

The Fatal Accident to Mr W H W R Burrell

How many of you have noticed the roadside memorial on the left hand side of the road of Needs Hill just before the railway bridge and wondered what it was there for? I noticed it there when I first moved here 35 years ago and was so intrigued by it I parked the car, got out and read the inscription. It reads:

"ERECTED IN LOVING MEMORY OF WHWR BURRELL SECOND SON OF SIR WW BURRELL BT WHO THROUGH AN ACCIDENT THAT BEFELL HIM AT THIS SPOT WAS CALLED TO THE PRESENCE OF HIS CREATOR 19 JULY 1883 AGE 26 YEARS. BY YE THEREFORE READY ALSO."

Over the years I had asked several local people who are no longer with us the story behind the memorial. One said the accident had been caused by a runaway horse and another that he fell off and drowned in the stream. Before I decided to write this article I went up to the local studies library at Chichester just to make sure exactly what was the cause of the accident. This is the account that I found in the Horsham Advertiser of 21st July 1883.

"An inquest this day was held at West Grinstead Park House before Mr A.R. Bostock (Coroner) on the body of Walter Henry Wyndham Raymond Burrell. The following gentlemen formed the jury. Mr H Sayers (Foreman) Messrs W. Sherlock, F Sherlock, T Hillman, Steere, Gumbrell, Luxford, Biggs, Potter, Harms, Page and Grinyer and following evidence was adduced.

"C.R. Burrell living at Knepp Castle said that the deceased was his brother and that he was 26 years of age. George Mitchell said that on Thursday last there was a cricket match on at Jolesfield Common, the deceased was playing.

"He left the ground about 7 o'clock and went homewards on a tricycle. I saw the deceased between Mr Luxford's and the railway bridge and a short time afterwards my attention was drawn to him. Deceased was lying on the side of the road at the bottom of Needs Hill. One of the wheels of the tricycle was lying on the body and the machine was turned over on the side of the road. The deceased was unconscious.

"Edwin Jupp said he found the deceased at the bottom of Needs Hill between 6 and 7 o'clock on Thursday last. The deceased was lying on the embankment at the side of the road and his cap was close to a post. The deceased was on the south side of the post from the railway bridge. The tricycle was a little away from him and he was foaming at the mouth.

"Dr. Gravely, a duly qualified medical practitioner living at Cowfold said he was called to the deceased about 8 o'clock on last Thursday evening. He was entirely unconscious and he remained so until he died at 4.57 on Friday morning. Witness remained with the deceased until he died and in my opinion the cause of death was concussion of the brain.

"In reply to Mr Luxford the doctor said that the deceased must have struck something very hard. The deceased could not have struck the ground first as there was no dirt on him.

"The jury returned a verdict in accordance with medical evidence.

"His remains were interred in the family vault in the churchyard at Shipley."

**Marion Webb
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