

MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS - WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 1914

FOOTBALLER'S TRAGIC DEATH

Jumped from Royal Infirmary Window

VICTIM OF DEPRESSION

Painful Story at Coroner's Court

The tragic death of a professional Association footballer, Thomas Leigh (26), of 222, Fairfield, Bury, was inquired into by the City Coroner (Mr. E. A. Gibson) today. Leigh, a player for the Goole club, had been for some time an in-patient the Manchester Royal Infirmary. On Monday morning he jumped from the window of his ward on the third floor into the Infirmary yard. Death was almost instantaneous.

The brother of Leigh said that Leigh returned from Goole to Bury about a week before Easter. He immediately complained of pains internally, and for that reason he had returned. He attributed the pain to his having twisted himself whilst playing football. The pain came on just after he had played.

A doctor saw Leigh and advised that he should be sent to hospital. He was accordingly admitted to the Manchester Royal Infirmary.

The Patient Depressed

The witness saw his brother at the Infirmary on Sunday afternoon. At that time Leigh appeared very depressed. He talked very little. He said nothing, and did nothing, that would suggest he intended to take his life. He had no trouble with the exception of his illness.

The Coroner: Did he show any signs of being out of his mind? No, sir. Witness added there had been no insanity in the family.

Nurse Broughton, who was charge of the ward in which Leigh was lying, said the ward was large one, with three small rooms each containing one bed. Leigh, was in one of the rooms. There was a window between his room and the large ward, and a window at the head of the bed overlooking the Infirmary grounds.

The nurse visited the patient on Monday morning about 7.25. He was then awake and comfortable. He asked for and was given a drink. She noticed nothing unusual with him, and he appeared to fairly cheerful. The windows then were closed.

The Empty Bed

Some five minutes later she was in the large ward, and from it noticed that the bed which Leigh had occupied was empty, and the bottom half the window was pushed up. She could see Leigh nowhere, and so started go down the grounds. On the way she saw the patient being brought up in the lift. Leigh was placed back in bed, and doctors sent for, and the man died almost immediately. Leigh had only been one night in that particular ward, having just been transferred from other rooms.

Elizabeth Hutchinson, of the surgical department, spoke to seeing Leigh lying on the asphalt in the infirmary grounds. He was in his night clothes. Only a small part of the ground - just where he was lying - was asphalt.

A Cancerous Growth

The footballer was admitted to the Royal Infirmary April 10, said Dr. Hughes, resident surgical officer. He was suffering from an internal obstruction due to a cancerous growth in the large intestine. An operation was performed, and on May 1 Leigh was sent to the convalescent home at Cheadle to improve his condition before undergoing a second operation. He returned from Cheadle on May 15 and the second operation was made on May 20. That operation was successful.

Dr. Hughes saw the patient Sunday about one o'clock. He then seemed to be comfortable, but complained of pain.

In answer to the Coroner, Dr. Hughes said the second operation was a severe one, but there was a possible chance of the man recovering.

The Coroner: Did he know was in that precarious condition? Not to my knowledge.

Dr. Hughes had never noticed anything abnormal about Leigh. He had always been depressed, and on Sunday appeared to just about the same.

The Coroner: Was that depression more than you could expect from a patient of that description? Dr. Hughes: No, sir. He was never morbid at all? No.

The doctor saw Leigh after the fall. The man suffered from severe shock, had bruises about the face and legs, one finger of the left hand broken, and abdominal wounds. The cause of death was shock, and the witness thought the fall (37½ feet) killed him.

SUICIDE

The jury agreed upon a verdict of suicide from depression.

The Coroner: You do not think he was insane? The Foreman: No.