

1861 CENSUS: RG9/658. folio 15. page 25.
Address: Vincent Cottage, Bellvue-road, Ryde, IW,

Charles HOPGOOD. Head. Mar. 47. Hairdresser. Ryde, IW.
Jane HOPGOOD. Wife. Mar. 42. Ryde, IW.
Edwin HOPGOOD. Son. 16. Solicitor's General Clerk. Ryde, IW.
Alfred HOPGOOD. Son. 15. Hairdresser. Ryde, IW.
Charles HOPGOOD. Son. 13. Scholar. Ryde, IW.
Henry HOPGOOD. Son. 9. Scholar. Ryde, IW.
Mary Louise HOPGOOD. Dau. 7. Scholar. Ryde, IW.
William HOPGOOD. Son. 4. Ryde, IW.
Anna Maria HOPGOOD. Dau. 2. Ryde, IW.
James COOKE. Boarder. 18. Hairdresser Apprentice. Newbridge, IW.

1871 CENSUS RG10/130. folio 651. page 39.
Address: 1 Town Square, Westminster, London.

Thomas GIBSON. Head. Unm. 28. Carpenter. Scotland.
William GIBSON. Brother. Unm. 20. Warehouseman. Scotland.
William KING. Visitor. Mar. 40. Engineer. Newport, IW.
James McDOUGAL. Lodger. Unm. 23. Warehouseman's App. Scotland.
Alfred HOPGOOD. Lodger. Unm. 25. Hairdresser. Ryde, IW.
Ludwig BOTT. Lodger. Unm. 31. Tailor. Prussia.

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday August 31st, 1871.

THE FATAL BOAT ACCIDENT OFF RYDE

It was some consolation the relatives of the unfortunate young man Mr. **Alfred HOPGOOD**, who lost his life in consequence of a boat accident near the Noman Fort, on Sunday week, that the body was found on Saturday morning last. Search had been made without satisfactory result for several days, but somewhere between eight and nine o'clock on Saturday morning. The body was seen floating about near the Fort by two fishermen named Matthew BARON and Edward MAYNE. The body was taken to the Mortuary, at the Cemetery.

THE INQUEST

An inquest was consequently held at the Gem Inn, kept by Mr Jacob REED, Hill-street, on the same evening, before Mr. E. F. BLAKE, deputy-coroner. Mr. G. MUNDELL was elected foreman.

Edward MAYNE, of 23, East-street, Portsea, was the first witness. He deposed:- I am a mariner. Between eight and nine o'clock this morning I was in the wherry, *Arrow* in company with Matthew BARON. We were going to Portsmouth from Bembridge. Some people on the Noman Fort called our attention to something, saying they thought the corpse of a young man or woman just passed by. My mate said "Get up aloft;" I went up, and was there about three quarters of an hour. A London barge passed by and the people on board told us they had seen a corpse a little distance away. We went in the direction mentioned, and found the corpse of the deceased. We then put a rope round the body, and towed it to Ryde, giving it in charge of the police.

William Iles FAIRALL deposed:- I live at 59, Union-street, and am a watchmaker and jeweller. I knew the deceased Alfred HOPGOOD. On Sunday morning last, I went out on a sailing boat, starting about quarter to eight o'clock. I, my brother, the deceased, and three Frenchmen went out in an 18ft. open boat. There were one or two more with us, and we first rowed and bathed.

After we went for a sail round the Noman Fort. We put up a mainsail and a jib. I steered all the way, and the deceased and my brother took the management for the sails. When about 200 yards from the Noman Fort we were jibing the boat, and she immediately capsized. In my opinion the cause of the capsizing was the three Frenchmen all sitting on the leeward side. We were all thrown into the water. The three Frenchmen and HOPGOOD all in a heap. I then took my coat off, but I did not see HOPGOOD afterwards. The three Frenchmen were clinging to the boat, and I and my brother were swimming at the side. We were in the water for three quarters of an hour before we were picked up, and the three Frenchmen were clinging to the boat all the time. I was clinging to the boat about a quarter of an hour before we were picked up by steam tug. The deceased was a good swimmer. I believe the Frenchman LABAYE was on the deceased's back, and holding him under water, I could see HOPGOOD's face about two inches under water during the time. LABAYE was a stranger to us, but the other Frenchmen were friends of the deceased. It was rather a squally day, and the wind was south-east. I, HOPGOOD and my brother were accustomed to boats. I believe the Frenchmen had been requested to move before the boat was jibed. I told the deceased to tell the Frenchmen to move to the other side when the vessel was being jibed, and he spoke to them in French, but I did not understand. They did not move, but they had time to move. There had been a quarrel on board. The Frenchmen knew nothing about sailing. We did not plan this sail till we got on to the pier. The boat and sails belong to the Pier Company; we were not cautioned before we went. It is my opinion, that if the Frenchmen had gone over to the other side, the accident would not have happened. I believe the deceased died in about a minute after he was in the water.

