

**Harry Cousens**

**Isle of Wight County Press - 26 August 1899**

**SHOCKING ACCIDENT AT NEWPORT.**

**FATAL RIDE ON A TRAVELLING CRANE.**

**THE QUEEN'S SYMPATHY.**

On Thursday evening a shocking fatal accident occurred in connection with the contract in progress for the extension of the Newport Gas-works, the victim being Harry Cousens, aged 17, the son of the foreman of the contract work (Mr. William Cousens), which is being carried out by Mr. S. Kavanagh, of Surbiton. A travelling steam crane, driven by deceased's elder brother William and used in connection with the excavations for and construction of a huge new gas-holder tank, was travelling with the ballast shortly before 6.30 p.m. Deceased, who was acting as signal, was in the habit of riding from point-to-point on what is described as the dummy buffers at the front of the crane as it ran round on the rails circling the top of the large pit. He unfortunately chose to follow this customary though risky practice on Thursday evening, when he was sitting on the outside corner of the buffer. Just before reaching the spot for which he was making deceased jumped off the crane, but instead of keeping on the outside he made the fatal mistake of attempting to cross the rails in front of the locomotive.

His left foot slipped on the outside rail and deceased fell between the rails. Deceased's brother, horrified at the sight, applied the brakes and quickly brought the crane to a standstill but of course it was impossible for him to avert the accident. The deceased was caught by the front of the crane and badly crushed, his agonising cries being heartrending. When extricated from what proved his death-trap deceased was found to have sustained a fractured thigh in addition to other terrible injuries at the lower part of his body, including very serious laceration, and the fears entertained that they were fatal internal injuries proved, unhappily, only too well grounded. Deceased's relatives and others at the Gas-works, including Mr. F. G. Cookey, manager of the Gas Company, did what they could for deceased.

Dr. Coombs, who quickly arrived on the scene, was admirably assisted in temporarily dressing the lad's injuries preparatory to his removal to the Royal I.W. Infirmary and County Hospital, by members of the St John Ambulance corps, including Messrs. H. L. Lawes (superintendent), F. Peach, H. Chiverton, W. Jacobs, Hennings, and others. The sufferer was then carefully borne on the ambulance stretcher to the Fairlee-road, where he was placed in the ambulance waggon and conveyed in charge of Messrs. F. Peach and W. Jacobs to the Infirmary which was reached shortly before 9 p.m., the skilful and opportune assistance of the ambulance workers throughout being most admirable.

Whilst preparations were being made to transfer deceased to the ambulance waggon in Fairlee-road, the Queen drove past towards Osborne. Noticing that something serious had happened, Her Majesty at once graciously manifested her sympathetic interest by sending her equerry back to make enquiries of Inspector Coleman, of the County Constabulary, who was present, for her information, and on her arrival at Osborne a telegraphic message was dispatched to the Newport police-station by Superintendent Fraser of the Household police, asking for the sufferer's name and address, extent of the injuries, and other particulars for Her Majesty, which were telegraphically supplied by Chief Inspector Ayres. Her Majesty also subsequently caused further sympathetic enquiries to be made by telephone of the Infirmary officials, and she was distressed to hear of the fatal termination which occurred at about 10 o'clock the same night.

Deceased retained consciousness to the last, and his father, brother, and sister-in-law, who accompanied the deceased to the Infirmary, were present at his death, which the skilled attention he received at the Infirmary was powerless to prevent, the internal injuries being of a fatal character. Deceased, who with his father and other relatives, lodged with Mr. Arnold at 24, Quay-street, Newport, does not belong to the Island, his family moving about the country as the contract work requires.

Further enquiries elicited the fact that the Queen, after reaching Osborne had caused a telephonic message to be sent to the Isle of Wight Royal Infirmary intimating that the sufferer was on his way to that institution and graciously asking that the case should receive the best attention possible – a request which it is needless to add was fully respected. With reference to the splendid efforts of the ambulance workers, whose services greatly alleviated the sufferings of the unfortunate lad, it may be added that Superintendent Lawes, who heard the cries of the deceased when he was in his garden very near to the scene of the accident, was promptly on the spot directing the work of his men and others who were doing what they could before the arrival of the doctor, and he ably superintended the ambulance work throughout till the journey to the Infirmary was commenced, when Mr. Peach took charge and rendered valued assistance in the subsequent efforts put forth in the interests of the sufferer.

On realising what had happened, deceased's brother, who was driving the crane, naturally felt his position very keenly, and the sight was a very pathetic and affecting one as, with feelings of great anguish, he tenderly raised him and in doing what he could to comfort and relieve affectionately kissed him several times. Willing and generous assistance was rendered by those living in the vicinity in supplying restoratives, clothing, blankets, &c., for use in the preparation for the sufferer's removal.

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