

Alfred William Burt

1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census

Eight Bells, Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England

Name	Relationship	Status	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
<i>Alfred Burt</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>Hotel keeper</i>	<i>Shorwell, IOW</i>
Sarah Burt	Wife	Married	43		Newchurch, IOW
Mabel Saunders	Niece	Single	17	Waitress	Shanklin, IOW
Henrietta Jolliffe	Mother-in-law	Widow	82		London, England
Amelia Nobbs	Visitor	Single	13		Ventnor, IOW

Isle of Wight County Press
28 February 1903

FATAL CYCLING ACCIDENT AT CARISBROOKE

Well Known Island Coach-Driver
Killed

We record with much regret the death, which occurred on Sunday evening, of Mr. Alfred William Burt, the genial and esteemed host of the Eight Bells, Carisbrooke, who was the victim of a bicycle accident which occurred outside his home in Carisbrooke High-street on the previous Saturday afternoon. It appears that deceased had just left his front door to go to the yard above when he was knocked down by a bicycle ridden by an 11-year-old boy, Reginald Cantelo, of Carisbrooke-road, who was riding down through the village. He sustained severe injuries, including a fracture of two ribs and collar-bone and injury of the shoulder and face, and he was picked up bleeding and suffering from great shock. He was removed indoors and attended by Dr. Castle, who, owing to the fact that deceased had been in ill health for some time, regarded his patient's condition as very grave from the outset. Deceased lingered on through the night and next day, but towards the evening gradually sank and died as already stated. A familiar Island personality has thus been removed, for Mr. Burt was known far and wide, not only as the landlord of the Eight Bells, but as a veteran coach-driver, in both of which connections he was constantly in contact with visitors from all parts. Just over a year ago we published in our columns an interesting note from the *Road*, recording the noteworthy fact that Mr. Burt had just completed his "golden" as an Island coachman. The writer of this note stated: "The season recently finished was his fiftieth. He has driven over half a million miles. . . He is a master of his art and possessed of a good fund of reminiscences in coaching." As supplemental to the note quoted above we stated then, what will bear repeating now, in regard to so notable a personality, "that in a chat we once had with Mr. Alfred Burt he told us that during his half century of coaching he has had six runaways, the most alarming of which was when his team bolted down Union-street Ryde many years ago. The corner into Pier-street was safely turned, and then Mr. Burt found immediately before him three carriages, two on one side and the third on the other side of that somewhat narrow street. With consummate coolness and skill the coachman steered his team through and the runaways were shortly afterwards pulled up, no casualty of any kind having resulted. This has been Mr. Burt's record through out—a complete absence of any serious accident." Mr. Burt commenced driving on leaving school, going first to Freshwater, from which place he drove an omnibus to Newport for some years. Then he went to Ryde and was for some time coaching between Ryde and Newport. His principal route, however, in coach-driving was between Ventnor, Newport, and

Freshwater, and it was between Ventnor and Freshwater, we believe, that he drove his last team. He was landlord of the Eight Bells for the long period of 38 years, and it is state that, with the exception of Mr. Frank Creeth, of the Griffin, Godshill, he was the oldest license holder in the Island.

INQUEST

On Monday afternoon the Acting Deputy Coroner (Mr. J. Eldridge) held an inquest at the Eight Bells.

Mr. K. Clark was chosen foreman of the jury.

Reginald Cantelo, of Chelsea-villas, Carisbrooke-road, said he was 11 years of age. About 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon he was riding down the hill through Carisbrooke on a bicycle. There were two traps coming up the road and one of them stopped in the road near the Eight Bells and the other came up round in the middle of the road out of the way of the other. One was a wagonette, which he thought he had room to pass, and just as he was passing it Mr. Burt came out of the Eight Bells door to see who it was in the wagonette. Witness rang his bell and called out to deceased, who did not seem to understand, as he looked down the road and then went back towards the wall. Witness was in the act of getting off his machine and the next thing he knew was that their faces met and they both fell together. He was off the bicycle when he collided with deceased; he let go the bicycle and it went against the wall. He then went into the Eight Bells yard to call some one, and he saw deceased carried in. He then mounted his machine and rode home. He did not think the bicycle was damaged.

Q. At what rate were you going down the hill?—I was not going fast because there was a boy trotting by my side on the mall.—Q. Did you ring your bell?—Yes, I rang my bell about three times and shouted. Q. Did you put on your brake or try to stop altogether?—Yes, I did. I never had a brake on the bicycle. I was back-peddling and I stopped suddenly.—Q. Do you know if the bike struck Mr. Burt?—No sir, I don't. I don't think it did. The bicycle did not swerve and hit him. I was going slowly enough to be able to get off and stand on my feet. Mr. Burt went right into the road as if he were going across and then came round towards me on his way to the stables. He thought there was a milk-cart standing opposite, near Mr. Turner's.