By the Juror: The deceased and LABAYE were about a yard from the capsized boat.

The foreman: How do you account for LABAYE (who could not swim) being saved, and the deceased (a good swimmer) being drowned?

Witness: I cannot account for it; I have only heard what the Frenchman said himself.

A juror: Was there any ballast in the boat ?

Witness: There was no ballast at all except half cwt.

A Juror: Which way do think you all fell into the water ?.

Witness: I think the deceased went out first, and all the Frenchmen went out after him.

A Juror: How did you fall out ?.

Witness: We did not fall out, we got out , all of us. To windward. (witness here pointed out to the jury that they did not fall out of the boat the same way that the boat fell, but got over the upper side of the boat, ---the windward side.).

A Juror: You say you never saw the deceased after you were in the water. I suppose you mean after you took your coat off.

Witness: The only time I saw him in the water was when I was getting out of the boat.

A Juror: Didn't you tell LABAYE to get off him.

Witness: No, I was too flurried at the time.

A Juror: Did you say anything to the deceased ?.

Witness: I said to him, as I was going out of the boat, "Go down".

The Coroner: Why did you say that ?.

Witness: Because I could see the Frenchman had hold of his neck, and I meant that he should dive.

The Coroner: Did he go down ?.

Witness: No he did not; I suppose he could not hear me as his face was under water. The Frenchman could not understand me.

A Juror: Don't you think the Frenchman must of known that the deceased was being suffocated ?.

Witness: I don't think the Frenchman knew at all what he was doing, for he seemed out of his mind all the time he was in the water. The other Frenchman were not so bad. For the first five minutes, like myself, they were very excited, but after that they were all right.

The next witness was Ernest DUDON, a Frenchman, who, in answer to the Coroner, said he could not speak English "very much." He deposed: I live at London, and am a hairdresser. I have known the deceased two-and-a-half years, and I and my friend Francois CONNENT, came to visit him in Ryde. I don't understand the water at all. HOPGOOD asked me on the Saturday night.

LABAYE went on board with us. When we were near the fort, and just before the boat had capsized, no one told me and LABAYE to move from one side of the vessel to the other. Deceased told us we were to stoop our heads when the sail passed over us, but we understood that was so we should not lose our hats. We all stooped down; but when the boat fell over we all fell out the same way that the boat fell.

The Coroner: The last witness said you went out of the boat the other side; it does not make very much difference.

Witness: We were all thrown into the water. After I fell into the water, I saw the deceased once; he was near the boat. I don't remember whether or anyone had hold of him. I and CONNENT can swim a little, but not much; but LABAYE cannot swim at all. It was not more than five minutes from the time I was thrown into the water before I had hold of the boat; but the other two Frenchmen had hold of the boat before me. I can only account for HOPGOOD not being saved by the fact that he had a bad arm, and might not be able to swim in consequence. He told me on Saturday night that he was suffering from rheumatism in one arm, but he did not complain on Sunday morning.

In answer to a Juror, he added that previous to the sail they had been bathing, HOPGOOD had swam well.

The next witness was Alex LABAYE, whose evidence was interpreted by the witness DUDON. He deposed; I live at Paris, and have now been in Ryde three weeks, carrying business as a portrait painter. I first met the deceased at Mr. HOPGOOD's shop. He asked me on Saturday night if I would like to go out and bathe with him on Sunday. I consented, and met him by appointment in the street the following morning. I did not bathe, but HOPGOOD did. I went out in the boat with the others. Just before the vessel capsized, I was told to lay down my head, but I was not told to change my place. After I was thrown into the water I saw HOPGOOD near me, I touched his head and tried to keep him up, but I did not catch hold of his head. I took hold of him by the arm, and at the same time I was at the side of the boat, holding it with my other hand. I did not keep hold of the deceased because the waves were coming over the boat and it seemed to be sinking. While I held his arm his head was just out of the water, but his mouth was under the water. The deceased appeared to be ill in the water, and during the whole of the time he said nothing at all to me.

By a Juror: The deceased did not seem to make any effort at all to save himself.

The Coroner was proceeding to sum up the evidence, when it was suggested it would be advisable to call Mr. Henry FAIRALL

This witness was then called in, and, after the usual preliminaries, deposed: After we had bathed we went for a sail. My brother steered, Mr. Alfred HOPGOOD had charge of the main sheet, and I had the conduct of the jib when we went about twice. I fancied something was said to the Frenchmen as to them moving their places, but I don't think they understood it. When the vessel capsized I went out to windward, or over the side of the boat contrary to the way she capsized. Just before the accident the wind and the sea had increased; and if we had jibed four or five minutes before, I don't think the boat would have capsized. We were, comparatively speaking, in smooth water, when suddenly we got into rough water. If the Frenchmen had moved over to the other side no doubt the accident would not have happened. I am not positive that any of them understood, but I told them to move. They were all sitting quietly, and there was no disturbance. There was no quarrel or frightened looks.

