

Michael Prince

Isle of Wight County Press - 19 August 1950

NEWPORT

Fatality in St. James's Square. — At about 9.25 p.m. on Wednesday a London father and his son were cycling on their way back to their holiday camp at Thorness, and when at the junction of St. James's Square with High Street, near Timothy White's corner, a collision occurred between the cycle ridden by the boy, Michael Prince, aged 13, of 1 Richard Place, London, E.17, and a Southern Vectis double-deck bus, driven by Edward Booley, of 127 Carisbrooke Road. The boy was thrown off his machine and the bus passed over him. He was taken to the County Hospital by ambulance, but was dead on arrival. An inquest was held at Ryde last night by the Coroner (Mr. R. E. A. Webster).

Isle of Wight County Press - 26th August 1950

Inquest in to the death of Michael Prince

The Coroner (Mr. R. E. A. Webster) conducted an inquest at Ryde Town Hall on Friday week on Michael Prince aged 13, of 1 Richard Place, London, E.17, who was fatally injured in a collision with a bus while cycling through St. James's Square, Newport, on Wednesday week. Mr. H. R. Palmer appeared for the Southern Vectis Omnibus Company and the bus driver, and Sergt. J. J. McMahon represented the police. Mr. S. J. Hofman was foreman of the jury.

Dr. J. H. McNeil White (house surgeon) said that when the ambulance arrived at the County Hospital at 9.55 p.m. on August 16th the boy was dead. Death was due to a fractured skull and a severe crush injury to his chest.

Jack Prince, a schoolmaster, who was on a camping holiday with his son Michael at Thorness, said that at about 9.15 p.m. on August 16th he and Michael were cycling through St. James's Square on their way back to Thorness. His son was on the near side of the road, and he was riding close beside him, their speed being just a little above walking pace. As they reached the corner near the monument and were about to go over the crossing witness saw a bus suddenly come from the High Street. He applied his brakes and stopped, but his son carried on. Witness left his bicycle and ran towards the bus, but was too late. The bus struck his son and went over him. Witness thought the bus was coming over the crossing rather rapidly, because it was a B road coming into an A road.—By the jury: He did not think there was anything to distract his son's attention or to obscure his vision.—By Mr. Palmer: It was about lighting-up time, and both he and his son had their lamps lighted. They were very close to the corner when the bus came round it.—By the Coroner: When they came to the corner they were riding more or less abreast.

Mrs. Alice Beatrice Dore, of 4 High Street, Newport, said that at about 9.25 p.m. she was sitting beside her husband in his car, which was stationary on the near side of the road in Lower St. James's Street at the pedestrian crossing. Her husband had stopped the car because of the bus, which was travelling very slowly from High Street over the crossing at the junction with St. James's Square. The bus appeared to have stopped for someone to go over the crossing, and had started up again. She was horrified to see two cyclists coming towards her from St. James's Square, the boy about a wheel in front of the man.

She did not think the boy had seen the bus, and thought his vision was obscured by the people standing about on the pavement and in the gutter. The boy carried on and was hit by the bus, and appeared to go under it. The bus pulled up in less than its own length. It was close to its near side on the corner.—By the jury: She felt that the people standing on the corner might well have obscured the boy's the vision. It might have disturbed the boy in trying to get round them and keep out of their way.—By the Coroner: She thought there were rather a lot of things for the boy to look out for. By Sergt. McMahon: She estimated the speed of the bus across the junction as 5-6 miles per hour.

Edward Booley, of 127 Carisbrooke Road, Newport, said he was driving a double-deck bus from Gunville into St. James's Square. Approaching the square, he changed down into third gear, and when he reached the corner he saw a car and slowed right down to allow it to go in front of him. He then thought the car was giving way to him, and started up again. Looking into the square, he saw nothing moving, and went across. Some people were on the stand waiting for the Cowes bus, but he did not notice whether they were in the road or not. He then saw the boy's head appear just in front of the off-side glass panel of his windscreen. He immediately applied his brakes and stopped in three-quarters of a bus length, but the off-side front wing of the bus caught the boy. Witness had side lights on but no headlights, in order not to blind other traffic and pedestrians. The street was well lighted. He found the cycle jammed under the bus off-side rear wheel, and the boy was under the cycle.—By the jury: He had no time at all to give any warning to the boy.—By Sergt. McMahon: He had been driving for the company since May 30th, and was familiar with the cross-road. It was his practice to change down into third gear at Woolworth's and slow down. He exercised the greatest care in going across the junction.

Raymond George Adams of 102 Hunnyhill, Newport, conductor of the bus, said he was standing on the rear platform when the bus was passing through High Street at a fairly slow speed towards St. James's Square. Approaching the cross-roads, the driver changed down into third gear and slowed down. Crossing the junction, he braked and then accelerated slightly. Witness heard a scraping noise, and the bus brakes were put on hard.

P.C. G. P. Porter said he tested the bus brakes, and found them very satisfactory. Using the foot brake only on a wet road, he pulled up from 20 miles an hour to a standstill in 23 feet, and from 10 miles an hour in 15 feet.

The Foreman said the jury were agreed that the boy died as a result of an accident due to his vision being obscured by people in the vicinity. They absolved the driver of the bus from all blame. He had done all he could in the circumstances to avoid an accident. They extended their deepest sympathy to the boy's parents.

The Coroner. Mr. Palmer on behalf of the bus company and driver, and Sergt. McMahon on behalf of the police, also expressed sympathy with the parents.

The jury and witnesses gave their fees to provide a wreath at the funeral at St. Paul's Church, Newport, on Saturday.

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