

## The Rowkins Family - 2 Deaths on the railway.

Alfred Rowkins was born 1842 in Bedford.

In 1865 at Belper, he was married to Mary Creswell (Born at Turnditch, Derbyshire 1844).

The 1871 census found them living at 76 Hanbury Road Stoke Prior, Worcestershire. Alfred was a Signaller at Stoke Works Station. They have 2 Children.

In 1874 a son - Alfred Jnr. is born.

On 30 April 1877 Alfred Senior was killed - struck down by a passing train while working as a Pointsman at Stoke junction.

The 1891 census found the Family living at 63 Foley Gardens, Stoke Prior. Young Alfred then age 17, was a Railway Truck Repairer. William, age 15 was an Errand Boy at Stoke works. Mary age 48 was the Post Mistress at Stoke Prior.

In 1897 Alfred Jnr. was married to Emily Harris. By 1900 They had 6 Children.

On 30 November 1900 Alfred Jnr. was struck and killed by a passing train while walking along the track to work at Bromsgrove wagon works. A press article shows a collection of £1, 16s was raised for the widow during an event at the Boat Inn, Stoke works.

The 1901 Census shows Emily and 2 daughters (Ada age 3 and Elsie age 2) living with her Father, Winter Harris at 93 Imperial Row, Stoke Works. Winter was age 68, a Timekeeper at the salt works. Mary was living nearby at the Post Office in Stoke Prior.

On 16 April 1903 Mary passed away after a short illness. She had been working as a Caretaker at a local School.

BROMSGROVE DROITWICH AND  
REDDITCH WEEKLY MESSENGER,  
SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1903

STOKE PRIOR.

DEATH OF Mrs. MARY ROWKINS.

-General regret was expressed in the village on Thursday morning, when it became known that Mrs Mary Rowkins had died after a few days' illness from an affection of the heart. The deceased was caretaker of the Board School. and was for some time in charge of the village post office. She was 59 years of age and she never recovered completely from the shock caused rather more than two years ago by the death of her son who was killed on the railway near Sugarbrook, when going to his work at Bromsgrove Station. Her husband also met his death on the railway about twenty-five years previously.






BROMSGROVE, DROITWICH &  
REDDITCH WEEKLY MESSENGER,  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23. 1901.

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SMOKING CONCERT. - A well attended smoker was held on Tuesday evening in the club room at the Boat Inn. Councillor Lambert presided, while song and harmony reigned supreme, and each one resigned himself to the subtle influence of the narcotic weed. Mr. W. Guise, of Droitwich, ably accompanied the following gentlemen, to whom the company showed their appreciation by hearty applause, Messrs. T. Farrin, Ern.. Vaughan, T Harbach, J. Carter, W Pass, W Guise, J Barnett and W Harrison. During the evening a collection was made on behalf of the widow and children of the late Mr Alfred Rowkins and £1,16s was given.- Mr. Lambert, in announcing the amount, said he need not remind them of the uphill fight and struggle Mrs. Rowkins was called to make by the sudden loss of her husband a young man 26 years of age. She would be much cheered and comforted by the thought that she had their neighbourly help and sympathy in her bereavement. The health of the chairman was enthusiastically drunk, and the singing of "God save the King" concluded a very pleasant meeting.




BROMSGROVE DROITWICH AND  
REDDITCH WEEKLY MESSENGER,  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1900

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FATAL-ACCIDENT ON THE RAILWAY  
AT STOKE PRIOR.

About 7 o'clock on Thursday morning William Twitty, a ganger, employed by the Midland Railway Co. found the dead body of a man on the railway, three quarters of a mile from Stoke Works Station. The deceased was afterwards identified as Alfred Rowkins, 27 years of age, living at Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, and employed as a labourer at the Bromsgrove Station Wagon Works. The body was much cut about the head, and the toes of the right foot were severed. The remains were removed to deceased's home, near the Navigation Inn, where the inquest will be held to-day (Saturday). Rowkins left home shortly after 5 a.m. and, it is supposed, was walking up the line to work. His body was discovered in the four-foot. It is believed that in getting out of the road of a down train, the deceased stepped on to the up line and was knocked down by a light engine which travels about 5.30 a.m. Deceased leaves a widow and 2 children, as well as a widowed mother, for all of whom much sympathy is felt in the neighbourhood.



BROMSGROVE DROITWICH AND  
REDDITCH WEEKLY MESSENGER,  
5 MAY 1877

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FATAL ACCIDENT TO A POINTSMAN AT  
STOKE PRIOR.

A sad fatality occurred at the Stoke Works station on Monday evening to a pointsman named Alfred Rowkins. He went on duty for the night at six o'clock, and subsequently gave a signal for a local goods" train to leave the yard. Shortly afterwards his body was found some distance from his box cut and mangled in a shocking manner.

An inquest was held on Friday (yesterday) at the Navigation Inn, Stoke Prior, before Ralph Docker, Esq., coroner, and a respectable jury, of whom Mr. Jas. Webb, of the Boat Inn, was the foreman.

Mr. Beale (Beale, Mangold, and Beale, Birmingham), watched the case for the railway company, and Mr. T. Clutterbuck, of Worcester, appeared on behalf of the widow and at the instance of the secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. William Thompson, Woodgate, a platelayer on the Midland Railway, said he knew the deceased who lived at Stoke Prior. He was in his thirty-fifth year, and was a signaller in the employment of the company, and was stationed at Stoke Junction.