By a Juror: When we were in the water there was no conversation except between me and my brother; the others were not in a condition for conversation. None of the Frenchmen were alarmed before the boat capsized; and LABAYE was singing a French comic song. My brother had sung "What are the wild waves saying?" about five minutes before. The accident was noticed by persons on the Noman Fort. We were about 200 yards from the fort; never nearer I should think. There is no boat there, they say, and if there had been one it could not be there in time to save the deceased. In answer to a juror; Witness explained that they had sufficient ballast in the boat in having as many as six persons in her besides the $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt'. He further stated that there was not the least probability that the mast struck the deceased, but he did not see him from the time he fell out into the water until that day (Saturday).

The witness having left the room.

The Coroner remarked that it was to be regretted that, the evidence the jury had listened to was somewhat conflicting; but at the same time, there seemed to be some explanation to the fact that the witnesses William FAIRALL and LABAYE disagreed, viz., by the supposition that LABAYE lost his presence of mind, therefore, he was unable to recollect distinctly what did take place. There was no doubt that the evidence of Mr. FAIRALL in regard to LABAYE being on the deceased and having hold of him by the neck, when compared with that of the Frenchman, who said he held the deceased's arm, was very conflicting and unsatisfactory. It was, nevertheless very probable that LABAYE would lose nearly all presence of mind, and not be able to give his evidence as clearly as under other circumstances. The question before the jury was whether any person was wilfully guilty of this poor man's death. His own impression was that the statement of Mr. FAIRALL to the effect that LABAYE held the deceased under water during the time he was suffocated was correct; but that was done while he was in such a state of mind that he did not know what he was doing.

It was for the jury to consider whether any blame was attached to anybody. If they considered that the death was caused in the way the witness FAIRALL had described, he did not for a moment think they would consider LABAYE criminally responsible for what had taken place. If they did consider LABAYE criminally responsible, then they would have to return a verdict of manslaughter against him; or they might, on the other hand, caution him for the future. When a boat capsized sometimes the owner was blamed for lending out a boat that was not safe; but whatever condition this boat might have been in the owners could not be responsible, as the boat was taken without their knowledge. After again recurring to the probability that LABAYE was unconscious at the time of the sad calamity, the Coroner ordered the jury to consider their verdict.

The verdict to that effect was accordingly recorded; the Coroner requesting Mr. Superintendent BURT to communicate the recommendation of the jury to the fort authorities.

THE FUNERAL

Took place at the Cemetery on Sunday afternoon, in the presence of a large concourse of people. Besides the relatives of the deceased, the five survivors of the accident followed the corpse. The Rev. B. BROWNE, Wesleyan minister, conducted the solemn ceremony, and before pronouncing the benediction, he briefly addressed the crowd of people who had gathered round the grave. He remarked that they had gathered under circumstances that were

..... and deeply impressive, and one could not but be reminded of that Scripture, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment." No one there would know when he or she would die ---whether the dew of youth was on the brow, or when the heart was saddened with the infirmities of age. They knew not when they would die ---whether when the flowers of spring bloomed, or when the autumn leaves rustled upon the ground, when the fruits of summer appeared, upon the foliage, or when the snows of winter covered the earth. None of them knew whether they would die in a week day or on a Sabbath. They did not know when, but it was certain that they would die in this or any other land they knew not ---whether amid the depths of the ocean (as in the case of their departed brother) or in the quiet and peacefulness of home. But they should so live so wherever their deathbed might be they would be safe in the arms of the loving Saviour. It was not for him to speculate for one moment respecting the deceased; his hope and trust was that in the moment of dissolution the hands of a merciful God took him to himself. But he would impress upon the young especially the importance of seeking religion. Death was certain, and after death the judgment. There was a judgment in this world, for every man left his own character behind him. He wanted them all to leave a good name behind them ---a righteous name that would be even fragrant when their bodies lay in the tomb; for posterity, did sometimes, though not always, form a correct character of the sons and daughters of men. But there was a judgment of all men after death, when the books would be opened, the judge sit on the great white throne, and every work and every secret word, whether it be good or evil, would be brought into judgment. How would they face their God on that day but by finding shelter in the beloved side of the bleeding Saviour? . Oh, be it their's,

each and all, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of the heart; to live the holy life of the Christian that in death they might be able to say "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?". He earnestly prayed that this solemn event might be sanctified to the young, and he charged them to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

The address of the rev gentleman was abruptly terminated by a young man who stood near him, falling down apparently in a fit. His hat fell into the grave, but he was supported by persons who stood near him. He was removed from the crowd, and was restored eventually by the usual appliances. The funeral cortege then withdrew.

NB: Unfortunately, a portion of the funeral report was illegible, stars ***** have been put in that section.

Researched & typed by
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