VIA RADIO.

Stanley,

6th June

19 56



The Honourable the Colonial Secretary,
STANLEY.

Sir,

15 With reference to your letter No. 1287 of 10th May 1956 I am requested to inform you that the following notice has been posted at the head of Goose Green Jetty:-

"THE COMPANY CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY
"ACCIDENT THAT MAY OCCUR ON, OR FROM THIS JETTY
"TO PERSONS MAKING USE OF THIS JETTY WHILE NOT
"ACTUALLY ENGAGED ON FARM WORK AT THE TIME OF SUCH
"ACCIDENT.

(Signed) T. A. GILRUTH

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. P. Davison

MANAGER.

H.S. This is not much help, especially if anyone is a bit "under the weather." Lights are the solution. I suggest we ask F.I.C. to reconsider on the grounds that lives may be involved again.

A. 9/6

J.E.

The current story on this file begins at p. 10. which is Bennett's report on the second death from the Green Green Jetty in just one two years. The jetty, as you know, has a marked deviation in its centre which is fatal for a drunk and can be equally dangerous for a sober man on a dark night.

This was followed by J11 in which Mr. Board suggested general raids. The Congress replied at J12 - not unreasonably. I wrote again at J15 suggesting a light - which I feel is a minimum precaution. The Congress's reply is at J16.

Personally I feel the Congress's attitude is callous and irresponsible. We can do little about it in the absence of special legislation. I doubt whether Section 3 of the Harbour Act (Cap 30) really grants the G. S. with the power to make regulations - but we could take legal action on the point. The difficulty here is that once we establish the principle - we should probably have to apply the regulations (which I think would only insist on lights) to all jetties - which is not really necessary - and we would have considerable difficulty in enforcing the regulations - for obvious reasons.

Would you feel the matter should be dropped - would you consider a private note or word to Gilbert?

L.H.J.
22.6.56

People often drown themselves here. 2 were drowned off the Public Jetty in 1948 & one in 1950. Perhaps a light wd help. Please remind me to mention it to Mr. Gilbert when he's here. DWA 22

DECODE.

19

TELEGRAM.

No. 1.

From W.H. Clement, Fox Bay

To Colonial Secretary

Despatched : 2nd July, 19 56 Time : 0900

Received : 2nd July, 19 56 Time : 0945

PRIORITY.

Reference fatal accident aboard s.s. Fitzroy deceased
J.R. Ashley.

Verdict of Inquiry, Accidental Death. Relevant documents
left in charge of K.W. Luxton for forwarding to you by first
flight.

W.H. Clement,
Acting Deputy Coroner.

Reply at 20

P/L
IR

GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPH SERVICE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

SENT

20

Number

Office of Origin

Words

Handed in at

Date

4.7.56

To ADDRESSED

L W. CLEMENT FOX BAY REPEATED K. LUXTON CHARTRES

HOM/C

19
 YOUR TELEGRAM GIVING RESULT OF INQUEST STOP WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL
 FOR ALL THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY YOU AND KEITH LUXTON IN THIS
 TRAGIC OCCURRENCE STOP GLAD IF YOU WOULD CONVEY GOVERNMENT'S
 DEEP SYMPATHY TO BROTHER AT FOX BAY.

COLONIAL SECRETARY

Time

ACD-T/IR

GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPH SERVICE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

SENT

9

Number	Office of Origin	Words	Handed in at	Date
				4.7.56
To ACTING MANAGER SAN CARLOS				HQA/C

PLEASE CONVEY TO ^{MR} ALF ASHLEY GOVERNMENT'S DEEP SYMPATHY IN THE TRAGIC DEATH OF HIS BROTHER AND INFORM HIM OFFICIALLY THAT INQUEST VERDICT WAS ACCIDENTAL DEATH.

COLONIAL SECRETARY

Time

ACT/EMR

*Mr A is half brother
444
A.M.*

*These are 2 half-brothers also:
W. & sister of Stanley & A Alazia
of Douglas Station
DRM 5/1/56*



22

Chartres,

West Falkland.

29th. June, 1956.

Sir,

23-33 I have enclosed to you the documents concerning the death
of John Richard Ashley and which I hope you will find in order.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M.H. Clement

Acting Deputy Coroner.

