

The Mansfield Chronicle - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 1907

(Transcribed 13 May 1998 by Rosalyn Pursglove from copies taken from Microfilm archives at Mansfield Library)

### **The Shirebrook Colliery Pit-Cage Disaster Burial of the Victims-Touching scenes at the Graveside**

Never since the funeral of the two men who were suffocated by "damp" and the fall of roof in the head end at Warsop Main Colliery some two or three years ago has there been an interment at the Shirebrook Cemetery with so much interest as the dual one which took place there on Saturday, when two of the victims of the terrible fall down the Shirebrook pit shaft were borne to their long last resting-place. Their names were William Edward Limb, aged 45, and William Phillips, aged 27. The remains of Arthur Burton, aged 36, a native of Basford, Notts. were interred at Bulwell the same afternoon. Never since the colliery was sunk has there been so many officials and workmen, out of respect, attend the burial of those who had fallen from amongst them, notwithstanding that a number of them visited Bulwell to represent the colliery company and workmen at the interment of the deceased Arthur Burton. From the colliery offices where the two corpses had been lying prior to the funeral, they were reverently conveyed to their own homes. The day was beautifully fine, the sun shining gloriously, and hundreds of people congregated to witness the scenes. The Shilibiers and mourning coaches conveying the remains and mourners of William Phillips were met at the top of Church Drive by the Shirebrook Adult School Prize Band, who, under the direction of Mr Fred Wakeford played with muffled drum the Dead March in "Saul" (by Handel) to Warren Terrace, where this procession was joined by those mourning the loss of William Limb. The long cortege then proceeded slowly to the cemetery on the Pleasley Road. It was an impressive and pathetic sight. Hundreds of people lined the road, blinds were lowered, and gentlemen removed their hats out of respect for the sorrowing friends and their dead. Amongst those who followed were the officials of the Shirebrook Colliery company: Mr William Hay, general manager; Mr Thos. Thompson, secretary; Mr Geo Thornley, under-manager; and Mr S Buxton, Mr W Ratcliffe, Mr J. H. Smith, Mr Noah Tomlinson, Mr Mark Avery, and Mr Joseph Carrington, deputies; with a number of fellow workmates from both Shirebrook and Warsop Main Collieries. Representatives of the Warsop Main Miner's Union and Checkweight Committee and the Ancient Order of Foresters were also present.

#### **The Chief Mourners**

Were: Mrs Limb (widow), and Mr Joseph Limb (eldest son), Mr Alfred Limb and Miss C Limb (son and daughter), Mr Harry and Miss Florrie Limb; Mr Arthur and Miss Clara Limb; Mr Joseph Limb (father), Master Percy Limb (son), and Mr Alfred Limb (brother), Ilkeston; Mr Richard Limb (brother), Mansfield Woodhouse; Mrs Meakin (sister), East Kirkby, and Mrs Wilkinson (sister), Cotmanhay; Mrs A Limb and Mrs Richard Limb; Mr & Mrs Young, Ryhill, Yorks; Mr & Mrs Beardsley, Ilkeston; Mr & Mrs Bagaley, Ilkeston; Mr Edwards, Sheffield, and Mrs Ward, Woodhouse nr Sheffield; Mr Ward and Mrs Meeds, Woodhouse, Sheffield; Mr & Mrs Homer, Shuttlewood; Mr & Mrs Brown, Mansfield Woodhouse; Mr & Mrs Roberts, Shirebrook; Miss Clara and Miss Ada Brown and friend, Mansfield Woodhouse; Mr John Martin, Mr Sam Bunting, and Mr William Lucas, fellow workmen in the stall, and Mr S Renshaw, Shirebrook Colliery.

#### **The Bearers**

Were workmates and friends of Mr Limb. They were: Mr M Stray, Mr T Fletcher, Mr Wm. Brittles, Mr A Fretwell, Mr Wm. Hurt, Mr A Froggatt, Mr J Rowe, Mr Levi Hopkinson, and Mr A Jacks.

