

Driver William Burley[©]
Regimental number: 217244
46th Battery, 39th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

born: 2 November 1878–died: 29 July 1917

Driver William Burley was born on 2 November 1878¹ in Ticehurst, Sussex,² the son of Daniel Burley and Rosa Hayes, who had married in Tonbridge, Kent, in 1855.³ William was probably the last of 13 children born to the couple.⁴ Only 11 of the children have been tentatively identified:

- Elizabeth (born in 1858)⁵
- Jane (born in 1860)⁶
- Mary (born in 1861)⁷
- Sarah Anne (born in 1862)⁸
- Caroline (born in 1864)⁹
- Esther (born in 1866)¹⁰
- Joseph (born in 1868)¹¹
- Ellen (born in 1870)¹²
- Thomas (born in 1872)¹³
- Emily (born in 1875)¹⁴
- William

Four of the children died before 1868—Elizabeth (in 1861),¹⁵ Mary (in 1861),¹⁶ Sarah Anne (in 1867)¹⁷ and Caroline (in 1864).¹⁸ In 1871, Daniel and Rosa were living in Capel, Kent, where Daniel was a agricultural labourer.¹⁹ He appears to have struggled to look after his family, as a local newspaper reported that Daniel pled guilty to neglecting to maintain his wife and three children, resulting in their becoming dependent on the Tonbridge Union in April 1871.²⁰ Ten years later, William had joined the family and, with his parents and four siblings, was living at Sunningly Cottage in Frant, Sussex.²¹ Daniel was still an agricultural labourer.

William's mother died in 1886,²² when he was just 7 years old. It is not known where any of the family members were in 1891 but, in 1901, William was probably a machine minder in a brickwork plant and boarding in the home of Robert Smith, also a brick worker, in Cheam, Surrey.²³ The following year, William married Martha Elizabeth Baker (born on 1 June 1848)²⁴ in London.²⁵ In the years leading up to the Great War, William and Martha had three children:²⁶

- Alice Ivy Alexandra (born on 14 October 1903)
- William George (born on 1 March 1912)
- Isabel Dorothy Irene (born on 20 April 1913)

In 1911, William, his wife and their first child were living 4 Heathfield Cottages in Hampton, Middlesex, where William was now a carman.²⁷ He enlisted to serve in the British Expeditionary Force four years later, a few months after war was declared. He signed up on 28 February 1915 in Kingston-on-Thames, London, claiming to be 33 years and 0 months old. He was, in fact, 37 years old. Perhaps he wanted to appear younger to ensure that he was accepted. He was 5' 2" tall and weighed 113 lbs.²⁸

William enlisted with the Army Service Corps and served, at some point, as a driver (Regimental number: T/4/065365), with the Remounts Service²⁹—the service responsible for providing horses

and mules to all other army units.³⁰ He left this service and was with the 46th Battery, 39th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery when he died.³¹

In July 1917, the 39th Brigade was stationed in northern France near the Belgian border and the North Sea. It was engaged in constant, heavy firing on the enemy. On 29 July, seven Other Ranks (non-officers) were wounded and William may have been one of them.³² He was admitted that day to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station³³ with a wound, caused by a bomb, that perforated his right thorax.³⁴ He was one of 477 soldiers admitted on 29 July.³⁵

He died the same day and was buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery (Plot II, Row A, Grave 8).³⁶ The cemetery is near Coxyde (now known as Koksijde) on the Belgian coast of the North Sea. French troops established the cemetery; when Commonwealth forces relieved the French in June 1917, it became the most important Commonwealth cemetery on the Belgian coast.³⁷

A letter was sent to William's wife at The Lodge, Horton Manor, Horton, Buckinghamshire, to notify her of his death.³⁸ She requested the following inscription for his gravestone:

ABIDE WITH ME³⁹

Daniel's father had died just a year before his son, on 9 July 1916. The funeral took place on the Burial Ground, Lower Green in Pembury (on the outskirts of Tonbridge).⁴⁰

After the war, William's wife **Martha** was living at No. 2 Brands Hill Cottages in Colnbrook, near Horton, Buckinghamshire, with her children William and Isabel (whose name is spelled in this and some other records as Isabel).⁴¹ Her daughter Ivy was a kitchen maid in the home of Walter Grant Peterson Morden, a member of the British parliament, nearby at Heatherden Hall in Iver Heath.⁴²

On 14 June 1930, **Ivy** married Arthur F Davis in what was described as a "charming wedding" at St Thomas Church in Colnbrook.⁴³ In 1939, they were living at No. 4 Brands Hill Cottages—very close to Ivy's mother.⁴⁴ Ivy died in 2003, at the age of 101⁴⁵—84 years after the death of her father in the Great War.

