

Frederick Robert Kingdon

18th March 1919

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Sad end to Dawlish Man.

ACCIDENTALLY AND FATALLY SHOT WHILST
RABBITING ALONE.

The death occurred at the Dawlish Cottage Hospital, at 2 a.m. on Tuesday last, from injuries received by the accidental discharge of his gun, whilst rabbiting, of Mr Frederick Robert Kingdon, of 36 Manor Row, Dawlish, aged 29. Much sympathy has been aroused by the sad affair. The deceased was a plumber by trade, and an old Regular Army man, having been discharged previous to the war owing to a weakness which developed as a result of a broken leg when a boy. He was a noted marksman of the old Dawlish Rifle Club. He was again passed for the Army during the war and joined the Royal Engineers. He had the ill-luck to lose a leg in the final stages of the fighting, and had been discharged and was getting about with a wooden stump prior to having a cork leg. At the time of the accident deceased was staying at Lower Charlwood Farm, at the invitation of Mr Richard Belworthy.

Deputy-Coroner T Edmonds held an enquiry (without a jury) at the Vestry Hall on Wednesday evening.

Deceased's brother, Mr Charles William Kingdon, gave evidence of identification. He saw his brother at the hospital after the accident, when he told witness that it was "a pure accident," and that "the hammer of the gun was down."

From the rest of the evidence it appeared that deceased went out alone rabbiting on Monday afternoon, taking a gun he had previously used of Mr Belworthy's. At about 5.45 p.m., Mr Daniel Milton, a farm labourer, was walking towards Fiddler's Bridge Orchard when he heard a call for help. Getting over the hedge, he saw Kingdon lying on his back in the orchard. He told witness he had slipped and fallen. Seeing blood over his head and arm and a large quantity of blood on the ground, witness ran for help. He met Mr Orme J Morris, of Beaver Cottage, on the way. Mr Morris went to his house and got a bandage and Mrs Morris came and dressed the wounds. Meanwhile, Mr Belworthy brought a trap to the spot, and the unfortunate man was conveyed to the Cottage Hospital.

Mr William Huxtable, another farm labourer, said he found the gun on the

other side of the orchard hedge with the muzzle pointing upward.

Mr Morris said deceased was lying on the ground 7ft or 8ft from the hedge. He was just conscious and told witness that it was an accident and that a twig "pulled the gun." It was a difficult hedge to get over.

Mr F J H Cann, M.B., stated when he saw Kingdon at the hospital at about 7 o'clock he was in a state of collapse and pulseless. He had severe gunshot wounds on the upper part of his right arm and the bone was broken in several places. He died at 2 a.m. as a result of loss of blood.

The Coroner returned a verdict of accidental death.