Reply at 36

The Hon.

The Colonial Secretary,

The Colonial Secretary's Office,

Stanley.

OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION.

On board the S/S.Fitzroy at anchor outside Chartres on the evening of the 29th.June,1956.

In a cabin aboard I saw the body of a man reported to have died accidentally the previous evening.

In the absence of relatives the body was identified by Captain White the Master of the Fitzroy, as John Richard Ashley, a member of the crew, also present at the identification were K.W.Luxton, Esq.J.P and Dr.Greenaway, the West Falkland Medical Officer.

W.H. Clement

Signed: W.H. Clement, Esq.J.P.

acting Deputy Coroner.

At the request of the Colonial Secretary, A.G. Denton-Thomson, Esq. M.C., I went along to Chartres in company with Dr. Greenaway to meet the Fitzroy in order to enquire into a sudden death which occurred on the previous evening to a member of that vessels crew. On the evening of the 29th. I went aboard the ship while she lay at anchor at Chartres and proceeded with the official identification of the body of John Richard Ashley, aged 53 years. After consultation with Captain White and Dr Greenaway, the latter requesting a ~~post~~ mortem examination, I decided to hold an inquest the same evening.

COURT PROCEEDINGS.

At 10.30 pm. on the night of the 29th. June, 1956, in the Saloon of the S/S. Fitzroy I enquired in the name of our Sovereign Lady The Queen, into matters touching upon the death of John Richard Ashley, aged 53, who had died of injuries received on the evening of the 28th. June, whilst following his lawful employment aboard the S/S. Fitzroy.

I conducted the ~~enquiry~~ enquiry without jury and assisted by K.W. Luxton, Esq. J.P. Members of the crew and passengers were freely admitted to this ~~enquiry~~ enquiry.

Statements were taken under oath from the following witnesses, I. Dr. Greenaway, the West Falkland Medical Officer, who also apart from this statement submitted a full post mortem report which it was felt being of a technical nature and not pleasant reading was withheld at my discretion to be submitted only if requested by the public.

This intention was made known to the public present and

1. request to this effect was made.

2. Alexander Mc.Leod testified as to the fitness of the deceased that day.

3. Stanley Eric George Short who was nearest at the time of the injury and took action to assist the deceased.

4. Peter Smith Thane, the 2nd. Officer who was first on the scene when Short called for assistance .

5. Captain F.W.White, Master of the Fitzroy, who testified as to his findings at the time .

I found it necessary to ask witnesses the following questions.

1. To Dr.Greenaway,- Do I take it from your evidence that the clothing was being worn in such a condition as to make it dangerous and in fact to have caused the accident.

REPLY. Yes. In my opinion the unbuttoned sleeve and the sleeveless, buttonless jerkin were very dangerous and in fact, one or both according to the state of these garments after the accident were the primary cause. Also the injuries were consistent with this opinion.

2. To Stanley Eric George Short,- Was the winch going fast.

REPLY. Yes, it was.

3. To Captain White,- You heard a witness state that the valve was open 3 or 4 turns. Do you consider that the winch was going too fast for the job in hand.

REPLY. Yes, with the valve open this amount the winch was running too fast for the job in hand.

The public were given opportunity to question each witness, but no questions were asked.

FINDINGS. After listening to the evidence given, and questioning the witnesses. Also seeing and understanding the workings of the winch, I find that death was accidental and due to shock, due to severe haemorrhage, due to multiple injuries. I found it necessary to comment upon the following factors, to those assembled at the enquiry.

1. The folly and unnecessary risk run by persons with loose, and in this case freely dangling clothing whilst handling fast moving machinery in close proximity.
2. The presence of mind of Stanley Eric George Short, a young man who did exactly the right thing at the right time.

Signed:

W. H. Clement

Acting Deputy Coroner.

At 6.30p.m. on Friday 29th. June in a cabin aboard s.s. Fitzroy at anchor outside Chartres I saw in a cabin the body of a man stated to me to be John Richard Ashley aged 53 years a member of the crew who had died as the result of a winch accident at about 6.50 the previous evening.

I spoke to Stanley Short who was within a few yards of the deceased at the time of the accident but facing away from him and on hearing a shout from Ashley turned around to see him stretched across the moving winch drum and unconscious if not dead.

