**Railway accident at Beecroft – death of Gordon Henry Lionel Norton**

**NSW Births Deaths & Marriages**

Birth 1887 – Gordon H. L. Norton, parents: Charles T. D. & Elizabeth F., Sydney

Birth 1891 – Gertrude J. Burton, parents: William & Charlotte, Boggabri

Marriage 1913 – Gordon Norton & Gertrude J. Burton, Sydney

Children:

Birth 1913 – Effie M., Sydney

Birth 1915 – Henry, Sydney

Birth 1916 – Reginald, Sydney

Birth 1919 – Mavis, Sydney

Death 1919 – Gordon H. L. Norton, parents: Charles T. D. & Lillian F., Hornsby

Marriage 1924 – Ernest Elbourn & Gertrude [Jane] Norton, Newtown

**Daily Examiner (Grafton, NSW: 1915 - 1954), Friday 15 August 1919, page 2**

RAILWAY FATALITY.

SYDNEY. Thursday.

While shunting trucks yesterday, Gordon Norton was run over and killed by a train. Norton, who failed to notice the approach of the Glen Innes train, was knocked down by the engine, and run over by several carriages. Both arms and legs were severed, and there were extensive injuries to the head and body.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 16 August 1919, page 8**

Shocking Railway Fatality.

Porter Killed at Beecroft.

A block porter named Gordon Norton (32), residing at 406 Elizabeth-street, Sydney, but employed by the Railway Commissioners at Beecroft station, was cut to pieces by the Northern mail at Beecroft on Wednesday morning. He had just shunted a goods train Into the relief siding, when he stepped backwards on the main line, right in front of the mall train which was dashing towards Sydney. He was knocked a considerable distance and was run over, and his remains were scattered widely. The driver of the mail was not aware of the occurrence, anil the mall train did not stop. Constable McDonald and the railway staff picked up the remains of the unfortunate young man, and they were then taken to the Sydney morgue. Norton was a married man, anil leaves a wife and several children.

**Northern Star (Lismore, NSW: 1876 - 1954), Saturday 16 August 1919, page 3**

A SHUNTER KILLED.

SYDNEY. Thursday. - While shunting, trucks yesterday Gordon Norton was run over and killed by a train. Norton, who failed to notice the approach of the Glen Innes mail, was knocked down by the engine and run over by several carriages, being extensively injured on the head and body.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 13 September 1919, page 4**

That Terrible Railway Fatality.

Commissioners Not to Blame.

The Parramatta district coroner (Mr. H. Richardson Clark, J.P.) held an inquest at Hornsby on Tuesday concerning the death of a block porter named Gordon Henry Lionel Norton, whose mangled remains were found on the line at Beecroft on the 13th August after the Glen Innes mail had passed, Mr. R. H. Levien appeared for the relatives of the deceased, and Mr. Inspector Burt for the Railway Department.

Constable McDonald, of Thornleigh, stated that about 9.35 a.m. on the 13th August he went to Beecroft railway station, and there saw on a stretcher close to the up line the dead body of Gordon Henry Lionel Norton. The body was much mutilated, the arms and legs being much crushed and the skull ad face being smashed to a pulp. He assisted to remove the body to the lamp-room, and there examined the clothing and found a pocketbook (produced) with the name of “G. Norton, 406 Elizabeth-street, City” on it; also, a second-class railway pass Sydney to Beecroft in the name of G. Norton, dated 30th July, l919; also, a time-sheet with the same name on It. Also found the sum of £1 3s and two pocket knives and a handkerchief. The man was quite dead. Removed the body to the city morgue. Had known deceased about a fortnight, and saw him nearly every day. He examined the railway line and found traces of blood on the sleepers up to frame C at the points. On the up-line close to-the points he saw on a sleeper some blood and hair.

Gordon Alexander Doust, station-master at Beecroft, but residing at John-street, St. Peters, stated that deceased was employed at Beecroft station as relief block porter. Last saw him alive on the morning of the 13th August at 9.11, when he told him to go to C frame points, and gave him the key. He was to turn the train No. 207, which was then at the station, into the siding to enable a passenger train No. 223, Sydney to Hornsby, to pass. Later on, witness was told by ganger Roberts that a man had been killed by No. 12 up mail (Glen Innes to Sydney), which cleared Beecroft that morning at 9.13. It usually cleared at 9.15. Deceased had been at Beecroft for 18 days, and must have known of this train, which was a regular one. Went up beyond C frame points. Saw portions of the body, lying on the line up to150 yards on the station side of the frame. He was unable to recognise any of the remains.

To Mr. Levien: The deceased was acting under witness’s instructions. He was a good, careful man.

Gertrude Jane Norton, widow of the deceased, stated that she lived at 406 Elizabeth-street, Sydney. The deceased was born in Sydney, and was 32 years of age. He was employed by the Commissioners as a porter at a salary of 10s per day. He was a sober man. Witness was dependent upon deceased. She had four children, ranging from 7 months up to about 6 years. Deceased's life was not Insured, and he left no property. He had been in the railways for 4 years.

William Izzard, a railway fettler, residing at Norfolk-road, Epping, stated that on the 13th August he was working with ganger Roberts near the station. The train No. 207 was backing into the siding. Saw a man standing on or near the upline near the railway bridge. Heard the noise of a train approaching on the upline, and witness stepped off the line. It was the Glen lnnes to Sydney mail train. Witness looked towards the bridge and saw a man standing near the line. As witness got clear of the line he lost sight of the man, but as the train approached witness saw something being rolled along under the train. When the train passed, he saw the body on the line, much mutilated.

John Hickey, a railway guard, residing In Hunter-street, Hornsby, stated that he was assistant guard on train No. 207, a pick-up goods train, on the 13th August. Deceased walked to frame C points, situated near the Hornsby end of the station. His duty was to unlock the points so that witness's train could enter the siding to enable a passenger train to pass to Hornsby at 9.28 a.m. Deceased unlocked the points and witness's train went into the siding. Witness directed deceased to return the key when his train was clear of the points. Witness did not get out of his van, and lost sight of deceased.

Maitland Stevenson, an engine-driver residing at 119 Station-street, Newtown, stated that he drove the Glen Innes mall train No. 12 on the 13th August. Left Hornsby at !9.5 a.m., and was running to time. Went through Beecroft at about 24 miles per hour. There was a curve at Beecroft station, and witness, being on the outside of the curve, could not see the line ahead. The fireman, being on the other side, would have a view of the line. Sounded the whistle. The first that witness knew of the accident was 2¼ hours afterwards, when he heard from Eveleigh about it. On examining the underneath parts of the engine witness found blood and hair on the moving parts.

Leslie John Dargan, a Railway fireman, of No. 3 Fernbank-street, Marrickville, stated that he was firing on the Glen Innes mail. Did not see anyone on the line as they approached Beecroft. There was an engine on the siding and some smoke and steam about. Saw a returned soldier near the points, but did not see anyone on the line. Witness had to watch out for the signals. The distant signal was off, and after passing it the driver whistled. Witness thought that deceased must have walked straight on to the line and been hidden from his view by the front of the engine. It was impossible to see anyone on the line with a train standing there until one reached the bridge.

The coroner found that deceased was accidentally killed by being run over by a train whilst he was in the performance of his duty, and he added a rider to the effect that no blame was attachable to the railway authorities.