The body the juryman had just seen was that of Alfred Rowkins. On Monday, the 30th April, witness went on duty at 5.30 at a point on the line about half-a-mile from the deceased's signal-box, being employed "slacking" the trains, as the line was under repair. Witness slacked the fast down-train, and then went on to Rowkins' box, and saw him there, and passed on to a little hut a few yards beyond, to clean his lamp. During that time what was called the "pick-up" train from Ashchurch came by, in the direction of Birmingham, and when witness returned with his lamp he saw Rowkins lying down on the outside of the up-line. He ran and picked him up, when he found that he was covered with blood and quite dead. Witness then went down the line to inform the stationmaster, Mr. Giles. The time when this occurred would be about half-past six.

To the Jury: The pick-up train was the only train that passed during the time, and it went on at a sharp speed.

To Mr Clutterbuck : There was a beaten track along the side of the line to which the deceased could go to and from his residence which was not far off. There were a number of sleepers and some ballast on the path near where the deceased's body was found. He was a sober, steady man.

To Mr. Beale: Noticed a small bunch of onions on the line some distance beyond the body when he went to call the station-master. The sleepers near where the man was killed

were spattered with blood, but there was some on the onions. He could not say whether he told the policeman on the following night that there was blood on the onions; he was "too much put about." If he did so it was not correct.

To Mr. Clutterbuck: The onions were on the Birmingham side of the body. The deceased cultivated a bit of land near the signal-box. Mr. Clutterbuck, in answer to the Coroner at this stage of the proceedings said the only insinuation on his part in respect to the deceased was that the plate-layers were to blame in throwing a trap, as it were, in the deceased's way on a path on which he was entitled to be at the time.

Charles Giles, station master, at Stoke Works, said at 6.45 p.m. on Monday he was informed of what had occurred by the former witness.

On examination of the deceased's time-book he found that the only train that could have killed him must have been the goods which passed the signal box at 6.35 p.m. on that day. The entry was in the deceased's own handwriting. At the time he was killed the deceased ought to have been in the box. He had to come on duty at six o'clock p.m., and the 6.36 would be the first train he would enter. Under ordinary circumstances he ought not to have been out of his box till six o'clock the next morning.

John Cunliffe, Birmingham, the driver of the Ashchurch, or "pick-up" train, said he saw

the deceased at his post in the signal box as the train passed at 6.35. Thomas Horne, guard of the train in question, said he did not see the deceased. He was, however, engaged in looking in the opposite direction to his box.

After some conversation between the Coroner and After some conversation between the Coroner and Mr. Clutterbuck, the former summed up the evidence, and the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

The deceased leaves a wife and six children the eldest of whom is only eleven years old. We direct attention to the fact, advertised in another column, that a special sermon will be preached tomorrow (Sunday) evening in the Stoke Works School. room by the Rev. J. Holding, who will "improve" the occasion, and when a collection will be made on behalf of the family of deceased, who was much respected in the neighbourhood for a man in his position, where he had been for twelve years.





BROMSGROVE DROITWICH AND  
REDDITCH WEEKLY MESSENGER,  
SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1877.

STOKE PRIOR.

THE LATE ACCIDENT. - On Sunday morning last, a sermon was preached in the parish church, by the Rev. E. Aldham, vicar, special reference being made to the recent awful accident to a signalman at Stoke Works Station. Taking for his text Jeremiah xlix. 11,

"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive ; and let thy widows trust in me," he delivered a most earnest and comforting address.

STOKE WORKS.

SPECIAL SERVICE.-On Sunday evening a special sermon was preached in the large school-room, Stoke Works, by the Rev. J. Holding, the newly appointed chaplain, and collections were made on behalf of the widow and orphans of Alfred Rowkins, late signalman at Stoke Works junction, whose melancholy death we recorded last week. The room was filled long prior to the commencement of the service, every available space being occupied, the deceased being much respected in the neighbourhood. The service commenced punctually at 6.30 p.m. The Rev. H. Aldham, vicar of Stoke Prior, amid the prayers, and Mr. R. Westall read the lessons. The hymns selected for the occasion were most appropriate, " Brief life

is here our portion," "A few more years shall roll," and " Days and moments quickly dying." Mr. Holding selected his text from Jonah i. 6, " What meanest thou, O sleeper Arise, and call upon thy God." For half an hour the rev. gentleman held his large congregation spellbound by the earnest and solemn emphasis which he threw into his address. A storm at sea was visibly pictured--the alarm of the crew-- their goods on which they had concentrated all their thoughts in fair weather -now when death was threatening thrown into the sea.

The heathen pray while the prophet of God is sleeping. The awakening of the prophet to his danger and the shipmaster's demand.

"What meanest thou ? " This the preacher proceeded to apply to the indifferent and careless, and to the Godless. He showed how near death might be to any one of them in the many accidents of life-in sickness wafted by the wind--in a fall from a horse--a slip on a ladder--a prick from a rusty nail--or a scratch from a diseased bone. Death was ever ready with his weapon. Nothing could escape therefore, all should be ready. He brought the matter more nearly home to his audience by referring to the recent awful death of Alfred Rowkins. He considered this not merely a warning, but emphatically the voice of God--rousing them from their indifference and neglect of their souls. To quote the preacher's words, " Here has been a solemn warning to you men, who

neglect your soul's salvation. God has spoken - aroused you in a voice of thunder louder than the roar of the tempest. Along that railway line he has traced, in letters of blood for All to read, those alarming words, "Prepare to meet thy God." The death of this signal. man may be the life of your souls." His appeal on behalf of the widow and six orphans was so heart-stirring as to draw sobs and tears from many a man in the congregation. The collection at the close of the service amounted to £7, 2s., the contributions principally of the working classes.

