

## Henry Sidney COPLAND (c. 1864-1887)

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**Henry Sidney COPLAND**, son of William COPLAND (c. 1825-1886) and Elizabeth GOODERSON (1830- ), was born circa 1864 in Stanfield, Norfolk. He was baptised on 16 May 1864 in Stanfield - parents William and Elizabeth

He appeared in the census in 1871 at Cross Keys Inn, Market Street in Shipdham, Norfolk - 6, scholar, born in Stanfield, living with parents William (46, publican) and Elizabeth (40), and siblings William Walter (18, work on land), Charles (12, scholar), Miriam (10, scholar), Elizabeth (9, scholar) and Herbert (2)<sup>1</sup>

On 3 Apr 1881, (the 1881 Census), he was living at High Common in Wreningham, Norfolk - 16, farm servant (indoor), living with parents William (54, farm bailiff) and Elizabeth (46), and siblings Bessie (20, domestic servant) and Herbert (11, scholar)<sup>2</sup>

Henry died on 14 March 1887 in Melton Constable, Norfolk.<sup>3</sup> He was buried on 17 March 1887 in Wreningham. He is commemorated in Wreningham Churchyard - "In loving memory of HENRY SIDNEY COPLAND, Guard On The Eastern and Midland Railway, Who Was Accidentally Killed At Melton Constable In The Discharge Of His Duty On March 14th 1887, aged 23 years. This stone was erected by His fellow workmen and friends to show the respect and esteem he was held amongst them. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. PSC XVI.v15. It is well with my soul."

On 18 March 1887 there was a newspaper report in the The Lynn News and County Press:

### **SHOCKING FATALITY ON THE EASTERN & MIDLANDS RAILWAY**

The City Coroner (E. S. Bignold, Esq.), held an enquiry on Tuesday afternoon at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital on the body of Henry Sidney Copland, aged 23, single man of Wisbech Road, King's Lynn, goods guard on the Eastern and Midlands Railway, who met with his death on Monday afternoon at Melton Constable.

Richard Belson, in the employ of the Eastern and Midlands Railway as inspector, stated that he did not see the accident on Monday, but knew that the deceased had been in the employ of the company for five years. He had known him for four years of that time, and always found deceased to be a steady and industrious servant. Witness produced on behalf of the company a plan of the station and place of the accident.

Walter Dixon, signalman, in the employ of the same company, said that shortly before the accident happened he conversed with the deceased, who was then quite sober, and in his usual health. The 4.35 goods train, of which witness

was guard, had just arrived at Melton Constable, when deceased stood on a truck which was in motion and placed his foot on a buffer in order to spring to the ground. His foot unfortunately slipped and he fell to the metals. There were two trucks passed by the spot, but witness thought that only six wheels went over him. He was taken up immediately, when it was found that his leg was cut off just below the knee. Deceased was at once sent off to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Witness said the occurrence was a pure accident.

Belson, recalled, said directly after the accident deceased was put in a special carriage and conveyed to Norwich. Not more than fifteen minutes elapsed before it started. He was accompanied by the station master, a trained nurse from Mrs. Hammond's Nurses' Home at Fakenham, and several others.

George Overton, a shunter, stated that he did not witness deceased fall, but assisted in picking him up. There was no playing proceeding at the time, and every one appeared to be doing their duty. Witness had seen guards put their feet on to the buffer, but he did not think it a wise thing to do.

In answer to a juror, witness said the reason deceased had left his brake was to see after some fowls that were in the truck in a coop.

Mr. H. Chester Nance, house-surgeon at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, said he was in the Hospital when deceased was brought in on Monday evening, and saw him directly after, but he was dead. He had been dead about ten minutes. The left leg was severed from the body just below the knee. On taking his clothes off it was found that he was seriously injured in other parts of the body. The spine was broken, and the injuries were sufficient to cause death. Great care appeared to have been taken in his removal to the Hospital, but no human aid could have saved him.

In answer to a juror, Inspector Belson stated that it was against the rules to leave the train while in motion.

George Calvert, engine-driver, said he drove the engine that brought the deceased to Norwich. He did not know the exact time when he started; but he knew he was alive at the Norwich (City) station, as he spoke to him and he replied.

After hearing the evidence the jury returned a verdict - "The deceased met with his death from accidental injuries."

On 6 September 1887 there was a further newspaper report in the Eastern Daily Press:

**THANKS.**

**To the Editor.**

**SIR - Not being able to thank all the kind officials and servants of the Eastern and Midlands Railway Company personally who contributed towards the erection of a**

memorial stone in memory of my son Henry Sidney Copland (who was killed at Melton Station on March 24th 1887), will you kindly allow me through your column to do so? Special thanks are due to Messrs. Bairstow, Blocksom, and Smith, for the deep interest they took in the matter, and also the Rev. A. Upcher, rector of Wreningham, for his kindness and assistance in the erection of the stone. - Yours obediently, ELIZABETH COPLAND. Wisbech Road, Lynn, 5th September, 1887.

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## Sources

1. *1871 Census*. RG10 Piece 1843 Folio 64 Page 11 Schedule 71. Cit. Date: 2 April 1871.
2. *1881 Census*. RG11 Piece 1957 Folio 98 Page 8 Schedule 680. Cit. Date: 3 April 1881.
3. *CR - Death*. 1887 Q1 Norwich Norfolk Vol 4B Page 98. Cit. Date: Q1 1887.