

A Dreadful Accident

The Yarmouth Bridge disaster of 2nd May 1845 was an unusual accident. Not only circumstances, where everyone turned out to see a clown being towed down the river, but in the number of children who died. 60 out of 82 people who died were under 18 years of age.

Based on the articles in the Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette 10 May 1845 and the Norwich Mercury, the people named are shown below. In some cases the papers reported the names, ages and addresses differently.

My interest is in the name Gotts, and we can see that Alice the mother and Alice the daughter both drowned. William Gotts, exciseman of the Conge, was father and husband. Strangely, in the civil indexes, only Alice the mother is recorded, and this is shown in the March quarter of 1846. Alice the daughter does not seem to have made it in the FRC records.

The verdict of the jury was made on a test case of Louisa Utting, and concluded that she had died by falling into the river from the bridge on 2nd May 1845 due to a defect in the joint or welding of the iron bar that first gave way, and to the quality of the workmanship being inferior to the original requirement.

The boatmen had sent bills for bodies taken from the water, which amounted to more than the number of dead, even when including those which were taken out but not via boats.

William Cory, the builder of the bridge (and presumably of Wm Cory's construction companies) provided a sum of money with B Dowson esq, secretary to the Ladies District Visiting Society for burial of any who required it.

The Inquest

H Bolingbroke, Esq, one of the directors with Mr Birkett, brother to SM Peto Esq were in attendance at the railway station.

At a meeting of the magistrates on Saturday morning, Mr William Cooke, the proprietor of the circus stated his intention to remove the circus from the town....
(The clown Nelson was Mr William Cooke according to the handbill)

The Coroner was Mr WS Ferrier. Among the gentlemen present were the Mayor Simon Cobb Esq, SB Sherrington Esq, SC Marsh Esq, William Yetts Esq, EHL Preston Esq, JH Palmer Esq.

The gentlemen sworn on the inquest were ST Palmer (Foreman) John Norman, John Orfens/Orfeur, James Pratt, John Fenn, GB Palmer, W Smith, William Spilling, Charles Barber, Charles Wolverton, Joseph Davey, James Emms, William Hallett, Mark Blowers, JG Laws, John Stagg, Ed Garrod, Thomas Davey.

The Pier Master was Captain S Smyth RN who raised the sunken bridge with Mr Teasdell

Those who died:

Name	Age	Residence	Identified by
Adams, James			Mary Ann Keeler, mother of Row 17. (See also Manship, Richardson

Adams, Robert	7	Rainbow Corner	Robert Adams, father
Anger, Caroline	10	Garden Row	Saul Anger, father.. Mrs Mary Utting was on bridge with the child
Balls, Reader Thurston	16	Bath Place	Mary Manning, Nathaniel Dobson, witnesses
Barber, Christopher	11	Pudding gates	Zachariah Porter, was with him. James Barber, father
Barker, Leonard	22	Surrey St, Norwich	
Beckett, Ann	8	Priory Yard	George Beckett, father. Ann was with two other girls, one was Teresa Steward
Beloe, George Henry John	9	Fuller's Hill	Margaret Beloe, grandmother. He was on the bridge with his mother (presumably saved)
Borking, Emily Hanworth	5	George St	James Borking, father. Eliza, her sister was saved
Bradbury, Isaac	20	King St, Norwich	John Bradbury, father tinman of King St Norwich
Buck, James Seaman	4	Row 17/sayers Corner Yard, not yet found	
Burton, Benjamin Patteson	7	Row 51	Mary Ann Burton, mother Benjamin Mason Spanton, witness, was in his father's boat.
Bussey, Harriet	26	Ferry Boat Row	Mary Ann Arnold, witness on bridge had a child in her arms. Harriet was wife of George Bussey, shoemaker
Buttifant, Sarah Ann	18	Row 2	Hannah Buttifant, mother. John Thomas, boatman witness
Church, Caroline	16	Horn Row	W Church, father. Rebecca Page was with her.
Church, James	7	Rainbow Corner	Samuel Church, father

