

Arthur Ernest Jupe

Isle of Wight Observer – Saturday June 26, 1880

Newport

FATAL GUN ACCIDENT AT NEW PARK

An inquest was held at the Blacksmiths' Arms on Thursday evening by Mr. F. Blake, coroner for the Isle of Wight, on the body of the poor lad Arthur Ernest Jupe, who was found on the previous evening shot through the head. The facts will be best gathered from the following evidence:

Alfred Jupe said - I am 17 years of age, am the son of James Jupe, and brother of the deceased. He was 11 years old, and lived with my father. I last saw deceased alive about 9 a.m. yesterday (Wednesday) in the farmyard. He was then walking about and in good spirits. I went to Newport, came back about 12.45 p.m., and found he had been missed. He did not return, and about 6 p.m. he was searched for. Heard that the body had been found about 9 p.m., but did not see it until this morning. The gun now produced belonged to the deceased. He took it in exchange for something else about six months ago. He carried it about, but I have never known him to load or use it. Never saw him in possession of any powder or shot; did not know there was any in the house. I know a boy named Brett who lives in a cottage near the farm. He used to go to school with deceased, and was on good terms with him. Did not know he had any gun-cotton caps. He was forbidden by my father and mother to use the gun, and it had been put away in a loft, and I have not seen it for two months.

Thomas Brett said - I am a labourer, and live at New Park, and work for Mr. Jupe. I saw deceased in my garden yesterday, about 9 a.m., but did not see a gun. If he had had one I must have seen it. My boy, Thomas, was in the house, and deceased said he was not going to school as it rained. I have at different times seen deceased with a gun, but not lately. I heard inquiries made about him, and about 8.30 p.m., my boy came in and said he thought he had seen Arthur in the lower part of the meadow. Went to look for deceased, and found him lying on his face, close to the dyke, and near to a bank or hedge. Could see he had been wounded in the right cheek. He was dead and stiff. Saw no gun, but searched for it, and with the police found it in a bunny (drain) about 50 yards from the body. The barrel was about a foot from the mouth of the bunny. My boy has said nothing about the deceased all day. My boy has told me to-day that deceased got over the hedge, and rested on the gun, when, leaping over the ditch, the gun went off and shot him.

Thomas Isaac Brett, son of the witness, said – I was in the habit of playing with deceased, and went to school with him, and we were good friends. Saw him yesterday about 9.30.; he had a gun that he used to keep at his own house, as he told me. Deceased asked me to go to the field with him. At first I said "No; it is too wet." I afterwards went with him. He had a pistol as well as a gun, and was going to fire at a bird. He asked me to hold the pistol, and I did so. He had loaded the gun and pistol behind our house. He carried the powder and shot in the tins now produced. He soon took the pistol again and put it in his belt. He had not fired as the bird flew away. We went down the field together. He beat down the hedge. We were to get over with the barrel of his gun. That was near the place where the body was found. Deceased went through the fence first and gave me the pistol to hold. He had to get over the ditch afterwards and, in doing so, he held the gun with the butt end on the ground and the barrel pointed towards his face. He jumped over the ditch, and the jerk caused the gun to go off. He had two small caps on it. He fell immediately. I was behind him, just getting through the gap. I went up and spoke to him but he did not answer. As he fell the gun dropped out of his hand. I was frightened and took the gun and put it in the bunny. I then threw the pistol into the pond. I showed the police the

place. I went back to the deceased and found the tins had fallen out of his pocket. I went home but did not tell anyone, being afraid they would put the blame on me. I went to the farm and was asked if I had seen deceased. I said I had seen him with another boy, but did not say he had been shot. I had not seen him with another boy. I did not tell anyone where I had put the gun until it was found. I threw the pistol into the bunny at first and it went off. I then threw it into the pond. I pointed out to the police where I had thrown the tins. I have never said till now that the pistol went off. Mr. Elderfield asked if the pistol had been discharged. I said "no." I think it was about 10.30 a.m. when deceased was shot. He had turned over a little from the time I first left him on the ground till I went back to him again.

Dr. Ernest Powell Wilkins stated that he was called to see the deceased. The body was cold and stiff, the boy evidently being dead some hours. He noticed a wound on the right side of the lower jaw, which extended to the brain cavity at the base of the skull. The wound was a shot wound, and was surrounded with powder. The barrel of the gun must have been very close to the face at the time of the explosion. He thought death must have been instantaneous, and that the nature and direction of the wound were quite consistent with the evidence of the boy Brett. He had not the slightest doubt it was the result of an accident from the discharge of a gun.

The Coroner having summed up the evidence, the jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally shot."

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