Examination of John Richard Ashley revealed multiple injuries along the left side of the head and chest and ante mortem friction burns of the left arm above the elbow, chest abdomen and both legs. Apart from these named injuries I found him to be a healthy man suffering from no apparent disease liable to cause loss of consciousness or sudden death.

His clothing which had been partly removed before my examination showed avulsion of wind jacket left sleeve above the cuff which was unbuttoned and the button and button hole intact but unbuttoned and the sleeve torn along its whole length. His waterproof army style sleeveless jerkin was also torn vertically along the whole left side. Appearances of this garment point to it having been buttonless for some time before the accident.

His injuries are consistent with his having caught in the winch cables and struck a severe blow on the face and chest and tension having torn his neck and the winch cables causing friction burns of his body and legs whilst still trapped in the moving winch.

The state of his clothing suggests that either his unbuttoned sleeve or his buttonless jerkin could have been trapped first and then the other loose garment whilst trying to free the first.

Death in this case was due to shock due to severe haemorrhage as the result of multiple injuries.

At the request of the Coroner I am prepared to state to the court a fuller description of the injuries if the public or representative of the deceased so require.

D.G. Greenaway

D.G. Greenaway, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Medical Officer, West Falklands.

POST-MORTEM STATEMENT TO W.H. CLEMENT, ESQ. J.P., HER MAJESTY'S DEPUTY CORONER, 29 TH. JUNE, 1956.

This examination was carried out this evening aboard S/S. Fitzro at anchor outside Chartres.

The body of John Richard Ashly was that of a middle aged man, he had rigor mortis well established and the condition of the body was consistent with death of 24 hours standing .

External examination revealed ingrained oil on the face, a fractured jaw, a tear of the left side of the neck from the upper border of the left ear diagonally downwards to the sternoclavicular joint. The ear was almost completely avulsed and the tear extended through the muscles to the spine, all the great vessels except the ~~internal~~ carotid being completely torn.

The left arm above the elbow was badly bruised and scored, there was a large haematoma of the abdominal wall on the right side and there were verticle and parallel antemortem friction burns of the chest, abdomen and both legs. Three of these burns measured 2 1/4" which corresponded exactly to the measurement of three adjacent coils of wire cable.

Internal examination. The skull was unfractured and there was no cerebral haemorrhage. Costal cartilages numbers 7, to 10 were fractured completely diagonally from near the sternum above, downward and outwards. The lateral corresponding chest wall was compressed inwards. Both parietal and visceral ^{pleura} were torn for 3 1/2" and there was about 100 c.c. of clotted blood in the pleural cavity.

The pericardium was inatatt, the heart was small and cōtracted and contained very little blood. There was no evidence of injury to it nor acute or chronic desease. The great vessels shewed no atheromatous changes. Ther was a complete fracture through the sterno clavicular joint ^{and} a comminuted fracture of the jaw.

There was a large bruise in the left submandibular region.

There was no evidence of acute or chr onic dēsease in the abdomin- al cavity. The gastric contents contained no smell of alcohol.

RECONSTRUCTION. After studying the clothing ^{and} with the above findings, in my opinion a loose part of clothing alomst certainly the left sleeve caught in the winch and whilst attempting to release it or reach the control column his jerkin, also loose, became emmeshed and he was lifted off balance and whirled bodily over the drum.

He was then struck a severe blow on the jaw by the guard on the forward side of the drum and almost simultaneously received a severe blow on the left chest causing the fractures of jaw and costal cartilages. It was this blow which rendered him unconsci- and his shout to Stanley Short probably ocured immediately after he felt himself lifted bodily when his jerkin caught. The remainder of his body acted as a brake with the head caught above the guard but the revolving drum in which the arm was gra- continued to revolve causing considerable tension on the neck ar- tearing skin, muscles and large veins resulting in a severe haemorrh- age . His body laying across the drum at this point and during the subsequent reversal caused the friction burns found. He was injured beyond human help.

SUMMARY. A healthy, middle-aged man with no evidence of acute chronic illness liable to contribute to his death.

Death was, in my opinion, due to shock, due to haemorrhage caused by multiple injuries.

