

Alfred Green (Platelayer) 1850 - 1873.

Our researchers discovered the story of Alfred by chance, whilst looking for events around Christmas during the 1870s on the British Newspaper Archive website.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0003389/18740103/033/0002>

It was not possible to find much detail about Alfred's life, but the brief story found is quite tragic.

On December 26th 1873, at about 23.00pm, Alfred left the Malt Shovel Inn to walk home. His route took him along the lane to Vigo Bridge then north along the railway track. He got as far as Blackwell station, a distance of about 3/4 of a mile. It was assumed he had fallen on the track and lay there unconscious. At about 00.20am on 27 December 1873 he was struck by a train pulling into the station and he died of his injuries.

It seems to have been common, back in those days, for people to use the railway lines as a footpath. Our research has found several incidents where off duty railway workers or members of the public, were killed or injured while walking along the track.



By Michael Westley, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14396667>

The picture above shows the site of Blackwell Station as it was around 1975. The platforms had gone by then. The Station Cottages (white buildings) were there in 1873. The station buildings once stood by the grass bank on the far right of the picture.

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=16.6&lat=52.34252&lon=-2.01829&layers=168&b=1>

The link above will open a map with the Malt Shovel Inn at bottom centre (opposite High House Farm) and Blackwell Station at the top of the map.

Alfred was born in Bromsgrove on 16 December 1849 to Ann Green of Linthurst, Bromsgrove (Q1 18 216). Alfred's father is not named on the birth certificate. The 1851 census finds Alfred, age 1, living with his uncle James Green, farmer age 42. Also in the house was a niece to James, Mary Ann Green, age 10 (possibly Alfred's sister) and James's sister, Ann Green, age 36. They occupied a property somewhere on Linthurst Road close to the junction with Fiery Hill.

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17.8&lat=52.35949&lon=-2.00487&layers=168&b=1>

On October 9th 1870 Alfred, age 20 was married at St John's Church, Bromsgrove to Clara Jones, age 21, a nailer from Burcot. (Q4 6c 696). The 1871 census finds Alfred, age 20 a platelayer and Clara, age 21 a nailer, living with Clara's parents somewhere on Greenhill, Burcot. Also in the House are Henry Jones, age 43 agricultural labourer, Harriet Jones, age 46, a Nailer and Henry's 3 daughters Cordelia age 12 Esmeralda age 8. and Annie May age 3.

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17.4&lat=52.34461&lon=-2.02361&layers=168&b=1>.

On January 19th 1873 Clara passed away as a result of illness - "*Dropsy and heart disease*". She was age 23 and left 2 infant children to Alfred's care. There is no clear record what became of the 2 children after Clara's death. Alfred was living in a cottage beside the railway somewhere between Blackwell and Barnt Green at the time of his death.

Bromsgrove, Droitwich & Redditch Weekly Messenger Saturday 25 January 1873

DEATHS.

January 11, at Bradley, aged 81 years, Ar, widow of the late John Brazier.

January 13, at Weatheroak Hill, near Alvechurch, after a long illness, aged 40 years, William Bartlam; much respected.

January 16, at Droitwich, in the 67th year of his age, Thomas Gorle.

King's Norton. January 18, at Dayhouse Bank, aged 30 years, Mary, wife of George Wood.

January 19, at Clifton, aged 53 years, the Rev. W. H. Tarylor, of Martin Hussingtree, near Worcester, formerly a missionary in Newfoundland, and for 15 years incumbent of St. James's, Rupert's Land.

January 19, at Cofton, aged 88 years, Ann Edmunds, form'y schoolmistress of that place.

January 19, at Burcot, Bromsgrove, aged 23 years, Clara, wife of Mr Alfred Green.

Bromsgrove, Droitwich & Redditch Weekly Messenger COUNTY JOURNAL, & GENERAL ADVERTISER.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25th, 1873.

BROMSGROVE.

No Business.—Captain Bourne, and R. Smallwood and A. Ryland, Esqs., attended at Petty Sessions at the Public Office on Tuesday last, but there were no cases for adjudication, and only one application for a summons.

INQUEST.—An inquest was held by R. Docker, Esq., coroner, at the Crab Mill Inn, on Wednesday last, on the body of Clara Green, wife of Alfred Green of Burcot, Laborer, who died suddenly on Sunday Morning last. It appeared deceased had been suffering from dropsy and heart disease, and as the evidence of Mr. Prosser, surgeon, showed that there were no marks of violence on the body, and that death was the result of disease, the jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes."

Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Redditch Weekly Messenger
Saturday January 3, 1874

SHOCKING DEATH ON THE MIDLAND RAILWAY.

An inquest was held by R. Docker, Esq., coroner, at the Malt Shovel Inn, Vigo, on Tuesday afternoon, on the body of Alfred Green, who was killed at Blackwell station, on the Midland Railway, on the night of Friday, December 26. The body of the poor fellow lay in the stable at the inn, and presented a shocking sight. Both thighs were broken, and the lower part of the body was horribly mangled. There was a cut on the face, the nose was broken, on the left breast there was a deep gash, and the right shoulder was dislocated. Mr. Stalvies, locomotive superintendent, and an inspector of the Midland Railway, were present during the inquiry.

The first witness called was Keziah Day, widow, and daughter of Mr. Sault, the landlord of the Malt Shovel. She stated that deceased came to the house on Friday, the 26th, between seven and eight in the evening, and stayed till closing time, at eleven, when he left. He was not drinking all the time he was there, but lay down and slept some part of the time. He was quite sober when he left. Witness did not see him again alive.

It was stated by one of the jurymen that deceased, who was a foreman of platelayers on the line, lived in a cottage by the side of the line near Green's bridge, below Barnt Green, and his nearest way home from Vigo would be along the line.

Sergeant Workman, of Bromsgrove, stated that on Friday night he was returning from Birmingham by the special train to Gloucester, which reached Blackwell Station at twenty minutes past twelve at night. When the train stopped he happened to look out of the window of the carriage he was in, and saw the face of deceased on the line turned up towards him. He was lying across the rails, with his head in the "six-foot" way, and the wheel of the carriage was on the lower part of his body.

Witness apprised the officials of the company, and the train being moved, he, with the assistance of Hill, a breaksman, drew the body from under the carriage. Deceased was then quite dead, both his legs being cut through in several places. There was a wound on the face of the deceased from which the blood had run, and this blood was dry, and from that and the appearance of the line, witness thought deceased must have fallen on the rails and been stunned, and lay there insensible till the train came up and ran over him. The engine, tender, and seven of the carriages had passed over the body, which had been dragged several yards along the line by the train. Witness, with assistance, conveyed the body to the Malt Shovel.

Enoch Marden, engine driver, stated that as the train drew up at Blackwell he felt the engine jump over something. He was looking a-head as the train drew up at the station, and he saw nothing. If deceased had been standing on the line witness must have seen him.

Edward Hill, breaksman on the line, stated that he knew deceased, and had seen him go up the line on his way home.

The jury thought it unnecessary to call any more evidence, and the Coroner having briefly summed up, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

Deceased, who bore a good character for steadiness, was a widower, and leaves two young orphan children to bewail the loss of him.