

Robert Frank David Burton

Isle of Wight County Press 4 January 1941

NEWPORT

Death Follows Accident.----The death took place in the County Hospital on Wednesday, following an accident, of Mr. Robert Frank David Burton, aged 41, of Ivydene, Parkhurst-road. Mr. Burton was knocked down by a motorcycle ridden by Gunner John Gray while crossing the road near his home on Saturday and was taken by ambulance to the County Hospital. He leaves a wife and widowed mother, with whom much sympathy is expressed. An inquest will be held this (Saturday) morning, and the funeral will take place at 2 p.m. on Monday at the Newport Cemetery.

Isle of Wight County Press 11 January 1941

BLACK-OUT FATALITY AT NEWPORT.

VICTIM HANDICAPPED BY DEAFNESS.

The sad circumstances of an accident in the black-out at the junction of Dodnor-lane with the main Newport-Cowes road on December 28th were related to the Assistant Deputy Coroner (R. E. A. Webster, Esq.) at an inquest in Ryde on Saturday. The deceased was Robert David Burton, aged 41, a fitter, of Ivy Dene, Parkhurst-road, who died on January 1st at the County Hospital from injuries received when knocked down by a motor-cycle. Deceased, who suffered the heavy handicap of having been deaf and dumb from birth, was well known in Newport and the West Wight. For five years he acted as a conductor on Brown's bus service, and his efficiency was much admired. The Coroner had the assistance of a jury, of whom Capt. W. S. Russell, T.C., was foreman. Acting Sergt. McVicar was the police officer in attendance.

The widow, Clemence Burton, said her husband, who enjoyed good health, left the house to catch a bus for Newport at 7.10 p.m. on December 28th, the bus stop being about 70 yards away on the off side of the road. The deceased carried an electric torch. On returning to the kitchen after he had left she heard the screech of brakes, and at first thought it was the bus stopping, but just afterwards was informed that her husband had been involved in an accident.

Dr. Alferatta Keith said that when admitted to the hospital at 8.15 p.m. deceased was conscious and extremely restless. His injuries were on the left side of his head and body. He became worse next day, and he died on the following day from concussion and cerebral haemorrhage due to a fracture of the base of the skull.

John Gray, a gunner, deposed that at 7.10 p.m. on the day of the accident he was driving an Army motor-cycle to the Post-office at Newport, travelling at 15 to 20 miles an hour, three or four feet from his near side. The night was very dark. A light suddenly shone in his face from a distance of about three feet. He jammed on his brakes, but his cycle struck an object, and he fell to the ground, with his cycle two or three feet away. He found that he had struck deceased, and had received injuries to his head. --- C.Q.M.S. George Turner, Hants Regt., deposed that when riding his cycle from Newport he heard a motor-cycle coming in the opposite direction, and travelling slowly. He saw a light flashed horizontally across the road, and heard the screeching of brakes. On going to the scene he found the motor-cycle on its side and two persons lying on the ground. --- Pte. Frederick J. Linfield, who was walking along the right-hand pavement in the direction of Newport, said he saw a man come out of a house and shine a torch. The man stepped off the pavement, and just afterwards witness heard the screeching of brakes.----P.C. Donougho said he was at the junction of Parkhurst-road and Forest-road when a motor-cyclist passed him at about 15 miles an hour. Suddenly he saw a light; there could have been no distance between the light and the motor-cycle. He then heard the screeching of brakes and the motor-cycle fall over. He found it three feet from the near side, and a further three feet out in the road, he found the pedestrian and the motor-cyclist. The tall elm trees in the grounds of the Public Assistance Institution added to the darkness at that spot. He knew deceased at one time as a bus conductor, and people were astounded at his efficiency.

The Coroner said he felt that the primary cause of the accident was that the deceased man was deaf.

In announcing the jury's verdict the Foreman said they agreed with the Coroner's remark. They found that death was accidental, and exonerated the driver of the motor-cycle from all blame.

The Coroner, the jury, and an Army officer expressed deep sympathy with the widow.

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