

Frank Cave

Isle of Wight County Press – 26 October 1940

SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST A GODSHILL WOMAN.

ALLEGED SHOOTING OF ISLAND FARMER.

At an Occasional Court at Ventnor on Monday, before A. J. Sharpe, Esq., Mabel Victoria Attrill (25), of Godshill, was charged "that she did feloniously kill and slay Frank Cave by shooting him in the back with a shot gun at about 7.30 a.m. on Sunday Oct. 20th."

Acting Inspector F. Rugman said he visited East Appleford Farm, Godshill, on Sunday, and saw the body of Frank Cave, aged 61, who had died from a gun-shot wound received in the above house on the day named. As a result of inquiries he arrested the prisoner, and conveyed her to Ventnor Police Station, where she was cautioned and charged. In reply she said "I do not wish to say anything." The Inspector asked for her remand in custody to Holloway Gaol, until November 2nd, and said she should apply for legal aid.

The application was granted.

THE INQUEST.

was conducted by the Deputy Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) at the Upper Ventnor Methodist School on Thursday. Supt. Morrison and Acting Inspector F. Rugman represented the police, and Mr. G. S. Green appeared for the widow. The Coroner sat with a jury, of whom Mr. F. G. Webb was foreman.

Supt. Morrison suggested to the Coroner that only evidence as to identification and the cause of death should be taken, as a woman had been arrested and charged with murder.

Beatrice Mary Cave, of 4 East Appleford-cottages, the widow, said she had been married to deceased for 43 years, and lived with him until six years ago. He was 61 years of age.

Doris Lillian Whittington, a married daughter of the deceased, of the same address, deposed that she heard a tap at the door on Sunday morning, and received the information that her father had been shot. She entered the room and found her father lying on the floor with both arms by his side. He was lying at full length. She put her arm under his head, and he made his last breath.

Dr. Arthur Arbuthnot Straton, of Newport, said he was called at 7.45 a.m. on Sunday, and arrived at the house at 8.12 a.m. He examined deceased and found that he was quite dead. He did not know whether he had been moved. He was lying on his back in the scullery with

his feet towards the sink and his head towards the inner door. Witness glanced at a wound in the left loin, which appeared to have been caused by a shot gun.

Dr. Harold Frederick Bassano, of Ventnor, stated that on Tuesday he assisted Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the Home Office pathologist, at the post mortem examination. He had previously seen the body at the house. The cause of death was the discharge from a sporting gun. The actual cause of death was shock and haemorrhage. The shot had penetrated the loin exactly over the left kidney. He had no hesitation in saying that the cause of death was as he had stated. Deceased must have lived at least five minutes after the shot was fired. One or two slight bruises had nothing to do with his death. One was on the left side of the nose, and the other on the leg. These injuries might have been caused by deceased falling. Sir Bernard Spilsbury had given him permission to use anything he had said.

The Coroner : I cannot use that now. I understand from the police that the lady had been arrested and charged with murder, and I cannot admit any questions but those relating to the cause of death. I am satisfied that this has been clearly established by the evidence of Dr. Bassano, and this could be confirmed by Sir Bernard Spilsbury if he were present.

To the jury : I do not know whether I should discharge you or adjourn the inquiry.

Mr. Green : If you discharge the jury you will have the option of calling them again.

The Coroner : That course might be inconvenient to some of them.

The Foreman : We are all Ventnor men and not likely to leave the Island.

The Coroner : I cannot see how they can render any further useful service. The next course will be an appearance before a criminal court. I am relying on the fact that there must be a committal. The cause of death is in my opinion proved, and in that case there will not be a verdict.

The inquiry was adjourned, and the jury were discharged.

The jurors` fees were handed to the widow by the foreman, but she said she would rather they were given to the Police Fund.

THE FUNERAL.

The deceased was buried at Carisbrooke Cemetery yesterday (Friday), following a service in St. John`s Church, Newport. The Rev. W. H. Mackinnon (vicar of St. John`s) officiated. The family mourners included three sons, Messrs. C., F., and T. Cave (all in Army uniform), Mrs. Whittington (daughter), Mr. and Mrs. G. Grayson (brother-in-law and sister), Mr. and Mrs. E. Cave and Mr. and Mrs. W. Cave (brothers and sisters-in-law), Mr. G. Cave (nephew), and Mr. W. Hillier.

Among those also attending were Mr. J. J. Simmonds, T.C. (president), and Mr. C. Eldridge, representing the Newport Conservative Club, Mrs. H. Biles, and Messrs. C. Wyatt, O. C. Hamilton, W. Spanner (Sir Francis Pittis and Son), T. Walls, and H. Hollis. There were a number of floral tributes. Messrs. Hamilton and Son made the arrangements.

Transcription by Jeremy Hallam

Post script: As the Isle of Wight County Press 21 December 1940 records, Mabel Victoria Attrill stood trial for the murder of Frank Cave at the Assizes. At the end of the trial, the jury found her not guilty and she was discharged.

Tony Barton

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