

### 1913 - Sad Gun Fatality at Tibberton - YOUNG MAN'S ACCIDENT WHILE RABBIT SHOOTING.

A distressing accident, which resulted fatality occurred at Tibberton Saturday afternoon. (Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1913) Mr. William Horace West (19) electrician, son of Mr. William West, of the Lower Farm, Tibberton, went out with his gun on the farm about three o'clock. About half hour later a rabbit was bolted by the ferret, and he shot at it. The rabbit was only wounded, and Mr. West, going up to it as it was jumping about, held his gun by the barrel and struck the rabbit with the stock. As he did so the gun went off, and he was shot just below the heart.

The accident was witnessed by a girl, Nora Taylor, who fetched a man named Claridge. Mr. West told them he was dying and asked for something to drink. Claridge sent the girl to the farm for this, and himself brought Mr. West up to the farm in a float. The district nurse came and did what she could, and the horse was put in the float and the injured young man was taken to Gloucester quite unconscious of what had happened. After an affecting leave-taking his mother, the young man was driven to Gloucester by his father, and reached the Royal Infirmary about 5.30 p.m. An operation was at performed, hut the patient died about 2.30am. in Sunday from shock. An inquest will be held.

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BURIALS in the Parish of <u>Tibberton</u> in the County of <u>Gloucester</u> in the Year <u>1913</u>				
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<u>William Horace West</u> No. 625.	<u>The Lower Farm Tibberton</u>	<u>Feb. 27</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>R. S. Halsey Pastor.</u>

Horace West aged 19 is buried in a Tibberton Holy Trinity Churchyard (grave N59) along with William West who died on 28/8/1929 aged 71 and Amy West who died on 18/3/1970 aged 70.

### DEATH IN GLOUCESTER INFIRMARY.

A gun fatality of a particularly sad character took place at Tibberton on Saturday afternoon, the victim being William Horace West, the nineteen-year-old son of Mr. William West, farmer, Lower Farm, Tibberton. It appears that deceased, whose occupation was that of an electrician, was staying at home for a short time with his parents, and about 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, wishing to shoot a rabbit, took gun and ferret and proceeded to a rabbit warren. Here, with the aid of the ferret, a rabbit was bolted, and deceased shot at and wounded it, quite sufficient to prevent retreat to cover. He then, it appears, ran up to the rabbit, and catching hold of the barrel of his gun dealt a blow to the stock. As he did so a live cartridge in the weapon exploded, and the charge entered West's body immediately below the heart. He was terribly wounded and fell to the ground.

Fortunately, a girl named Taylor had watched the whole affair, and immediately called a man named Claridge, who on learning what had happened proceeded to the spot to assist the deceased. West said that he was dying and asked for something to drink. Claridge sent for this, and a man named Taylor also brought a float, and upon this the unfortunate man was placed, and with Taylor in the shafts he was dragged to the house. Here he was given some whiskey, and the district nurse who had heard of the accident prepared him as well as she could for the journey into the Gloucester Royal Infirmary. A horse in the meantime having been attached to the float, the journey into Gloucester commenced.

When near Rudford House deceased's parents who were returning from Gloucester and knew nothing of the accident, were met, and they of course, seeing their own float, stopped and enquired what was the matter. They were told, deceased said that it was an accident, and explaining how it happened, said he was dying. He kissed his mother and said he hoped he should meet them in Heaven. Mr. West to then took charge of the float and drove to the Infirmary as quickly as possible. On arrival and operation was immediately performed, which was quite successful, but deceased succumbed at 2.30 a.m. on Sunday from shock.

#### THE INQUEST.

The City Coroner (Mr. Charles Scott) and a jury held an inquiry at Gloucester Infirmary on Monday night into the death of William Horace West, an electrician, aged 19, son of Mr. William West, Lower Farm, Tibberton. Who met with a gun accident on Saturday afternoon while rabbit shooting on his father's farm, and who died in Gloucester Infirmary early on Sunday morning.

William West, the deceased's father, said until three weeks ago his son been working at Sutton Coldfield. He was not very accustomed to the use of a gun, only occasionally having a day's shooting when home on holiday. Witness left home in the morning and came into Gloucester, and on his way home he met his man bringing his son into Gloucester in a float. He stopped and asked what the matter was. His son answered and said he went down to shoot a rabbit, that he wounded one, saw it getting into a hole, and ran to and struck at it with the gun, when the other barrel went off and the whole charge went into his side. Witness took charge of the pony and float and brought him to the Infirmary. An operation was at once performed, but the doctor gave no hope and the witness stayed with him to the end, which came at 2.20 Sunday morning. His son said it was pure accident. (The stock of the gun produced was split through, just where the lock joins the stock). Witness said it was his gun, and a good one in good order.

Norah Hannah Taylor, White House Tibberton, a young girl of about 17, saw the whole occurrence. Young Mr. West was ferreting, and she saw the rabbit come out of the hole and Mr. West shoot. The rabbit tumbled over, and Mr. West ran up it and hit it with the stock of the gun, holding the barrels in his hands, when the other barrel went off and Mr. West fell on his back and shouted "Claridge." Claridge lived next door to witness, and she ran in and told what had happened, and Claridge at once went out to the deceased. Deceased's sister fetched the district nurse; and witness's sister went to Lower Farm and told them there what had happened. Witness fetched a drink for the deceased and her father fetched the float.

Arthur Claridge, carter to Mr. West, was in his cottage the time and heard the gun go off distinctly once, and then a second time very muffled. The last witness called him, and he ran out Mr. West and found him on the ground calling witness's name. As soon witness got to him, Mr. West said, "I'm dying Claridge." He explained that he had wounded a rabbit and then struck it with the butt of the gun to prevent it going in the hole, and the second charge entered his side. He said, "Claridge, tell dad it was an accident." With assistance he got the deceased into the float and was bringing him to the Infirmary, when he met Mr. West, who then took charge.

John Hamilton Boag, assistant house surgeon at the Gloucester Royal Infirmary, said deceased was conscious "when he reached the Infirmary. There was a large wound to the chest wall on the left side, through which part of the stomach was protruding. An operation was performed, and the deceased recovered consciousness from the anaesthetic, but gradually sank and died at 2.25 on Sunday morning. The wound was such as would be caused-by a gun shot, fired very close, and the cause of death was shock arising from the injuries sustained.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased accidentally shot himself and added their sincerest sympathy with the deceased's relatives in their sad bereavement. The Coroner concurred.

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*Edited extracts compiled by David Mills 2024*