

**Frederick Maurice Cooper**

**Isle of Wight County Press – 14 July 1923**

**SAD BATHING FATALITY AT NEWTOWN.**

**CARISBROOKE LAD'S FATAL DIVE.**

A distressing bathing fatality, resulting in the death of a popular young Carisbrooke man, occurred at the pool below Clammerkins-bridge on the Newtown-road on Thursday. The victim was Frederick Maurice Cooper, 19, son of Mr. M. Cooper, of Clatterford-shute, who carries on a barber's and newsagent's business at High-street, Carisbrooke. Young Cooper delivered papers daily in the Newtown and Calbourne districts, and was well known and much esteemed there. On Thursday afternoon, about 2 o'clock, whilst on his round, he stopped at Clammerkins to bathe. He was alone, and consequently no one knows exactly how the sad event happened, but Corpl. Mercer, of the Royal Ulster Rifles, at Newtown Camp, coming to the pool to bathe later in the afternoon, found Cooper's clothes and bicycle on the bank, and no sign of anyone in the stream. Fearing a tragedy he returned to the camp for assistance, and quickly returned with other soldiers, one of whom (Rfn. Oliver) dived in and discovered the body with the head and shoulders firmly embedded in the mud at the bottom. The unfortunate lad had evidently made too deep a dive when plunging in, and his head and shoulders had stuck in the mud. With considerable difficulty the body was recovered, and later Police-Inspector Shotter, from Cowes, and P.C.'s Gamble and Turner removed it to the Sportsmen's Rest Inn to await an inquest. The affair has aroused widespread and sincere sympathy with the sorely bereaved parents. Deceased was a popular member of the Newport Trojans Athletic Club, and was a successful competitor in the cycle races at the Whit-Monday sports meeting at the Recreation-ground, Newport. This is the third son Mr. and Mrs. Cooper have lost in recent years. One joined the Canadian Forces, and is presumed to have been killed as nothing has since been heard of him, and another boy was killed whilst serving in the Royal West Surrey Regiment. The inquest will be held this (Saturday) afternoon.

**Isle of Wight County Press – 21 July 1923**

**THE NEWTOWN BATHING FATALITY.**

The inquest on the body of Frederick Maurice Cooper, 19, the Carisbrooke lad who was found dead at the bottom of the pool near Clammerkins-bridge, Newtown, on Thursday week, was conducted by the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.), without a jury, at the Congregational-school, Porchfield on Saturday.

Maurice Herbert Cooper, of the Grey Cottage, Clatterford-shute, Carisbrooke, a retired constable from the Metropolitan Police, father of the deceased, gave evidence of identification, and said his son, with his brother and sisters, conducted a newsagent's, tobacconist's, and confectionery business in High-street, Carisbrooke. He delivered newspapers in the Porchfield, Newtown, Shalfleet, and Calbourne districts daily, and on Thursday he left home about 10.30 a.m. to do his round. He generally took his own time on the round, and often did not return home until late in the evening. He believed he had bathed at the pool many times, and on one occasion assisted to save a friend from drowning in the same stream. He understood that he was a very good swimmer. He was a powerful lad, and a member of the Trojans Athletic and Dreadnought Cycling Clubs.

Louisa Heal, wife of Frederick Heal, of the Blacksmith's Cottage, Lock's-green, said deceased called at her house daily with the paper. On Thursday, between noon and 1 p.m. he called, as usual, and had some lemonade and cake. He left at about 20 minutes to 1. He was alone. The pool at Clammerkins-

bridge was about five minutes' walk from her home, and deceased would have reached it on his cycle in a minute or two.

Corpl. Robert Mercer, 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Ulster Rifles, said that on the day of the tragedy he was at Newtown Rifle-ranges. At about 2.30 p.m. he was patrolling the banks of the stream, which was out of bounds to the troops, and discovered some clothing on the bank, about five feet from the bridge, and a bicycle under the bushes about 10 yards away. He looked into the pool and into the woods to see if the owner of the clothing was anywhere about, and, failing to see anyone, and knowing the dangerous character of the pool, he immediately returned to the camp and reported the matter to Sergt.-Major Murphy. The sergeant-major and four or five men returned to the pool, and the men entered the water, but failed to find anything within wading distance of the bank. Rfn. Oliver, a good swimmer and diver, then came to the scene, and after three dives brought up the body.

In reply to the father, P.C. Gamble said he understood that there was from 10 to 12 feet of water in the centre of the pool at high tide, and about three feet of mud at the bottom. Very little of the water receded as the tide ebbed. The banks were chiefly composed of blue slipper, and were very slippery.

Mr. Cooper expresses the opinion that deceased slipped when entering the pool, perhaps struck his head, and slipped down the side of the pool.

