

## **FRANK NORMAN FRYER Railway Wagon Fitter 1876 to 1895**

The Fryer family origins were in the village of Birlingham, Worcestershire. His father and grandfather were agricultural workers. Frank's father Henry, like so many in that era, left the land to find better paid work in industry. He married in Droitwich, Worcestershire and settled to work and raise his family in Bromsgrove.

Henry and Frank's brother George also both worked at the Bromsgrove wagon works. They were not witnesses to the accident but did give evidence at the Inquest.

1841 census shows Frank's grandparents family living at Birlingham Lower End. - Joseph Fryer 30, Butcher, Ann 25, William 10, Betsy 8, Mary 5, Louisa 2 and Emma 1.

1849 Sep, Frank's father Henry was born at Birlingham, (Registered Pershore Q3 18 481).

1849 Birlingham parish records, (Church of St James the Great) Sept 23 Baptism, Henry son of Joseph Frier & Ann (Jones) of Birlingham.

1861 Census, Birlingham, Lower End - Joseph Fryer, age 54 Ag. Lab. Anne 46, Louisa 22, working as a Servant, George 17, a Miller, Henry 12, Ag. Lab. Edmund 7, and a visitor Anne Vicker age 2. George is described as a Miller so he possibly worked at Nafford Mill which is on the river Avon at the lower end of the village.

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/101586796#zoom=5&lat=3393&lon=3330&layers=BT>

1865 Death of Joseph Fryer (Pershore Q3 6c 209)

1871 Census, Birlingham Almshouse, Ann Fryer Widow 52 Charwoman, Sarah Fryer, 24 Gen. Servant, Mary Anne Moore Visitor age 19 Servant. The Almshouses at Birlingham appear on old maps - use the link above.

1885 Ann Fryer Passed away (Pershore Q2 6c 179).



By Birlingham Church. by Philip Halling,  
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Frank Norman Fryer was Born in Bromsgrove C1876. His parents Henry Fryer and Sarah Till had been married in Droitwich in 1867. The earliest official record found of him is the 1881 census when the family were living at Middle Road, Stoney Hill, Bromsgrove. The family seem to have resided there for some years. A later census shows them at 20 Middle Road (now Central Road) which is at the centre of the Area shown on the following 1884 map link -

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/101586094#zoom=6&lat=2394&lon=7611&layers=BT>

1891, The Bromsgrove Wagon Works staff records show Frank Fryer starting work on April 13 as a Wagon Repairers Boy his weekly pay in was 7/- in 1893 9/- and in 1894 11/-. He is shown as leaving the company on March 15 1895 deceased.

[https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/1728/images/32167\\_626640\\_0624-00021?treeid=&personid=&usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=XVi6&\\_phstart=successSource&pId=607090](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/1728/images/32167_626640_0624-00021?treeid=&personid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=XVi6&_phstart=successSource&pId=607090)

1895 March 14 Frank is Injured at work, crushed between 2 wagons, at about 6.30am.

1895 March 15 Frank died at home of injuries received the previous day.

1895 March 18 The inquest into Frank's death is held at the Golden Cross Bromsgrove

1895 March 23 reports of the accident and Inquest appear in the Worcestershire Chronicle and Bromsgrove Messenger.

1895 March, Frank was buried in Bromsgrove Cemetery (Plot S1127). His workmates contributed to the cost of a headstone.



Frank's Headstone at Bromsgrove Cemetery

## **WORCESTER CHRONICLE - SATURDAY 23 MARCH 1895**

### **FATAL ACCIDENT AT BROMSGROVE.**

An Inquest was held at Bromsgrove, on Monday, touching the death of Frank Norman Fryer, a wagon repairer's assistant, which occurred on Friday from injuries received on the previous day at the Midland Railway carriage works. It appeared that deceased was fixing a draw-bar in a wagon, when another wagon was pushed up behind and crushed him in the pit of his stomach.

A verdict of " Accidental death" was returned, and the Jury suggested that more care should be exercised in future.

**BROMSGROVE AND DROITWICH MESSENGER**  
**SATURDAY 23 MARCH 1895**

**FATAL ACCIDENT**  
**AT THE**  
**RAILWAY WAGGON WORKS, BROMSGROVE.**  
**THE INQUEST.**

An inquest was held at the Golden Cross Hotel, Bromsgrove, on Monday, before Mr. Edwin Decker (Coroner for East Worcestershire), on the body of Frank Norman Fryer, who died on Friday, from the effect of injuries received on the previous day.