Just before the Second World War, Martha and her son **William Jr** were still at Brand Hill Cottages, where William was a wireless engineer.⁴⁶ William married Helen Fletcher in Eton the following year⁴⁷ and was only 69 when he died in Slough, Berkshire, in 1981.⁴⁸

Isabel married Cecil A. Collins in 1941.⁴⁹ Cecil died in 1971⁵⁰ and Isabel married Alfred J Monzer in 1973.⁵¹ She died in Bracknell, Berkshire, in 1987.⁵²

© 2024 BIFHSGO

¹ "UK, WWI, Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923," FOLD3 *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, William, Reference Number: 015/0063/BUR-BUR

² "Surrey Recruitment Registers 1908-1933," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for W. Burley, Reference: 2496 / 2

³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for Daniel Burley, Registration district: Tonbridge, Inferred county: Kent, Volume: 2a, Page: 565

-
- ⁴ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for William Burley, Registration district number: 40, Sub-registration district: Hampton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 04, Piece: 3564
- ⁵ “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, Elizabeth, Registration district: Tonbridge, Volume 02A, Page 409
- ⁶ “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, Jane, Registration district: Tonbridge, Volume 02A, Page 439
- ⁷ “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, Mary, Registration district: Tonbridge, Volume 02A, Page 443
- ⁸ “England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Sarah Anne Burley, FHL film number: 1469618 IT 6
- ⁹ “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024) entry for Burley, Caroline, Registration district: Tonbridge, Volume 02A, Page 498
- ¹⁰ “1871 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 January 2024), entry for Daniel Burley, Registration district: Tunbridge, Sub-registration district: Tunbridge, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 14, Household schedule number: 31, Piece: 934, Folio: 52, Page: 7
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, Ellen, Registration district: Tonbridge, Volume 02A, Page 603
- ¹³ “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, Thomas, Registration district: Tonbridge, Volume 02A, Page 576
- ¹⁴ “GRO online index (birth),” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Burley, Emily, Registration district: Maidstone, Volume 02A, Page 605
- ¹⁵ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Elizabeth Burley, Death registration place: Tonbridge, Kent, United Kingdom, Inferred death place: Kent, United Kingdom, Volume: 2a, Page: 289
- ¹⁶ “England, Select Deaths and Burials, 1538–1991,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Mary Elizabeth Burley, FHL film number: 1473662, Reference ID: P85-1-91 p76 No608
- ¹⁷ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Burley, Death registration place: Tonbridge, Kent, United Kingdom, Inferred death place: Kent, United Kingdom, Volume: 2a, Page: 289
- ¹⁸ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Caroline Burley, Death registration place: Tonbridge, Kent, United Kingdom, Inferred death place: Kent, United Kingdom, Volume: 2a, Page: 366
- ¹⁹ “1871 England Census,” *Ancestry*, entry for Daniel Burley
- ²⁰ “Neglecting a Family,” *British Newspaper Archive, Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Daniel Burley, *Maidstone and Kentish Journal*, 14 October 1871
- ²¹ “1881 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 January 2024), entry for William E. Harris, Registration district: Ticehurst, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 4, Piece: 1049, Folio: 36, Page: 6
- ²² “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for Rose Burley, Death registration place: Tonbridge, Kent, United Kingdom, Inferred death place: Kent, United Kingdom, Volume: 2a, Page: 476
- ²³ “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for William Burley, Registration district: Epsom, Sub-registration district: Carshalton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 18, Piece: 578, Folio: 76, Page: 27, Household schedule number: 174
- ²⁴ “1939 Register,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 February 2024), entry for Martha L Burley, Enumeration district letter code: DWID, Schedule: 210, Schedule sub-number: 1, Reference: RG101/2143E/019/16, Piece number: 2143E, Item number: 19, Line number: 16

