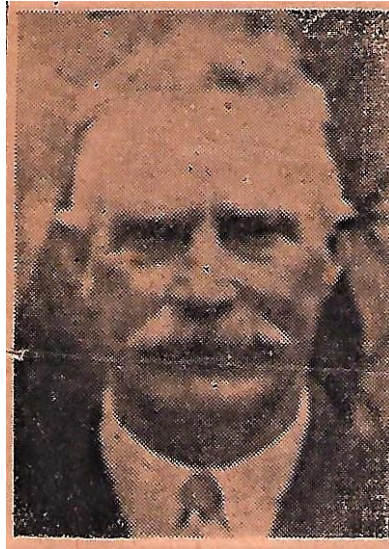


TRAGIC DEATH OF MR. J WELFORD, SANDSEND

(27th December 1943)

(extract from Whitby Gazette 31st December 1943)



Fatally injured by falling from his horse - hunting field accident.

A meet of the Glaisdale Harriers, on Monday, was marred by an accident sustained by Mr. John Welford aged 69 years of Elloughton Meadowfields Sandsend and formerly of Ravenhill Farm Dunsley.

Mr. Welford sustained severe injuries as a result of an inexplicable mishap in the course of which he fell from his horse into a shallow ditch with the horse on top of him. He was rendered unconscious almost immediately and although medical assistance was speedily forthcoming and he was removed to The Whitby and District War Memorial Cottage Hospital, he died later the same night.

One of the best-known farmers in the Whitby district, Mr. Welford was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Welford Ridge Lane Staithes. He was brought up on the farm and had a natural love for things agricultural, and especially for horses, of which there were fewer better judges in the Whitby district. At the age of 16 his father died and Mr. Welford shared with his mother the responsibility of running a farm, the task which he faced with the courage which was a notable characteristic of his life, and which enabled him to capably shoulder heavy responsibilities. At the age of 32 he left the Staithes district taking over the tenancy of the Ravenhill Farm where he continued until May of this year winning a wide reputation as a farmer of outstanding skill and as a man whose knowledge of agriculture was such as enabled him to give sound advice.

As a breeder of stock he was known far and wide throughout North Yorkshire and his cattle frequently figured in Christmas show prize lists. He was an all-round agriculturalist: a man who farmed as much a love of nature as for profit and he was ever ready to help his neighbours in any way he could.

Like most men connected with the land Mr. Welford had his own particular pastime. He loved hunting, the joy of the chase been very real to him. Not unnaturally this tended to increase his affection for horses and hunters in particular. He bred several fine animals, but his general custom was to cast his

knowledgeable will eye over promising youngsters, buy those which took his fancy and break them as us hunters. His skill in this matter brought into the notice of the late Mr. F.H. Pyman who seeing

Mr. Welford mounted on such a spirited hunter at a local meet enquired how he got his animal into such a fine condition. Mr. Welford explained his methods and the result was that he was appointed to look after the hunters belonging to Mr. Pyman. He did this job as he did all other work, very conscientiously and efficiently. His knowledge of the terrain of the Whitby district was extensive. He knew the runs of foxes, the moors, fields and roads of the entire district and, when hunting, invariably took his own line in order to be up at the "kill". Many of the huntsmen and women of this district who owe their pleasure of the chase to the advice and tuition of Mr. Welford. The Cleveland, Staintondale and Goathland hunts knew him well and he was equally at home with the Glaisdale Harriers with whom he had many a stern chase after the elusive moorland foxes. He was in fact, as well as in word, a real sportsman and his death will be deeply mourned by the hunting fraternity amongst whom his worth was appreciated. Even in retirement Mr. Welford maintained two hunters so as to avail himself of the opportunity of a day in the field and at the age of 69 year old with a fearless determination which many younger men might well envy. It was a delight to see his well-knit frame merging into that of the animal to make the perfect hunting team. Courageous, he had a love for a horse such as few men possess and he would never permit any horse to be ill-treated if he could do anything to prevent it.

When the present war broke out Mr. Welford's vast and agricultural knowledge of the Whitby district made him an automatic choice for the County War Agricultural Executive Committee and he gave himself unstintingly to this work. Before that his soundness as a breeder of good stock was recognized by his fellow farmers and at many local shows he was chosen to judge stock. His passing under such tragic circumstances came as a great shock to a very wide circle of friends and much sympathy has been extended to his wife and their family of four sons – Mr John Welford, Sandfield Farm Straggleton, Mr. Thomas Welford, Sandsend Mr. Ralph Welford Robin Hood's Bay and Aircraftman Joseph Welford.R.A.F.V.R.