Henry Fryer, Stoney Hill, fitter, employed by the Midland Railway Company, at their waggon works at Bromsgrove Station, said the deceased was his son, and was nineteen years old last September. Deceased was a waggon repairer's assistant, and was also employed at the waggon works. His son left home about twenty minutes to six o'clock on Thursday morning in his usual health, and witness did not see him again until after the accident. About 6.30 or 6.45, a man came and told witness that his son was hurt, and he went into the mess-room to see him, but found that he had already gone home with his brother. Mr. Davenport, the manager, sent one of the foremen to witness to say that he might follow his son if he liked, and he went about ten o'clock. When he arrived home he saw deceased, who was in bed. Witness asked how the affair occurred, and deceased replied that it was a pure accident, and no blame attached to anyone. Deceased told him he was putting a draw-bar in a waggon, when another waggon came up behind him and struck him, crushing him between the draw-bars of the two waggons. Deceased said he did not see the second waggon coming, or hear anyone shout. Deceased, who was attended by Dr. Ball, remained in bed until the following day, when he died. Witness was unable to say what arrangements were made to prevent accidents in the side of the works where his son was hurt, and he could not say whether there was any blame attaching to anyone.

William Abel, Windsor-square, employed as a waggon-repairer at the waggon works, said the deceased assisted him and worked under his direction. On Thursday morning they were at work repairing a waggon. Fryer was engaged in fixing a draw-bar in the end of the waggon, and in so doing the bar was about level with his stomach, and he was pushing it with both hands. While Fryer was so occupied some other men pushed another waggon up the line, and the draw-bar of the approaching waggon caught Fryer in the small of the back and crushed his stomach against the bar he was putting in the stationary waggon. The men who were pushing the one waggon could not see that Fryer was in front, and as soon as witness saw that deceased was in danger he called out, but before anything could be done the accident happened. Witness expected that Fryer thought he could put in the bar before the second waggon came up. It was the custom to see that the way was clear and shout before pushing a truck, and there might have been a shout on the present occasion, but witness did not hear any. Deceased helped to push his own waggon up, and the other men did not notice that he had remained behind, but thought he was helping to push the second waggon. Fryer did not succeed in fixing the drawbar, and if he had there would have been no accident.

A juryman, who was formerly engaged at the works, asked what business Fryer had putting in a draw-bar when waggons were on the move. It was against the regulations when he was at the works, Witness replied deceased evidently thought he had a chance to fix the bar.—The juryman : Did he know the waggon was being pushed up ?—Witness : He must have known that. —The juryman: He would not have five minutes to spare. The juryman added the second waggon should have waited until the draw-bar was fixed or the waggons would have had to be opened again for the purpose. His impression was that under the circumstances the deceased should not have gone between the waggons.

Thomas Vicarage, Stoney-hill, wagon repairer, gave similar evidence to the previous witness. He said after they had pushed up the first wagon, they went back to fetch another truck, and they supposed that deceased had returned with them, but it afterwards appeared that he had remained behind to put in a draw-bar, which had been left out to be repaired. The first intimation that they had that anything was wrong was when Abel shouted, but it was then too late to prevent the accident. They pulled the waggon back, and deceased walked out. They found that he had been crushed between the drawbars, and they rubbed him, and put him to sit down. He appeared to get a little better, and the foreman afterwards sent him home. They did not think he was seriously hurt. It was usual to see if the line was clear before pushing a waggon, but it was deceased's duty to push with the other men and they were under the impression that he was doing so. Witness considered that proper care was exercised and proper precautions taken. Witness had himself done the same as deceased, putting in a draw-bar, and then getting out of the way before the waggons closed.

George A. Fryer, living with his father at Stoneyhill, a waggon repairer, said deceased was his brother. Witness, who worked in another shop, was fetched when his brother was hurt, and upon going he found that his brother had walked to the top of the shop. Deceased was standing up, and he told witness he wanted to get the draw-bar in while there was room, but the waggons closed before he could get the end of the bar in the mortice, and he was pinched between the draw-bars. It was deceased's duty to put the bar in. The work might have been left, but it was generally done when there was room, and the same thing had been done scores of times. It was not usual to place someone to see that the way was clear when trucks were being moved ; the men who were pushing were supposed to see, and that plan generally worked all right. Witness took deceased home. Deceased did not attach any blame to anyone

Dr. Ball deposed that he was called about a quarter-past eight o'clock on Thursday morning, and he found deceased in bed. Deceased was suffering from the effects of a blow in the pit of the stomach, which might have been caused in the manner described in the evidence. He treated deceased, and saw him again in the afternoon and the next morning, but on the latter occasion he was dying. In the absence of a post-mortem witness could not form a definite opinion as to what particular organ was smashed. He considered death was due to shock and internal injuries, probably haemorrhage of the liver.

The Coroner remarked they might have had a post-mortem to have ascertained the precise injuries, but he thought it was sufficient to know that the poor boy died from internal injuries.

The jury concurred, and after having reviewed the evidence, the Coroner said the only point for the consideration of the jury was whether or not there was any blame attaching to anyone. It was for the jury to determine whether sufficient and proper care was exercised.

After consulting in private, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and added that they thought the operation of fixing draw-bars while waggons were on the move was attended with danger, and more care was required to prevent accident.

The Coroner said he would convey that expression of opinion to the Midland Railway Company.

