

Percival Charles Brading

Isle of Wight County Press – 8 June 1935

SHOOTING AFFRAY AT NEWPORT.

ATTEMPTED MURDER AND SUICIDE.

A shooting affray which resulted in the death of one man and serious injury to another followed a funeral at Newport yesterday (Friday) afternoon.

The funeral was that of Mr. Charles Brading, coal merchant, who resided at 18 Caesars-road, Newport, and after the mourners had returned Mr. Abraham Davies, a middle-aged crane driver who lives at 1 Albert-cottages, Castle-street, Carisbrooke, and is executor of the estate, called on the deceased's son, Percy Brading, a man of about 44, at his house at 5 Drill-hall-road, Newport, to discuss the disposal of the estate.

Percy Brading, who had not attended the funeral, was alone in the house when Davies called at about 5 o'clock. He invited Davies into the back sitting-room and during a conversation which ensued Brading suddenly produced a revolver from beneath a cushion on a sofa, leveled it at Davies across the table, and pressed the trigger. Luckily for the latter it was a misfire.

Davies rushed to the back door, but could not get it open, and Brading fired again. This time the bullet struck Davies a glancing blow to the cheek, and then, in his desperation, Davies jumped through the window into the back yard, climbed over the wall, and escaped into the street through the house next door.

Streaming with blood from the bullet wound and from cuts on the head and neck from the broken glass of the window, he was taken to the Police-station by Mr. John Alderslade, who happened to be passing in his car.

Although he was in a very distressed state he was able to tell the police what had occurred, and after his wounds had been attended to by Dr. Heathcote he was conveyed to the County Hospital. His injuries are apparently not grave, although he lost a considerable amount of blood.

On going to the house in Drill-hall-road Police-Sergts. Turnbull and Denness found Brading lying dead on the sofa in the room where the attack took place. He had a bullet wound in the forehead and the revolver, a heavy Service weapon, was still gripped in his hand.

Mr. S. Elliott, who lives next door, told a County Press representative that he was having tea in the back-room of his house when the door was suddenly burst open by Davies. His face was covered with blood and he gasped "Percy Brading has shot me" as he stumbled through the passage into the street.

Percy Brading was very well known in Newport, He served with the Territorial Artillery in Mesopotamia during the war and about a year ago was involved in a motor-cycling accident at Oxted, Surrey, in which he fractured a leg and sustained other injuries. His wife was not at home when the tragedy occurred.

Isle of Wight County Press – 15 June 1935

NEWPORT SHOOTING DRAMA.

FATALITY FOLLOWS A FUNERAL.

MIND UNBALANCED BY WAR SUFFERINGS.

The inquest on the body of Percival Charles Brading, 44, formerly coal merchant, of 5 Drill-hall-road, Newport, who, as reported in our last issue, shot himself with a revolver after wounding Mr. Abraham Davies, his father's executor, was held at the I.W. Rifles Drill-hall, Newport, on Tuesday afternoon by the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.). A sad story was unfolded, showing that the deceased man's mind was evidently affected by his sufferings during three years' Turkish captivity in Asia Minor following his capture, with his comrades of the 5th Hants Howitzer Battery, R.F.A. Territorials, at the fall of Kut.

The Deputy Coroner sat with jury of which Mr. A. J. Williams was foreman. Mr. R. J. Eldridge watched the proceedings as solicitor to the deceased man's father (the late Mr. Charles Brading), who was buried just before the shooting took place, and the Deputy Chief Constable (Supt. A. Morrison) was also present. It was stated that Davies was progressing satisfactorily in the County Hospital, although he was not fit to attend the inquest.

DISCOVERY BY THE POLICE.

Police-Sergt. Thomas Denness stated that at about 5.20 p.m. on Friday week, in company with Police-Sergt. Turnbull, he visited the deceased's house in consequence of a communication made by Davies that Brading had attacked him with a revolver. They first entered the house next door (No. 6), and from the garden they could see Brading in a reclining position on a couch in the back room, and he appeared to be dead. They then entered Brading's house and found that he was dead, with a bullet wound in his forehead and a heavy six-chambered revolver still clasped in his left hand with the thumb on the trigger. - In reply to a juror witness demonstrated that the thumb would be handiest to use when pointing the weapon at oneself,

On examining the revolver he found that it contained one empty cartridge case and four live rounds. On a chair near the window were six empty cartridge cases showing that the deceased man had apparently emptied the revolver at Davies and then reloaded.

A FORTUNATE ESCAPE.