### **Wm. Phillip's Mourners and Friends**

**Who followed:** - Mrs Phillips (widow), and Mr John Phillips (brother); Elsie, Gertrude, Harvey and Elizabeth (children); Mr & Mrs Patrick Sweeney (sister & brother-in-law), Miss Annie Sweeney, Miss Rose Phillips, Mr & Mrs Freeman, Mr & Mrs Sidall.

### **Bearers**

**Mr T Lindsay, Mr Arthur Parker, Mr Geo Taylor, Mr Thomas Hinds, Mr Thomas Kelly, and Mr John Bolton.**

### **The Last Rites**

The deceased, William Phillips, was buried on the consecrated portion and William Limb on the unconsecrated portion of the cemetery. The services in the Conformist chapel and in the Nonconformist chapel and at the graveside were conducted by the Rev. E. Braddon, M.A. Vicar, and the Rev. Ed. Hall, Congregationalist Minister, who conducted the ceremonies simultaneously, amid mingled signs of grief, respect, and sympathy.

### **Affecting Scenes of the Last Farewell**

Much sorrow and emotion was manifested during the services at the graveside, one or two of the mourners fainting and having to be carried away. Another of the relatives, it is said, wanted to jump into one of the graves after the coffin had been lowered. Children sobbing for their parent, widows and relatives mourning on account of their husbands and friends, who refused to be comforted because they were not. At length the parting came, and it was only by efforts almost compulsory that some of the mourners were got away from the "narrow bed" in which they had lain their dear ones to sleep the long last sleep of rest; and then the mourners slowly and reverently dispersed. Many of the sympathisers and friends returned with them, while others lingered to see the last. A sombre air pervaded the whole of the proceedings, and the utmost respect reigned throughout the vast concourse of people who witnessed the ceremony, many of whom were moved to tears.

### **Wreaths and Inscriptions**

A large number of beautiful wreaths, bearing the most pathetic inscriptions, were sent by the bereaved relatives and friends as tokens of respect: -

Those to the memory of William Limb were: -

A beautiful wreath bearing the following inscription: "In loving remembrance, from his sorrowing wife and family." Another, from Mr Hay was as follows: "With Mr Hay's deepest sympathy".

Another: "In loving remembrance from his brother & sister, Harry & Annie." Another: "In loving memory, from his brother and sister, Will and Annie Mary". Another: "With deepest sympathy, from Mrs Sam Jinks and Mrs J Mellors". Another: "In memoriam. Presented by the neighbours and friends as a token of respect for Wm. Limb". "In affectionate remembrance from Isaac and Lizzie". "With deepest sympathy from Mrs Roberts". "With sincere sympathy, from Father Froes and the Catholics of Shirebrook." "In loving memory from his brother and sister, Alfred and Louisa." "Presented by the workmen of Shirebrook Colliery as a token of respect for William Limb, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1907".

A most beautiful wreath, under glass shade, with hands clasped, was also sent by Mrs Phillips and family to the memory of husband and father. There was another from the workmen, with the following inscription: "Presented by the workmen of Shirebrook Colliery as a token of respect for William Phillips, March 26<sup>th</sup> 1907." And one from Mr Hay "With Mr Hay's deepest sympathy".

**An appropriate passage was read at the graveside of Wm. Limb by Bro. W. Hutchinson, secretary of the Forester's Lodge.**

**When the service was over the Adult Band played the funeral hymn "Days and moments quickly flying" and as the procession moved from the graves the band also played "Lead, kindly light" to the tune Sandon. Proceeding from the gates of the cemetery homewards, the band again played the march "When the roll is called".**

**The coffins, which were of polished oak, with brass fittings, were supplied by the Colliery Co., and made by Mr Forster, Shirebrook, the undertaker. Mr Cox supplied the shillibiers and mourning coaches.**