### **Continued from Page 5.**

The unfortunate fatal accident at the railway works was the subject of a full enquiry at the inquest on Monday. The operation in which the deceased was engaged at the time he was injured was a dangerous one, but it seems that it is generally adopted by the men, with a view to expediting the work, and no blame appears to attach to any particular person. The jury thought it was the system that was at fault, and they suggested that some alteration should be made which would remove or at any rate minimise the danger. This representation will doubtless be acted upon by the Company, and the men will probably be forbidden to get between the waggons when shunting is going on, even when the shunting is being done by hand.

## The record of his parents and siblings:

1867 Henry Fryer married Sarah Till in Droitwich. 1868 A son Harry Hugh was born in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. 1870 A daughter Margaret Ellen was born in Bromsgrove. 1873 March, A son George Albert was born in Bromsgrove, 1873 A daughter Janet was born in Bromsgrove. 1876 Frank Norman Fryer was Born in Bromsgrove 1878 A daughter Alice was born in Bromsgrove. 1880 A son Will was born in Bromsgrove. (Bromsgrove Q3 6c 390)

1881 Census, Middle Road, Stoney Hill Bromsgrove - Henry 34, Driller of Ironwork, born Birlingham, Sarah 39 dress Maker, Bromsgrove, Harry Hugh 12, Bromsgrove, Margaret Ellen 12, Bromsgrove, George Albert 8, Bromsgrove, Frank Norman 6, Bromsgrove, Alice 3, Bromsgrove, Will 7months, Bromsgrove.

1882 Jan. Both Harry H & Will passed away Harry age 13. Buried Bromsgrove Jan 31. Will age 1, Buried Bromsgrove Feb. 1

1885 A daughter Beatrice Emma was born in Bromsgrove.

1887 Wagon Works staff records show George Fryer started age 14, he left in 1909.

1888 Jan. 13 Beatrice is baptised at All Saints, Bromsgrove

1891 Census, Middle Rd Henry, Iron Stock fitter 42 born Birlingham Worcs, Sarah 49 Bromsgrove, George 18 Carpenter Bromsgrove, Frank 15 Errand Boy Bromsgrove, Alice 13 Bromsgrove, Janet 18 Bromsgrove, Beatrice 5 Bromsgrove.

1891 April 13 Frank starts work.

1892 Dec 10th, Sister Margaret marries Leo Plumb at All Saints Church, Bromsgrove

1895 March 14 Frank is Injured at work. March 15 Frank passed away at home.

1896 May 23 Margaret's son George Henry Thomas is born in Bromsgrove.

1898 June 22 Margaret's son George is baptised at All Saints Church.

1902 Mar. 1st, George marries Elizabeth Mary Horton at St Johns Church, Harborne,

1901 Census Alice Fryer age 23 is working as a servant in Rhyl, Wales.

1909 Sept. George leaves the Bromsgrove works and transfers to Bristol.

1910 Feb. Henry Retires from the wagon works due to illness.

1911 Census Stoney Hill Road - Henry 64 retired Railway Carriage Fitter, Sarah 69, Isabella Farmer, boarder, 22 Elementary School teacher born Lye Worcs.

1911 Census 20 Rothay Road, Sheffield George Albert Fryer, 38 Foreman of railway, born Bromsgrove, Elizabeth Mary Fryer, 32 Clerical (Builders Company) born Harborne, (Birmingham) Staffs, Henry Richard Fryer, 8, Bromsgrove, Nelly Fryer, 5 Bromsgrove.

1911 Census, Bell Inn, Market Place, Willenhall - Leo Plumb 39 Lic. Victualler born Little Compton, Margaret Ellen Plumb 40, Bromsgrove, Leonard Plumb 19 Hairdresser, Bromsgrove, George Plumb 15, Bromsgrove. <https://maps.nls.uk/view/115475484#zoom=7&lat=9496&lon=15288&layers=BT>

1914 Beatrice marries George Siviter of Stourbridge at Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove Q2 6c 542)

1916 Frank's father Henry passed away in Bromsgrove age 69. (Bromsgrove, Q2 6c 178)

1917 Jul. 11th at St James Church, Edgbaston, 2 children of Beatrice Emma Siviter & George Siviter, (Soldier) are baptised. - Stanley George and Oswald Henry Siviter.

1917 Nov 2. Leonard A Plumb dies of wounds in France.

1925 Emma passed away in Worcester age 85.

1939 National Registration, 8 Myrtle Grove (Summer Road) Edgbaston - Emma B Siviter b7/10/1885 Stanley G Siviter b14/11/1915, Centre Lathe Turner, Geoffrey E Siviter, b27/7/1925, Errand Boy, Booksellers. <https://maps.nls.uk/view/228802097#zoom=5&lat=7681&lon=5381&layers=BT>

1938 Jan 21st Leo Plumb died.

1945 Apr 2 Margaret Plumb died.

1948 Aug 22nd George Plumb died. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/139073978/>

1961 Beatrice passed away age 75 (Birmingham Q2 9c 369).