D. G. Greenaway

D. G. Greenaway, M.B.R.C.S.E.R.C.P.

MEDICAL OFFICER, WEST FALKLANDS.

Statement of Alexander Mc.Leod, of Stanley, Aged 32 Years.

I shared a cabin with Jack Ashley on the Fitzroy. Yesterday before the accident I spoke to him several times. He seemed quite well and at no time did he complain that he felt ill.

Signed:

A McLeod
29/6/56.

STATEMENT BY CAPTAIN F.W. WHITE.

At 18.55 hours on Thursday, 28th June 1956, while having my dinner in the dining saloon, I was called by Mr. A. Short, 3rd Mate, who reported an accident at No. 3 steam winch. I went aft immediately and on arrival found J.R. Ashley, Lamptrimmer & A.B., lying face down, head forward, over the main barrel of No. 3 steam winch. The winch was completely stopped at the time. I made a quick examination of Ashley and found him to be bleeding heavily from the left neck and lower jaw, but quite free of the winch. I ordered several members of the crew to lift him from the winch and lay him on the port poop deck. He was laid face up on this deck and I gave him immediate attention. At this time bleeding was slow. His injuries were washed and closely examined. Examination showed the left ear to be mangled and almost completely severed; a deep, wide, open wound extending in a vertical direction downwards from just above the left, lower jaw to the left lower neck; the jaw appeared to be broken and it was obvious that neck arteries and veins had been severed. While I was attending him he gave several slow, laboured gasps which finally ceased, and bleeding ceased. At approximately 19.05 hours there was no pulse or sign of life and Ashley was taken into the four berth cabin (2nd Class) aft. The usual tests were made and it was evident that life was extinct. I then inspected No. 3 winch and found a large quantity of blood lying on the forward end of bed-plates and bearers. I held an inquiry into the happening and it was ascertained that Ashley and S. Short, Sailor, had been engaged winding slack wire runner on to the main barrel of No. 3 winch. Ashley was driving the winch and Short was guiding the wire runner through the travelling block of a gun tackle purchase. Ashley was feeding the wire runner on to the winch barrel. This was a normal duty and has been done over a number of years. No weight, or lift, of any description, was attached to the lifting hook on the end of the gun tackle purchase. From the appearance of Ashley's clothing, and the location of his injuries, it seems that his loose left sleeve caught in a turn of wire just going on to the winch barrel and he was carried over, left arm first. The first intimation that S. Short, Sailor, had that anything was wrong was when he heard a muffled shout and looked round to see Ashley lying over the winch barrel. Short immediately ran round to the controls of the winch and, showing presence of mind, reversed the control lever, so freeing Ashley, before shutting off the steam. Ashley was apparently in good health, and was quite experienced, having been in the ship for some considerable time.

F.W. White.

F.W. White.
Master.

Statement of Stanley Eric George Short, of Stanley, aged 18 Years.

I had been on deck for about five minutes and was standing on the starboard side slightly forward of Jack Ashley.

He was rewinding wire onto the winch drum and guiding the coils into place with a gloved left hand. He was always very particular about this wiring.

He told me to hold the hook and block in such a way as to let the wire run easier through it, while I did this I was facing away from him.

Less than a minute after this I heard a muffled shout and turning quickly I saw him lying across the drum facing me with his left arm over and around the drum.

I ran straight away and pulled the control lever into reverse, and shut the steam valve which was right full on.

There were three or four turns open on it.

By moving the lever I had loosened him before shutting the steam off.

I then went to him, he was unconscious bleeding very badly.

I called for help and Arthur Short and Peter Thane came right away from the scows.

Before the accident he seemed quite well.

Stanley Eric George Short

Signed:

Statement of Peter Smith Thane, 2nd. Officer, of Port Stanley,
aged 26 Years.

Yesterday when the accident to Jack Ashaley happened I was working in the scows alongside.

I first knew something was wrong when Stanley Short shouted, "There's a man caught in the winch." I went aboard immediately.

Ashley was lying face down across the winch. He was free of the wire coils. The winch was stopped, with steam shut off.

He was unconscious and there was little sign of life.

I sent ofr the Mate and waited until his and the Captain's arrival before moving him.

Signed: *P. S. Thane 22.6.76*