Rgn. Maurice Oliver said that when he arrived at the pool three or four men were searching in the water, and one said he thought he could feel the body with his feet. The water was very muddy, making it difficult to see. He undressed and swam out to near the middle and dived, but all he could find at the bottom was a log. He then went a little further, and on again diving felt the body. After coming to the top for breath he dived again and saw the body. It was lying face upwards, with the back of the head and the shoulders in the mud, one arm across the chest and the other by the side. He tried to lift it, but it was firmly in the mud. He then worked the head clear, and, placing one leg under his arm, got it to the surface. He was "almost beat," as he had to stay under too long.

The Coroner: You acted very pluckily and courageously.

In reply to further questions, witness said the body was lying about five feet from the bank. The head was not directly down into the mud as if deceased had dived in the usual way. He should think there was from 12 to 14 feet of water at the spot. He had tried to touch bottom at the centre of the pool before, but had failed. He dived feet foremost. If deceased had taken a header in the usual way with his hands over his head he should not have expected to find the body in the position he found it, His opinion was that deceased tried some trick dive, probably a somersault.

The Coroner said if the father was satisfied that his son met his death by accidental drowning he did not think any good purpose would be served by endeavouring to establish exactly how he entered the water. They could never clear up that point, as he was alone. If the father wished it, he could visit the pool.

Mr. Cooper said he did not think that necessary. He was convinced that his son slipped into the mud when entering the water, and in the struggle became exhausted. If he had plunged or dived in his body would have been further from the bank. He should like to know if artificial respiration was tried, and if a doctor was called.

P.C. Gamble said the soldiers tried artificial respiration for about half an hour before he arrived. But, considering that deceased had been under the water about three hours he should have considered it useless. There was no doubt that death had taken place, and no doctor was called at the time. Any subsequent calling of a medical man was a matter for the Coroner. The police never hesitated to send for a doctor in case of accident or when there was any hope that medical assistance would be of use.

The Coroner added that when the facts were so obvious as in that case it was not necessary to call a doctor. The poor fellow had been under the water nearly three hours, and, according to all scientific declarations on the subject, four and a half minutes was the longest period of complete submersion which a human being could withstand without loss of life. All the facts pointed conclusively to accidental death.

Mr. Cooper: I am quite satisfied on that point.

The Coroner: Whatever we do, I do not think we shall ever discover exactly how he entered the water. But there is no doubt that death was due to an unfortunate accident, and my verdict is that deceased met his death by accidental drowning. I deeply sympathise with the parents in their terrible bereavement, and I should like to congratulate the witness Oliver on the very plucky manner in which he dived to recover the body.

Mr. Cooper said he much appreciated those kind remarks, and he was thankful to the witnesses and the police for what they did. He hoped a warning notice-board would be erected near the pool.

The funeral took place at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Sunday afternoon, the Rev. T. Story Busher (vicar of Carisbrooke) officiating in the presence of a large gathering of sympathising friends, including many representatives of the Trojans Athletic Club and Dreadnought Cycling Club. Six members of the former Club acted as bearers, and there were over 30 beautiful floral tributes, including wreaths tied with the club colours from Trojans A.C. and the Dreadnought Cycling Club, and one from the inhabitants of Shalfleet. The mourners were Mr. and Mrs. M. H. Cooper (parents), Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Cooper (brother and sister-in-law), Miss D. Cooper and Mrs. Weir (sisters), Mr. D. Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. F. Bennett, and Mr. and Mrs. G. Woods (uncles and aunts), and Mrs. Scott, Mr. and Mrs. J. Westmore, and Messrs. F. Cooper and W. Holbrook (cousins). Amongst those also present were Messrs. G. A. Brannon and W. Lowe; Mr. G. Attrill (vice-president), Mr. W. D. Buckler (hon. instructor), and about 20 members of the Trojans Athletic Club, the following acting as bearers: Messrs. G. Symonds, W. James, G. Attrill, L. Buckler, and A. and P. Pointer; and the following members of the Dreadnought Cycling Club: Messrs. A. M. Cheverton, W. Cheverton (hon. secretary), R. Cheverton, Green, Twyman, Earley, Rackett, Cassford, Bennett, Burton, Comer, W. Williams, and C. Heal.

### Isle of Wight County Press – 4 August 1923

#### CARISBROOKE,

**THE LATE DROWNING FATALITY.** – Yesterday's *Daily Chronicle* notified the payment of death benefit under its insurance scheme as follows: "F. M. Cooper, late of the Grey Cottage, Clatterford Shute, Carisbrooke, I.W. He was accidently drowned whilst bathing. A cheque for £250 is being sent to the next-of-kin."

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