-
- ²⁵ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2024), entry for William Burley, Registration district: Woolwich, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 2300
- ²⁶ “UK, WWI, Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914–1923,” FOLD3 *Ancestry*, entry for Burley, William
- ²⁷ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for William Burley, Registration district number: 40, Sub-registration district: Hampton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 04, Piece: 3564
- ²⁸ “Surrey Recruitment Registers 1908–1933,” *Ancestry*, entry for W. Burley. His recorded height was below that required for enlistment in early 1915. However, regulations were apparently not always followed in the early years of the war. (“From Civilian To First World War Soldier In 8 Steps.” *Imperial War Museum* (<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/from-civilian-to-first-world-war-soldier-in-8-steps>: accessed 14 February 2024)
- ²⁹ “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for William Burley
- ³⁰ “The Army Service Corps Remounts Service,” *The Long, Long Trail* (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>: accessed 5 February 2024)
- ³¹ “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry*, entry for William Burley
- ³² “39th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery,” *The National Archives* (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C14052661>, accessed 1 February 2024), Reference: WO-95-1249-4_03
- ³³ A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not soon die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital. (Casualty Clearing Station,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ³⁴ “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 1 February 2024), entry for Burley, W., No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station
- ³⁵ “War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/war-diaries.aspx>: accessed 26 March 2023)
- ³⁶ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2024), entry for Burley, W.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa*, entry for Burley, W.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ “Tudeley,” *British Newspapers Archive, Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Daniel Burley, *Maidstone and Kentish Journal*, 14 October 1871
- ⁴¹ “1921 Census of England & Wales index,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for Martha L. Burley, Registration district: Eton, Registration district number: 144, Sub-district: Eton, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 8, County: Buckinghamshire, Piece number: 07298, Schedule number: 113
- ⁴² “1921 Census of England & Wales index,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2024), entry for Martha L. Burley, Registration district: Eton, Registration district number: 144, Sub-district: Eton, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 9, County: Buckinghamshire, Piece number: 07299, Page: 2. Morden was a Canadian financier who went bankrupt in 1931 (*WikiTree* (<https://www.wikitree.com/genealogy/MORDEN>: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Walter Grant Peterson Morden. Heatherden Hall was sold and would eventually become Pinewood Studios—a major British film studio. “Heatherden Hall,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heatherden_Hall: accessed 7 February 2024)
- ⁴³ “Wedding of Miss Burley,” *British Newspapers Archive, Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 31 January 2024), entry for Ivy Burley, *Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 20 June 1930

-
- ⁴⁴ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Ivy A. Davis, Enumeration district letter code: DWID, Schedule: 212, Schedule sub-number: 2, Reference: RG101/2143E/019/23, Piece number: 2143E, Item number: 19, Line number: 23
- ⁴⁵ "England and Wales, Death Index, 1989-2018," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for MS Ivy Alice Alexandra Davis
- ⁴⁶ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Marth L. Burley, Enumeration district letter code: DWID, Schedule: 210, Schedule sub-number: 1, Reference: "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Ivy A. Davis, Enumeration district letter code: DWID, Schedule: 212, Schedule sub-number: 2, Reference: RG101/2143E/019/23, Piece number: 2143E, Item number: 19, Line number: 16
- ⁴⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for William G Burley, Registration district: Eton, Inferred county: Buckinghamshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 4593
- ⁴⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for William George Burley, Registration district: Slough, Inferred county: Berkshire, Volume: 19, Page: 0506
- ⁴⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Isobel [*sic*] D. I. Burley, Registration district: Eton, Inferred county: Buckinghamshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 4351
- ⁵⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 December 2024), entry for Cecil Arthur Collins, Registration district: Reading, Inferred county: Berkshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 475
- ⁵¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Isobel [*sic*] D. I. Collins, Registration district: Reading, Inferred county: Berkshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 423
- ⁵² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 February 2024), entry for Isobel [*sic*] Dorothy I. Monzer, Registration district: Bracknell, Inferred county: Berkshire, Volume: 19, Page: 70