By a Juror (Mr. W. W. Gyton): The wagonette which was just above deceased's door obstructed his view of the road below. He just escaped the wagonette and immediately Mr. Burt came out of the door quickly.

The Acting Deputy Coroner: When you saw Mr. Burt did you do everything you could to prevent running into him?—Yes, I did.

Witness added that he kept over to his right, thinking he would keep clear in that way, but Mr. Burt returned towards the wall on that side. He thought Mr. Burt was going to pass him on the other side. Mr. Burt fell towards him, and he (witness) hurt his face, nose, and arm. He did not fall on Mr. Burt.

The Acting Deputy Coroner said he thought the boy had given his evidence very fairly and well, and the jury agreed.

Edgar Hy. Turner, dairyman, of Carisbrooke,, said that about 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, as he was drawing milk from his urn in the cart, which was standing opposite the Eight Bells, he saw deceased come out of the door and go towards the yard. When deceased had got half-way he saw a bicycle coming and half turned against the wall and the bicycle ran into him, knocking him against the stack pipe and carried him a few feet. Then deceased fell under the bicycle. The boy in getting off the machine trod on deceased's ribs. Before the boy had time to get the bicycle away witness got deceased up. The pedal wheel of the bicycle was resting on deceased's nose and had injured it. As witness lifted deceased the blood began to rush out and they gave him what attention they could and carried him in and sent for a

doctor.

Q. How fast was the boy riding?—Not very fast, only he had not got control over the machine. You could not call it furious riding.—Q. Was he going slowly?—No, a medium pace. He had not got control of the machine, which seemed too big for him. The boy, added witness, seemed to be looking into the Eight Bells yard at the brake which was unloading there, and that seemed to put him off. The brake was not in the boy's way at all at the time, as it had drawn into the yard and was being unloaded. Mr. Burt had been sent for to come out to see about the brake.—Q. Your evidence is that the bicycle struck Mr. Burt?—Yes, and knocked him down.—Q. Are you sure of that?—Yes, I am sure of that. The boy got off afterwards, not before. Mr. Burt was only about 4ft. or 5ft. out into the road. He did not know the width of the road there.

The Acting Deputy Coroner said he should think it would be 17ft. or 18ft.

In reply to the jury, witness said there was nothing in the way of the boy, as the brake had gone into the yard and there was no carriage there—only witness's milk-cart on the other side. He did not hear the boy ring his bell or call out, but he was rather deaf and he might not have heard shouting or the ringing of a bell. The machine was either too big for the boy to keep control or he was staring about and not looking after it. There was room for the boy to have passed all right. When deceased saw the bicycle wobbling in front of him he turned back towards his wall to get out of the way.

The Acting Deputy Coroner said the two versions of the accident they had already heard differed materially, although they agreed as to deceased turning back before the accident. Perhaps the next witness would be able to throw more light upon it.

Mr. Gyton said there was a bend in the road there and cyclists had to swerve to the right in coming down.

Mr. Turner added, in reply to a further question, that the boy was not knocked off the machine by the collision.

Mary Phillips, married woman, of Alvington-road, said she was at the Carisbrooke Post-office, close by the scene of the accident. The boy on the bicycle was evidently getting out of the way of a cart when deceased came out of his door. The boy shouted to deceased to get out of the way and he rang his bell, which did not sound much. Mr. Burt was getting out of the way, but went to the wrong side—instead of keeping on the outside he went nearer to the wall, with the result that they collided; but the boy was in the act of getting off his machine at the time. Mr. Burt went flat on his back and the boy on top of him. As far as she could see only the handle bars of the bicycle struck the deceased. They really went into each other's arms.

By Supt. Ayres: The boy was riding very slowly, but he scarcely seemed to have control of the machine.

By the Jury: The boy was close to the wall. Both Mr. Burt and the boy seemed to be making for the wall and met. She thought the boy was riding a lady's bicycle.

Cantelo, however, said it was a boy's bicycle.

