

Frank Dunford

Hampshire Advertiser - 12 December 1900

**A SEPTUAGENARIAN SHOOTS HIMSELF WITH
A DOUBLE-BARRELED GUN.**

Late on Saturday afternoon a terrible tragedy was enacted at Bowcombe, Isle of Wight, where Mr. Frank Dunford, a well-known grazier of the district, 75 years of age, took his life by shooting himself with a double-barrelled gun. The deceased lives at Bowcombe Barn Cottage with his niece, Annie Isabel Dunford, who states that she left her uncle just before three o'clock in the afternoon. When she returned a few minutes later she missed him, and asked Wm. Dunstan, a labourer, to search for him. This he did, and found the poor old man lying dead in an outhouse near the cottage. Information was given to P.C. White, who was soon on the scene, in company with Dr. Thompson. They found a double-barrelled gun fastened to a bench on the inside. From the position in which the body was found and the injuries inflicted, it was quite apparent the deceased managed to pull the trigger. Such fearful injuries were inflicted to his face and neck that death must have been almost instantaneous. Since the deceased gave up management of his farm at Michaelmas, he had been very depressed. It now appears that only a day or two since he threatened to make away with himself.

On Monday afternoon an inquiry was opened by the Coroner, Mr. E. F. Blake, touching the death. - Annie I. Dunford, niece of the deceased, said she acted as housekeeper to the deceased for the last eight years. On Saturday the deceased and she had dinner together. At half-past two he sent her to Newport on business, and she left him in the house alone. She returned about a quarter to five, and she could not find him she got Mr. Dunstan to look for him. He found her uncle in the carpenter's shed quite dead. She went inside, and noticed blood on the ground and a gun lying there. During the last few days the deceased had been very depressed about having let the farm. He was afraid he would not get his rent. The farm belonged to him. The gun was his own. - Wm. Edgar Dunstan said he had only known the deceased since the 21st November. He had seen him two or three other times a day. Witness thought he was uneasy because he had nothing to do, being out of business. On Saturday, about five o'clock, the niece came for him, and together they searched for the deceased. In the carpenter's shed they found him lying flat on his face, and quite dead. Witness called him by name twice, but met with no response. He also shook him. Witness next went for the police and the doctor. - Mr. Hillier, a juror, said he thought the deceased had not been right for some weeks past. - The niece, however, contradicted this, stating that this was not true. He had only been depressed a short time. - Dr. C. J. Thompson, of Newport, deposed to visiting the carpenter's shed on Saturday afternoon. Deceased was lying on his face, quite dead, with his hands by his side. The left side of his left lower jaw was smashed to pieces, and the left side of the neck about the region of the large blood vessel was blown quite away. The injuries were quite sufficient to account for his death. Witness added that he had been told the deceased was suffering from delusions, having the idea that he would become very poor, and have to go to the Workhouse. - After the Coroner had briefly summed up, the jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst in a state of unsound mind."

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