THE INQUEST

The inquest into the circumstances of the accident was conducted by Mr B. Wilkinson coroner for the Cleveland District sitting without a jury at the Court House, which the on Wednesday evening

Evidence of identification was given by deceased's eldest son John Welford Sandfield Farm, Straggleton, Whitby who said deceased was his father. Witness last saw him alive on Wednesday before the accident, when his father was in good health. Deceased was riding regularly and on Monday rode the same horse as he had ridden for two years. Witness knew the horse his father rode; it was not a spirited animal; he would call it a steady decent horse. His father had ridden horses all his life

Dr. James Alexander Fraser medical practitioner, Whitby, said he saw deceased at about 5.30 on Monday afternoon at the Whitby War Memorial Cottage Hospital. He had not attended deceased previously. At the time Mr. Welford was deeply unconscious and the witness came to the conclusion that he was suffering firstly from the fracture of the base of the skull and cerebral laceration; and, secondly from fractured ribs with damage to the lungs. Nothing could be done on account of the cerebral injuries and deceased died about three hours later. The cause of death was coma following a fracture of the base of the skull and cerebral laceration. Witness had no doubt that deceased would be unconscious from the time the injuries were sustained.

HEARD A GROAN

George Leng, Parliament Cottage, Glaisdale, farm labourer, said he was out with the Glaisdale Harriers on Monday at Breckon Hill Glaisdale. When they were about 500 yards to the west of Breckon Hill at about noon, he was riding in front of Mr. Welford who was bringing up the rear. Witness heard a groan and turned quickly as he thought it was a horse falling. He saw the horse was just getting up out of the ditch and that deceased was in the ditch. It was not a wide ditch about 18 inches across he would say and about 2 feet to 2 ½ feet deep. There was no fence at the ditch which a horse would have taken without trouble in the ordinary way. Witness thought the horse Mr. Welford was riding must have stumbled into the ditch. As soon as he saw what had happened he called to Mr. Robert Atkinson and their will on the spot directly. When they got back the horse was nearly up, and he held the horses of other men while they lived in Mr. Welford out of the ditch.

The Coroner: "You think the probability is that the horse stumbled?"

Witness ; "Yes"

The Coroner: "But you did not actually seen anything that happened?"

Witness: " No"

Robert Atkinson, Rake Farm, Glaisdale, corroborated what the previous witness had said regarding his position in the field and of the shout witness had heard. He never saw deceased until the horse got out of the ditch. He then saw Mr. Welford, who was lying in the ditch, his body had being covered with water, except for his head and shoulders. The horse was not injured in any way, and when witness spoke to deceased he got no verbal reply only a sign of hand pointing to the right leg. Deceased was bleeding from the nose and mouth, and when they got him out of the ditch they took him to the cottage. There he was seen by Dr. Hugh English who ordered his removal to the Memorial Cottage Hospital Whitby.

The Coroner said that was all the evidence they had. He could have called more witnesses, but they could only have told them what they had from Mr. Atkinson and he did not think it would have helped them any further. They never would know exactly what happened but the most likely thing, was as suggested, by Mr. Leng, that the horse stumbled into the ditch. They could all make mistakes, animals as much as human beings. He did not think he could go any further than that for the purpose of his verdict, which was that deceased died from coma, following the fracture of the base of the skull and cerebral laceration, sustained as the result of a fall from a horse. For the purpose of his verdict it did not matter whether the injuries were sustained when Mr. Welford fell to the ground or whether they were caused by the crushing he received from the horse. He expressed his deepest sympathy with deceased's family and with members of the Hunt. One could only feel that Mr. Welford, who had had such a long and useful career, might have had many more years of usefulness but for that unfortunate happening.

Sergeant Carter, on behalf of the police, associated himself with this expression of sympathy.

The interment will take place at Lythe, today (Friday) at 2.30 and there will be a Requiem Mass at Saint Hilda's Roman Catholic Church at 10.00 AM

OBITUARY NOTICE

December 27, accidentally, aged 69 years, John Welford of Elloughton, Meadowfields, Sandsend, late of Ravenhill. Requiem Mass at Saint Hilda's Roman Catholic Church Whitby, today (Friday) at 10.00 am. To be interred at Lythe at 2.30 pm : Cortege leaving Meadowfields 2.10 pm R.I.P

John Welford

with

Mr W A Oldfield (Bank Manager)



Message on back of photo (believed to have been taken at Sandsend) -

*To John Welford
From W.A. Oldfield.
In remembrance of some very happy days.*

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH



Back row : Ralph Welford John 'Jack' Welford Thomas Welford

Front Row : John Welford (Father) Joseph Welford Martha Welford (Mother)