Dr. Hutton Castle, of Newport, said that on Saturday afternoon he was called to see deceased, who was said to have fallen down. He was attending a case close by and he got Dr. Bradfield to go up at once. Directly after he (Dr. Castle) went up to see deceased, who was suffering from very severe shock consequent on injuries received, rendered more grave by the fact that he had been in ill health for several months. Two of the ribs on the left side—the third and fourth—were broken, and he had severe injury to

the shoulder joint. He was in such a critical condition that the mere moving of him to attend to his injuries would have been dangerous. Witness did all he could for him; but on Sunday afternoon, on being summoned again, he found deceased was sinking and he died in the evening.—Q. Were the injuries from which he was suffering such as were likely to have been caused by being knocked down by a bicycle?—Quite so.—Q. Do you consider that owing to his ill health the injuries were more dangerous?—Certainly. If a man well and strong had been knocked down by a bicycle and sustained broken ribs and collar-bone—I think his collar-bone was broken—he would very likely get over it. One would expect a thoroughly healthy man to get over that.—Q. What should you say was the cause of death?—Shock, resulting from the injuries described, to a system enfeebled by ill health. As a matter of fact he had chronic bronchitis. His breathing was very short and the heart's action very weak.

George Hy. Burt, wheelwright, of Newport, younger brother of deceased, gave formal evidence of identification and said he believed deceased was nearly 65. The deceased had been getting a little feeble during the last two years, but generally he had been in fair health.

The Acting Deputy Coroner said it was a very sad case and they must all feel the greatest sympathy with the relatives and friends of the late Mr. Burt, who was so well known all over the Island for so many years, in the sad accident which seemed to have caused his death. He briefly referred to the evidence of the three witnesses and said it seemed to him that it was a pure accident and that the boy was not to blame in any way. He did not think they could find anything on which they could censure the boy, though one felt—and he spoke as a cyclist himself—that there was a necessity generally for emphasising the importance of cyclists exercising the very greatest care, especially in turning about among vehicles in thoroughfares.

Mr. Willstead, one of the jurors, said he thought the boy quite free from blame and that he spoke very honourably and straightforwardly in giving his evidence, and he considered it a pure accident (hear, hear).

The Foreman said they were all agreed that it was a pure accident and that no blame attached to the boy Cantelo, and a verdict was returned accordingly.

Deceased's brother said cyclists deserved censure sometimes for their reckless driving, though he did not blame the boy in that case. He might have lost control of the machine and caused that.

The Acting Deputy Coroner agreed and said that much greater care was needed to be exercised by cyclists in busy thoroughfares.

Mr. Gyton and other jurors endorsed the necessity for such a caution.

FUNERAL

The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon and was largely attended by representatives of the various Island posting establishments, members of the Island Licensed Victuallers' Association, and of the Carisbrooke Bowling Club (the deceased's hostelry being the head-quarters of the Club), and many other friends of the deceased. There were signs throughout the village of the sympathetic respect in which the deceased was held. The first portion of the service took place at the Parish-church, the Vicar of Carisbrooke (the Rev. W. J. Stobart) impressively officiating. The interment took place at Carisbrooke Cemetery, the remainder of the burial office being said at the graveside by the Vicar. The family mourners were Mrs. Burt (widow), Mr. George Henry Burt (brother), Messrs. C. Burt, W. Saunders, A. Saunders, J. Scovell, and C. Scovell (nephews), the Misses F. and M. Saunders and Mrs. C. J. Atwell (nieces), Mrs. Saunders, Miss Jolliffe, and Mrs. Snudden (sisters-in-law), Mr. B. Snudden (brother-in-law), Miss M. Nobbs, and Messrs. C. J. Atwell, C. Jolliffe, Frank Cooper, George Chiverton,

W. T. Warne, and F. Nobbs, and John and James Merritt (employees). There was a large assemblage at the graveside, amongst those present being Messrs. E. Moores, Newport (vice-president), G. Read, Ventnor (secretary), Jefford (Shanklin), Adams (Freshwater), W. Glover (Sandown), Burrige (Northwood), and Burt (Red Lion, Carisbrooke), representing the I.W. Licensed Victuallers' Association; Messrs. N. H. T. Mursell (captain), C. Steel (hon. secretary), H. Norris, J. Cushen, C. Peck, James Lockhart, and Curwood (representing the Carisbrooke Bowling Club), Supt. W. Ayres (I.W. County Constabulary), and Messrs. E. O. White (representing the Royal Brewery), Kemp and Reggie Mearman (Sandown), Richardson (Shanklin), G. H. Smith (Cowes), H. Brown (Ventnor), C. Saunders and D. Bartlett (Shanklin), Meguyer (Sandown), G. Young (Ryde), W. Payne, W. Wheway (Freshwater), Stanley Wadham, J. T. Long, F. Maber, J. Cooley, T. Piper, H. E. Barham, T. Barnes, W. Knott, Johnson, Lowe, J. Williams, F. Attrill, B. Urry, W. Hamburg, and Sprake. On the brass breast-plate of the polished elm coffin was the inscription, "Alfred William Burt, died Feb. 22nd, 1903, aged 64 years".

Transcription by Ian Roach for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2020
<https://www.foncc.org.uk>