

Josiah Barnfield - Killed by Accident



The grave of Josiah Barnfield and his son Ernest John, in Bathford churchyard is falling apart; the once finely chiselled grey stone has split due to age and weathering, and the portion which remains (*March 2005*) will very soon crumble into the grass and soil of the grave, leaving a blank headstone with no inscription whatsoever. This particular stone is not just a memorial to the persons buried there; one being just 5 years of age, but is also a record of an accident which occurred on the Great Western Railway. The inscription that remains on the stone, reads:

In Loving Memory
of

Josiah Barnfield
of Bathford
Who was killed
by Accident.
October 24th 1891
Aged 56 Years

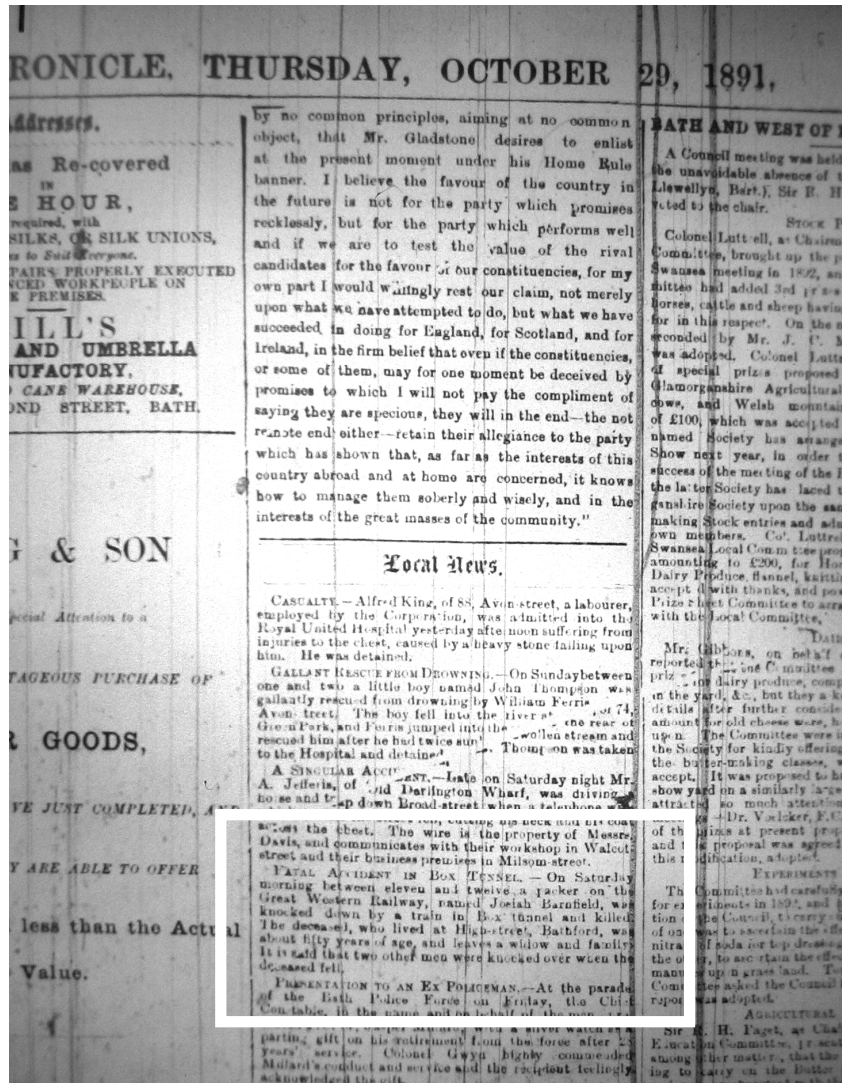
He has gone to his rest, his trials are over;
He has done with all sorrow and pain.
The ills of this life he so patiently bore;
Shall never distress him again.

Also of
Ernest John
His son
Who died 14th May 1885
Aged 5 Years

There may have been a further inscription below this, but that portion has already fallen away.

The Bath Post Office Directory (Bathford Village) lists Josiah Barnfield as a 'plate layer' from 1878 to 1888, living in the High Street, Bathford. Even after his death, he was still listed until the 1892-93 directory and from thereafter Mrs Mary J Barnfield was listed at Cora Cottage, Bathford until 1903.

A search through the Bath Chronicle newspapers for October 1891 brought forth a small account of the accident in the weekly produced paper on the following Thursday; the accident had occurred on Saturday 24th October 1891:



FATAL ACCIDENT IN BOX TUNNEL.
 - On Saturday morning between eleven and twelve, a packer on the Great Western Railway, named Josiah Barnfield, was knocked down by a train in Box tunnel and killed. The deceased, who lived at High Street, Bathford, was about fifty years of age, and leaves a widow and family. It is said that two other men were knocked over when the deceased fell.

The Bath newspapers are preserved on microfilm at the Bath Central Library where the above photograph was taken of the image on a microfilm reader.

RAE Scammell
21/03/2005