

**John Hoyes, killed in Gowerton
1914**



Gowerton July 1914

THE SAD DEATH OF JOHN HOYES.

The sad affair at the Elba Steelworks. Gowerton, on Saturday, when a young man named John Alexander Stratton Hoyes, Malvern-terrace, Swansea, lost his life by an explosion,

John Davies, of Mill-street, Gowerton, steel smelter at the works, said he was working next to Hoyes at the time of the accident, which occurred about one o'clock in the morning. They were preparing a number of iron drums for the furnace. They were unloading them from a truck into the charger, and were making holes in them with a pick, to let out any air inside

Describing the accident, Davies said he had struck the drum once, and had the pick raised for a second blow when the drum exploded. Hoyes was standing by his side at the time.

It was a powerful explosion, and witness was blinded for a few moments. He was told the end was blown out, but could not actually see what happened. When witness came to himself, Hoyes was lying near a truck, full length on his back.

This was not Hoyes' customary work. The drums had contained acid used in connection with the manufacture of celluloid.

A medical report was handed in by the Factory Inspector, describing the injuries sustained by deceased, each of which was sufficient to cause death.

A verdict of 'Accidental Death' was returned. We are told that *Hoyes was a young man of a singularly bright and amiable disposition, and one of the most capable of workmen.*

But soon the press uncovered another element to this story, one which provoked considerable interest later in the summer of 1914.

The Cambrian newspaper reported that *John Hoyes was formerly a lieutenant in the Militia, the uniform of which he is wearing in the photograph. His father was a colonel. Young Hoyes came into a fortune but he quickly disposed of it.*

Now the story was a very different one.

*THE SWANSEA ROMANCE - A STORY OF
DISSIPATED FORTUNES*

It seems that Hoyes received a University education. In 1910 when working as an apprentice to the motor engineering trade, he married, and he shortly afterwards came to Swansea with his wife, where he lived on an allowance of £12 a month, which he received under his father's will.

During the recent hearing of his bankruptcy examination he told the court that his failure was due to the stoppage of his allowance.

When he came of age, he said, he was entitled to £1,000 under the will of an aunt, and he also received £250 under the will of General Forrest, of Winchester, a distant relative. His interest under his father's will was £7,000, but he stated that this was all gone, and that in nine months he had spent £848 on pleasure.

When he appeared in court in June he had had liabilities of £194 19s and assets of 7s. 5d.

END OF A RUINED CAREER.

John A. Stratton Hoyes, an ex-second Lieutenant in the Militia, was killed on Saturday whilst following his occupation as a furnaceman at the Elba Steel Works, Gowerton, near Swansea. Hoyes, who was only twenty-eight years of age, was the son of the late Colonel Hoyes, and, having run through a fortune of £7,000, became a labourer at the docks, and latterly a furnaceman. Last May he went through the Bankruptcy Court, and attributed his failure to extravagance and falling into the hands of moneylenders.

I have used the story of John Hoyes as an important element in my next novel, ***Patagonia Jacks***, the fourth in the 'Inspector Rumsey Bucke investigates' series.

I have made some changes, though. In the novel he is working in the copper works in Hafod as a labourer. I have changed his name, too, to Hamish 'Lardy' Darr. And, like all the characters in ***Patagonia Jacks***, he is haunted by incidents in his past...

If you need to catch up on the Inspector Rumsey Bucke Series, then here are brief introductions to the other three novels.

You will also find more information on my website www.geoffbrookes.co.uk

The book in the series is ***In Knives We Trust***

The second volume is ***Our Lady of Mumbles***

The third novel in the series is ***A Swansea Child***