

Renowned cider manufacturer fined following grandad's death

A cider manufacturer has been fined after a much-loved grandfather was killed on his 65th birthday.

Tommy Manns, from Dymock, Gloucestershire, was driving for H Weston and Sons Limited, the manufacturer of Henry Westons Cider, when he was killed by the end of a security barrier on 28 September 2020.

H Weston and Sons Limited was fined £1.4 million on Thursday after the company was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The van was being driven out of the firm's site at Bounds Farm, March Marcle, Ledbury, when the end of a security barrier speared through the vehicle's windshield and fatally crushed Tommy.



Two of Tommy's grandchildren had called him up to wish their grandad a happy birthday just hours before the accident.

Tommy, who had two children as well as three grandchildren, was a farm manager at H Weston and Sons Limited and had started working at the company in 2008.

A HSE investigation into the incident found H Weston and Sons had installed the barrier a month earlier, and failed to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. The company also failed to implement a safe system of work to ensure the barrier could be secured safely when open and closed.



HSE guidance can be found at: [Advice on horizontal swing car park barriers.](#)

Tommy's wife Rose Manns said: "I am still in shock following the death of my husband. I've never been an emotional person, but since the accident I am nervous and reliving the accident all the time. In the beginning I couldn't even drive because my husband was driving at the time of his accident and I couldn't face driving again for a long time.



Tommy and Rose

"I've always been a people's person and now I have no confidence. People stop and ask me how I feel and how I am. I don't feel confident to talk to people about what happened and people don't know what to say to me.

"Tommy loved his grandchildren so much. He spoke to the two grandkids who were four and six on the day of his death. They rang to sing happy birthday to him in the morning. He never got the chance to open his birthday cards.

"We had put a deposit down on a motorhome. My son had to ring the company a couple of days after Tommy died to cancel the order.

"Tommy has left a great legacy. He was so loved, he was my rock, my

soulmate.”



Oliver Hunter, Tommy’s stepson, added: “As a parent there are many memorable moments you want to keep hold of, however trying to explain to my four-year-old son (now seven) and six-year-old daughter (now nine) that their Grampy Tom had died on his birthday and that he is no longer with us, is one I wish I could forget.

“Both of our children were outgoing, happy little people with a love of life, but since Tommy’s death their behaviours have changed, they are more wary of life, can be more angry and upset over various things. They live with a constant fear that their loved ones maybe taken away from them which consequently means they are both struggling daily with separation anxiety on

different levels.”

H Weston and Sons Limited, of Much Marcle, Ledbury, Herefordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £1.4 million and ordered to pay £26,756.50 in costs at Kidderminster Magistrates’ Court on 30 November 2023.

HSE inspector Sara Lumley: “This is a sad and devastating case that is made all the more tragic as the incident took place on Tommy’s birthday. It was also his day off. Rosemary and Oliver have made clear the impact that Tommy’s passing has had and our thoughts remain with them and their family.

“Horizontal barriers can be dangerous – but deaths are extremely preventable. The guidance for those operating barriers like this at car parks is clear and it’s vital to make sure the barriers are adequately secured at all times whether open or shut.”

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>