

The life and death of Charles James Hutchinson compiled by Lynn Hayter

My great grandfather, Charles James Hutchinson was born on the 17th of October 1842 at the family home, No. 3 Paradise Walk, South Chelsea, Middlesex, the eighth of ten children born to John Hutchinson, labourer, and his wife Susan Manning. At some time between Charles' birth and that of his next sibling in 1847, the family moved to Brentford and by the 1851 census were living somewhere on the south side of the High Street or one of the alleys or yards off it. By the 1861 census John, now a barge carter labourer and Susan were living in British School Alley, which ran off the north side of the High Street but Charles was not with them.

Charles married Ann Maria Haywood on the 29th of April 1867, at St. Paul's Church, Hammersmith, Middlesex, at which time Charles' worked as a carman. By the 1871 census Charles, still a carman, and Ann together with three of their children and Charles' younger brother, William, were living in the High Street, Old Brentford, next door to an uninhabited building called 'Mount Pleasant'. By the 1881 census Charles, still a carman, and Ann, and six surviving of seven children born, were living at 407 High Street, Brentford, together with Ann's mother Elizabeth Haywood and two of her sisters, Maria and Emma Haywood.

My great grandmother, Ann Maria Hutchinson died on the 15th of June 1887 aged 43, the death certificate says at 409 High Street, Brentford but this perhaps should read 407.

On the 23rd of December 1888 Charles, still a carman, married Eleanor Coomber, a widow of 27, South Street, Hammersmith, at St. Peter's Church, Hammersmith and by the 1891 census they were living at 79 Distillery Road, Brentford, with three of Charles' children including my grandmother, Harriet, and two of Eleanor's children from her previous marriage.

Charles died on the 5th of September 1894 aged 52, at Watford District Cottage Hospital from injuries received in an accident at Bushey. An inquest was held on the 7th of September 1894 at the Red Lion, Colney Butts, Watford, where the jury heard evidence about the accident, and detailed reports of the inquest were published in The Watford Observer of Saturday the 8th September 1894 and The Watford Leader of Tuesday the 11th of September 1894.

Eleanor gave evidence that she identified the body as that of her husband, Charles, and that he was a horse-keeper in the employ of Messrs. Brentnall & Cleland, coal merchants, Kew. He had been a carman but had lately been employed in the stables. Eleanor stated that she had seen Charles alive on Wednesday morning at four o'clock when he was going to Hampstead Road and then through Bushey to Rickmansworth, and was then going to return to Kew Bridge.

Police-constable Clarke, 199S Metropolitan Police, who had witnessed the accident whilst standing outside near Bushey police station, gave evidence that on Wednesday the 5th at about 4.30pm he had seen the deceased sitting alone on the front part of a two-wheeled cart laden with furniture. The cart was properly loaded and the driver had the reins properly in his hands as far as he could see, looked very cheerful and did not appear to be drunk. When the cart got opposite the White Horse public house the horse started kicking, and it was the witness's opinion that at the top of the hill the load had touched the animal's rump, the horse then started and bolted as fast as he could go. The policeman followed as fast as he could and saw the deceased fall from the cart and the off-wheel run over his body. The deceased was unconscious immediately after the accident and the witness sent for Dr. Wilson, who came and ordered the deceased to be removed to the Watford Cottage Hospital.

Dr. A. E. Cox said that the deceased came under his attention at 7.30pm on Wednesday night, when he was sent for to the Watford Cottage Hospital. He found him in bed undressed in a state of collapse. He had broken two ribs, which penetrated to the lungs and has sustained other very serious injuries, which were quite sufficient to cause death, although there were no serious injuries to the head. The injuries he found accorded to the description that he had received of the accident. The deceased died at half past nine the same evening.

The jury returned a verdict of 'accidental death'.

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Charles' body was returned to Brentford to be buried at South Ealing Cemetery, grave number 39 Z C on the 11th of September 1894.

In the early days of my family history research in 2007 I found the only death of a Charles James Hutchinson that tied in with the information gleaned from the censuses and this was registered in Watford. I didn't think that this could be my ancestor because he has spent his life in Brentford and I thought that I would one day find the right death entry, so I filed the information and got on with some other line of my research. In January 2013 I mentioned to Celia that I was having trouble finding Charles' death and she advised me to get the certificate for the entry that I had found in 2007. When I received the certificate and saw that the death was the result of an accident I contacted Hertford Record Office and Watford Museum and in April 2013 visited both. With the help of the archivists and curators I was able to find all the details of Charles' death and the inquest held into it, and also saw old and new maps of the scene of the accident so that I could visit the spot myself. My husband and I did this on the way home from Hertford record office and we took the following photographs. We were also able to see the Watford Cottage Hospital building, now offices. I am also grateful for help from the staff at the South Ealing Cemetery office to find the burial details.



The view down Clay Hill, Bushey; I think the building on the right could be the former White Horse public house.



The former police station at Clay-Hill, Bushey, built in 1897 but I think possibly on the same site as the earlier one.