BURROWS, William 26 September 1919

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Fettler/Length Runner	Midland Junction	Struck by wagons

William Burrows, a Fettler of 22 years' experience, was 54 years of age when he died as the result of a shunting accident at Midland Junction. William had stepped clear of the track he was working on to allow a train to pass. He inadvertently stepped into the path of coaches being propelled into the station. Two coaches passed over him and he died at the scene. A Coronial inquest determined that Williams death was an accident. The son of a convict of the same name, William lived in Guildford with his wife, Eliza, and seven children and he is interred at Guildford Cemetery (ANGLICAN/A/0076).

A FETTLER KILLED,
A fatal railway accident occurred in the station yard at Midland Junction last Friday morning, the victim being William Burrows, a fettler in the employ of the Railway department. The deceased was working on the line almost opposite the station and stepped out of the way of an engine travelling along one set of rails, without, apparently noticing the approach of a train which was being backed into the station yard on the adjoining track. The result was that the leading coach passed over him, cutting the unfortunate man to pieces. The body was removed to the morgue at West Midland. The deceased was a married man with seven children, living in Victoria Street, Guildford.

An inquest was opened in the Midland Junction Courthouse yesterday before Mr. G. Hiscox, J.P. (acting coroner) and a jury.

Mr. E. G. O'Neill, stationmaster at Midland Junction, identified the deceased, whose age was 57 (sic) years. He said the train which killed deceased was being shunted off the main Line into the yard. The deceased was of sober habits and had been in the railway service for 22 years as a fettler.

At this stage the inquiry was adjourned to October 2.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Friday 3 October 1919 Page 8.*

Author's Note: *William's age was severally misreported as 57 years. His true age was 54 years. William's wife, Eliza Jane, survived him by 20 years and 3 days until her death on 29 September 1939 at the age of 73. She was interred with him at Guildford Cemetery.*

MIDLAND JUNCTION RAILWAY FATALITY.
THE INQUEST.
The adjourned inquest concerning the death of William Burrows, who was killed in the Midland Junction railway yards last week, was held in the Midland Police Court yesterday, before the acting coroner (Mr. Geo. Hiscox, J.P.) and a jury consisting of Messrs. W. Barnes, R. F. Brown, and C. Willshire.

Mr. C. Haynes represented the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees, and Mr. R. G. O'Neill the Commissioner of Railways. Sergt. O'Halloran conducted the inquiry.

Dr. Badock said he held a post mortem on the deceased on the 26th ult. and the injuries were excessive, the man being practically cut to pieces. His head was smashed in, left arm was torn from the shoulder joint and fractured in many places, and all the ribs were fractured. Death must have been practically instantaneous.

Constable Hawes stated on the 26th ult. he was called to the railway station at 7.30 a.m., and was informed that a man had been killed. The body was lying about 5O yards from where the deceased was struck by the coach. From his observation the rear of the train struck the deceased as it was shunting backwards. One carriage and two wheels of the second carriage passed over the body. He did not think the driver could see the back of the train from the left hand side of the train. The body was removed to the West Midland morgue on the arrival of Dr. Badock.

By Mr. O'Neill: Witness had not sufficient railway knowledge to express an opinion as to whether the driver could see the back of the train.

Robert Horner, night station master said he was on duty at 7.30 a.m. on September 26, and saw the workers train No. 209 being backed, into No. 4 road, which was done every morning. Witness saw deceased standing behind a tender of the engine on No. 3 road. Deceased was on duty as a length runner. As the train was being shunted on to No. 4 road deceased walked backward towards No. 4 line, which was about four or five yards from No. 3 line. Deceased placed his foot on No. 4 line, and the right side of the brake van of the workers' train struck him when going backward. Witness signalled to the engine driver to stop the train, but the signal was not obeyed for some time, and he continued shouting and whistling. The train travelled 70 or So yards before it stopped, after striking deceased, and was going about four or five miles an hour. The shunter jumped off the train about 10 yards before the deceased was struck. The shunter was on the opposite side to where deceased was standing. As soon as witness saw the deceased run over he sent for the police and doctor, and told the driver not to move his train, as a man had been run over. That was the first the driver knew of the accident. Witness met the shunter when he was going to the driver, and informed him what had happened; he was not aware of the accident till then. It was impossible for the shunter to see the deceased from where the former was standing. There were three or four coaches between them. The shunter was standing on the left hand side of the leading coach.

By the Jury: Although on the opposite side of the train witness could see the shunter on the train. The shunter got off the train to give the driver the signal.

By Mr. Haynes: It was an A.D. brake coach at the rear of the train. The brake compartment was on the Perth end. There was an E class engine standing on No. 3 which was stationary at the time deceased was struck. The space between the roads might be 7ft. Two steps backward would bring deceased foul of the coach. Witness did not see deceased prior to the accident. He could not account for his signal not being obeyed. It was not the practice for a shunter to jump off a t train at the same spot every morning.

By Mr. O'Neill: When No. 209 pulled off the main line the signalman gave him clear for No. 4 road. The shunter used his own discretion when to jump off a train. It was practically impossible for a driver to hear a whistle or a shout at the distance from which witness whistled. It was doubtful if the driver, had he seen deceased, would have pulled up, because it was customary for employees to be on the line. The body being caught on point 5 5 was sufficient to kill the deceased.

Lionel Mann, shunter in the W.A.G.R., stated he was employed on No. 209 on September 26, and shunted the train on to No. 4 line at the Midland station. Witness was standing on the footplate of the foremost coach on the left hand side, and did not hear a whistle or shout. He jumped off the train so that he would have the driver in view in case of an obstruction. The driver was leaning over the left hand side watching witness. The left hand side was the most convenient for the driver. The first intimation he got of the accident was the stop signal from the night station master from the platform, and witness immediately repeated the signal to the driver, and the train was pulled up in five or ten yards. The train would have gone the full length of the train further had the signal not

been given. It was not possible for the driver to see anyone on the line in the position deceased was. Witness did not see deceased on the line prior to the accident, but saw an engine standing on No. 3 road. When witness saw the body it was under the first bogey of the second coach.

By Mr. Haynes: At the time of the accident the weather was squally. Witness could not say if the deceased was taking shelter, but believed he had an oilskin suit on at the time. Witness had been shunting the train all the week prior to the accident. It was customary to leave the vehicle at that point to have a clear view of the line and get the driver under control . There was a shunting engine that had been standing on 5 road.

By Mr. O'Neill: Witness had had a number of years' experience in shunting. The track took in a sharp turn at the spot, and consequently witness had to leave the train to keep the driver in view. He saw the night station master's signals through the carriage.

By Mr. Haynes: He jumped off the train because otherwise he would lose the view of the driver.

Constable Hawes, recalled, said he stepped the distance between Nos. 3 and 4 roads, and it was two paces.

After an absence of five minutes the jury returned the following verdict: "That the deceased, William Burrows, came to his death by being run over by train known as 209 in the Midland Junction railway station yard whilst on duty on the morning of September 26.

Source: *Trove/The Swan Express (Midland Junction)* Friday 3 October 1919 Page 5.