			Mrs Susan Money was witness
Cole, Jane	16	Row 65	Elizabeth Dingaderry, aunt. Martha Field, witness was with Jane and Hannah Field
Conyers, Elizabeth	13	Row 13	Benjamin Conyers, father. Elizabeth Rowland and her four little brothers was with her but left the bridge
Crowe, Eliza	14	Row 6	Sarah Crowe, mother
Ditcham, Mary Ann	64	Row 18	Eleanor Ditcham, daughter. George Tubby, witness
Duffield, Eliza	10	Rainbow Corner	Grace Duffield, mother, was on bridge with Eliza Manship
Durrant. William George	12	Row 24	Mary Durrant, mother John Bellew was with him
Dye, Charles	2	Moat	Elizabeth Blogg. Mrs Dye, grandmother had stated that Charles Dye was in the arms of his uncle at the time, who had been taken to the hospital with a broken leg. Charles Dye had been taken to her house and died there.
Dye, Benjamin/Henry Dye	9	Rainbow Corner	Mary Dye, mother. Mary Marshall saw him on the bridge.
Ebbage, David	9	Row 17	Sophie Ebbage, mother. Alfred Norman was with him
Edwards. Maria	12	Garden Row	Maria Edwards, mother
Field, Hannah	12	Row 14	Mr Field, father. His other child was saved. (Martha)
Field, Susannah	7	Say's Corner row	Elizabeth Seaman, aunt
Fox, John Horace	19	Butchers Row	Horace Fox, father

			Charlotte Smith, witness
Fulcher, Elizabeth	16	St John's Head Row	Elizabeth Garrod, lives on North Quay, aunt Caroline Roberts was with her
Fulcher, James	14	Row 31	Mary Ann Fulcher, mother Elizabeth Smith, witness
Funnell, John	19	Wortwell, not yet found	
Gilbert, Sarah	12	Row 14	Mary Gilbert, mother. George Crickmay, witness
Gotts, Alice	52/51	Conge	Martha Gotts, daughter, was on the bridge with her mother and sister Alice.
Gotts, Alice junior	19/9	Conge	Martha Gotts, daughter, was on the bridge with her mother and sister Alice.
Grimmer, William	8	Moat	Mrs Grimmer, mother
Hatch, Elizabeth	12	East Hill	Sarah Hatch, mother Anne Bowles was with her.
Hindle, Henry	10	Ferry Boat Row	John Hindle.
Hunable, Elizabeth Jane	13		Sarah Hunable, aunt Elizabeth Cudon was with her.
Hunn, Sarah Ann	13	Row 3	Edward Hunn, father. Maria Crisp was with her.
Hunshall, Elizabeth Jane	13	Row 110	
Jenkinson, Mary Ann	10	Row 1	Thomas Kirk, and Elizabeth Savory, grandmother
Johnson, Elizabeth	7	Row 23	Mary Fisher, mother Eleaner Eliza Allman was with them
Johnson, Sarah Ann	15	Row 23	Mary Fisher, mother

			Eleaner Eliza Allman was with them
Johnson, Thomas or Robert	8	Row 1	Mary Ann Johnson mother, and Elizabeth Bowles, witness
Juniper, Maria	9	At workhouse	Martha Juniper, mother
King, Mary Ann	11	Apollo Walk	Susannah King, mother
Lake, Mary Ann Susan			Hannah Lake, mother. Sarah Church was with her (mother of James?)
Little, Harriet Mary	13	Market	Edward Foster Church. Had seen with mother and second child, both saved.
Livingstone, Joseph	6	King St	Mr Livingstone, father. Their mother was on the bridge, but saved. Also witnessed by Susan Knights
Livingstone, Matilda	7	King St	Mr Livingstone, father
Lucas, Frederick	62	Row 21	William Lucas, son John Thomas, boatman, witness
Lyons, William	6	Row 1	Mariah Smith, witness
Manship, Elizabeth	28	Rainbow Corner	Mary Ann Keeler, mother of Row 17.
May, Clara	20	Row 6	Betsy Wright was on bridge with her. Witness's mother called her off the bridge.
Mears, Susannah Ellis	8	Ferry Boat Row	Henry Mears, father
Morgan, Elizabeth (Betsy)	62	Row 1	Robert Mills, and Mariah Smith, witnesses
Morse, Robert	26	Charlotte St	William Morse, brother Daniel Wright saw him with a little child in his arms.
Parker, Charlotte	8	Row 13	Mrs Parker, mother. Elizabeth Rowland had

