

Irvine Darby

Murchison Advertiser

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Shocking Fatal Accident.

A shocking accident, by which Mr Irvine Darby, of the Football Club Hotel, Rushworth, met his death, occurred on Wednesday evening last.

From what can be gathered it seems that deceased, in company with Mr Hiram McNicol, had been fishing at the minor outlet, and as this was the closing day of the season they had stayed somewhat late, together with others who had also been having a try. Deceased was driving a gig, and had reached a point just on the Rushworth side of the crossing over the main outlet channel on the Tatura road. Here, it appears, the driver of another vehicle came along and deceased pulled to one side to allow him to pass.

Just what happened would be hard to say, but Mr McNicol states that the first he knew he was out on the road. On picking himself up he saw deceased lying on the road, and on speaking to him he got no answer. He next turned him over and at once saw that he was seriously injured.

A remarkable feature about the whole thing was that those who had passed by did not stop, not having observed the accident, although it was almost as light as day. The horse had cleared out with the gig, and McNicol found himself stranded with an apparently dead man a couple of miles from the nearest habitation. He at once set out for Mr Knight's, about two miles away, and they later brought the body in to Dr Heily, who pronounced life to have been extinct for some time.

Deceased was a son of Mrs Phillips, and was 42 years of age. He was also a brother of Mrs Considine (Rushworth), Mrs Alf. Lever (Murchison) and Mr R. C. Darby (Murchison), and the news of his untimely death naturally came as a very great shock to them all, and the greatest sympathy is felt for them.

Magisterial Inquiry.

A magisterial inquiry touching the death of Irvin Luther Darby was held by Mr R. Knight, P.M., at the court-house yesterday afternoon.

Robert Calvin Darby, hotelkeeper, of Murchison, deposed that he identified the remains of deceased as those of his twin brother, who was 42 years of age, single, and licensee of the Football Club hotel.

Hiram McNicol, laborer, Rushworth, deposed that he was in company with deceased on the previous day. They drove out to the Minor Outlet fishing. About seven o'clock they started for home. They pulled up at the wine shop and had some drinks. He (witness), did not get out of the gig. Deceased came out about eight or half-past, and was perfectly sober. They started for home. Fred Anderson's trap went on in front of them but they passed him before they got to the Tatura road bridge. When they got to the bridge Fred Anderson passed them and he was a few yards ahead when they struck some obstruction. He fell out and when he got up he saw something black up the road about 30 yards. He went to it and found that it was deceased and the seat of the gig. When he got up he found that Anderson had gone on.

Frederick Anderson, blacksmith, Rushworth, deposed that he was fishing at the Minor Outlet on the previous day. He saw deceased at the wine shop, where they had several drinks. Deceased was perfectly sober and only took very small nobblers of wine. He drove away first. He did not remember seeing a living soul after he left the wine shop. He was not quite sober.

Mr Knight — Well, young man, I would advise you to take a pull on yourself in future.

Witness—He supposed McNicol was telling the truth, but he could not remember anything about it. He got home between half-past eight or nine o'clock. He was in bed when Constable Hannah came to his place later.

Dr Jno. V. Heily deposed that deceased was brought to his place about 10.30 or 11 o'clock by two men named W. Knight and H. McNicol. He examined deceased and found that he was dead. He could see that the base of deceased's skull was fractured and he had bled a great deal from the ears and head.

Constable Hannah deposed that he went to Dr Heily's surgery about 11 o'clock on the previous evening. Dr Heily said Darby was dead. He made an inspection of the scene of the accident that day and saw where the wheel of a vehicle led up to and struck a large stone on the edge of the road at the crossing.

Mr Knight—The stone is an obstruction and should be removed.

Witness—That is so. The stone was split with the force of the blow. From the nature of the horse tracks he thought the horse was travelling at a good pace as the gig went along for 26 yards on one wheel before it went over. There were marks of where something had been dragged along and then there was a large pool of blood. The gig had gone along on the knave of the wheel for a further distance and then righted itself. He found the gig that morning about two miles away and it was much smashed up. He knew deceased as a quiet, sober man, and he never knew him to be under the influence of liquor. Apparently deceased had pulled in towards the fence to let another vehicle pass.

His Worship said there was no doubt deceased had met his death by misadventure, and he found that death was caused by fracture of the skull by reason of being thrown from a gig and dragged along the road for some distance. He was quite satisfied deceased was sober at the time.

Footnote: Rushworth cemetery records include a listing for Irvine Darby.