			left her with Elizabeth Conyers.
Powley, Elizabeth	21	Row 2	Daniel Powley the younger, husband of 5 weeks. And Maria Smith, sister was on the bridge with Richard Powley. She was pulled out of the water by Sergeant Willamont
Powley, Amelia Hannah	10	White Lion Opening	Daniel Powley the elder, father. Susannah Graver, witness (and aunt?)
Powley, Richard	4	Row 3	Daniel Powley the elder, father
Read, Elizabeth	5 ½?	Rainbow Corner	Elizabeth Hannah Read, mother
Richardson, Phoebe A	17	Row 99	Mary Ann Keeler, mother of Row 17. Henry Hall, witness on bridge
Roberts, Lydia	12	Pudding Gates	Susannah Roberts, sister. Her mother was not well enough to give evidence.
Roberts, Mary Ann	19	Pudding Gates	Susannah Roberts, sister
Scotten, Ann Maria	20	Row 3	Sarah Scotten, mother in law, Elizabeth Brown witness
Stolworthy, Maria	14	Kings Arms Yard	Edmund Stolworthy, father. Another daughter saved.
Tann, Harriet	15	George & Dragon Row	Elizabeth Mullenger, aunt. Harriet was orphan. Sarah Church was with her.
Tennant, John	11	Railway Walk	Tennant, John, father
Tennant, William	10	Railway Walk	Tennant, John, father
Thompson, Mary Ann	15	British Lion Alley	James Thompson, grandfather

Thorpe, Heppy	12	Row 2	Charles Thorpe, father. Heppy's sister was saved. (Possibly Sarah Ann Thorpe) William Mussom, boatman witness
Trory, William Townsend	12	George St	William Trory, father
Utting, Louisa	7	Row 33, not yet found	
Utting, Sarah	18	Paved Row	Robert le Neave Utting, father, James B Thorndike, witness on the bridge
Utting, Caroline	9	Row 33	
Vincent, Maria	19	Apollo Walk	Daniel Cooper
Vincent, Richard	19?	Apollo Walk	
Watts, William Walter	8/9	Pudding Gates	Harriet Watts, sister
Yallop, Martha	10	George St	Mary Elizabeth Yallop, cousin. Oliver and obert Whitelock, witnesses were with her.
Youngs, Emma/Emily	6	Fuller's Hill	William Youngs, father Mary Ann Platman, witness
A servant of Mr Burroughs, MP			(but his own name was not provided in either paper)

Other mentioned as ill or saved:

Eleanor Eliza Allman

Mrs Louisa Beloe and one child, one being drowned

Elizabeth Bowles

Ann Bowley, aged 11

Elizabeth Browne

A brother of BP Burton

A young woman named Cook, living in Row 63/65

Maria Corp aged 11 (a very intelligent little girl)

Elizabeth Cudden from Ipswich

Grace Duffell, mother of Elizabeth

Widow Edwards

Robert Houchen aged eight, ("a nice looking little boy")

Susan Knights

Harriet Hunibal, Row 110

Jay, a little boy son of Mr Jay, a baker of White Lion Gates

Mr John Lake's servant and one child (but his own name was not provided in either paper)

Sarah Linder aged 12 of Row 132

Mrs Daniel Little and child, the other being drowned.

Mrs Livingstone and child, two having been drowned

Robert Marshall aged 16

Mrs Susan Money and one child

Alfred Norman

Frederick Nathaniel Palmer, surgeon

Caroline Roberts

A son of Mr Sloman the bookseller who was under the care of Robert Morse, one of Mr Sloman's assistants.

Maria Smith

Teresa/Trevor Steward, aged 12 Priory

Martha Ann Stolworthy, aged 7

Sarah Ann Thorpe

Mary Utting, mother of Caroline

Hannah Watering, aged 8 Priory

John Watts and three brothers

Robert Whitlock who left the bridge to look for his brother

Betsy Wright

Ian Gotts member 994