There was blood in the backyard and along the garden path, and the window and frame were broken, bearing out the story told by Davies that he had escaped by jumping through the window. On the floor he found five bullets. Three of them did not appear to have struck anything, but two others were flattened slightly at the nose. One of these was lying on the floor below Brading's head. He formed the conclusion that the ammunition was old and that the powder had become so perished that the shots

would lack force and would not make much noise. There was only one mark on the wall, and that was only a slight one.

The Coroner: It is possible, then, that the bullets might have struck a man without penetrating his clothing?

Witness said it was quite possible. He formed the opinion that the bullet lying near Brading's head was the one that killed him, and that it just penetrated the skull far enough to cause death and then dropped out again.

P.S. Turnbull gave corroborative evidence and stated that when Davies was brought to the Police-station he said he had been shot by Brading.

DAVIES' INJURIES.

Dr. Aubrey A. Heathcote said he was called to the Quay-street Police-station at 5.15 p.m. to see Davies. One bullet had struck him on the side of the nose, but had only inflicted a slight wound, and another had grazed the top of his head causing a clean cut wound, but both injuries were superficial. He had no doubt that these wounds were caused by bullets although he was surprised that they were not more serious. Davies was suffering severely from shock. At 6.30 p.m. he saw Brading's body at his house. He had a bullet wound in the centre of his forehead from which brain tissue was protruding. The bullet had only just penetrated the bone. He could not say whether it had entered the scalp or not, but there was no exit hole. There were no other injuries and death was undoubtedly due to the bullet wound.

DECEASED'S THREATS.

Gilbert Reginald Hatcher, of 6 Drill-hall-road, stated that at about 4.45 p.m. on the day in question he saw Brading in his garden. He asked witness if he had heard about the will and went on to say "I am left with nothing. A fellow (witness took this to mean Davies) offered me, £500." Replying to the Coroner witness said that he understood from further conversation with the deceased that others would receive the money which he (Brading) thought he was entitled to. Witness advised him to take the £500, and the deceased then "turned very funny," said Davies was returning at 6 o'clock, and added "He will be up against something this time." Witness went indoors and shortly afterwards Davies came. There was a "rumpus" next door as if they were fighting, but witness heard no shots fired. He went to his front door and saw Davies stagger from Mr. Elliott's front garden and run down the road. Witness went to inform deceased's wife. - By Mr. Eldridge: Witness understood that the £500 was offered by those entitled under the will.

THE WIDOW'S STORY.

Florence Mary Brading, the deceased man's widow, gave evidence of identification and said that she had been married for 10 years. Her husband had a road accident some 10 months ago and received injuries including a fractured pelvis and arm. He had been unable to work since he came out of hospital. He was not on good terms with his father, and when Mr. Brading, senior, died on June 3rd, and his executor, Mr. Davies, told him the terms of the will he was not surprised to learn that he had been left out. - The

Coroner: Did he take it badly? - Sometimes he would say he did not care and at others that it wasn't right. Witness added that her husband and his father were not on speaking terms. - Continuing her evidence Mrs. Brading said that Davies called on her husband at 4 o'clock on Friday but was called away about 4.30. Witness went with him and her husband then said that he was going to the stables. Witness went to Caesar's-road with Mr. Davies, who had previously promised her husband that he would return at 6 o'clock to settle the proposed agreement. She understood that the offer Mr. Davies made was "£500, if not more," and that it was in consideration of being left out of the will. She did not know that her husband had the revolver and had no idea where he kept it. - The Coroner: Am I right in saying that your husband once before attempted suicide by gas poisoning? - Witness said this was true, and added that it was 10 years ago. - Deceased had sometimes been in a depressed state since his accident. They were not "hard-up." Her husband would often say he had nothing to live for, but at other times would be bright and cheerful. - By Mr. Eldridge: She understood that the gift of £500 would really come from Mrs. Charles Brading.

MIND AFFECTED BY WAR EXPERIENCES.

Lieut.-Col. H. G. Thomson, D.S.O., of Yarmouth, who commanded the 5th Hants Howitzer Battery R.F.A. Territorials during the war, said the deceased man served in that battery in India and Mesopotamia and was a capable N.C.O. At the fall of Kut he was taken prisoner and was one of those who survived the terrible hardships of Turkish captivity in Asia Minor for three years. Out of four officers and 126 other ranks of the battery who were taken prisoner at Kut only 36 remained alive at the Armistice. He was not surprised that any man's mind should be affected by such treatment as they had to endure. He had only met Brading once since the war, about 12 months ago, when he had a conversation with him in Newport, and he then remarked to Mrs. Thomson "That poor fellow's mind is not right. I have no doubt it has been affected by what he went through as a prisoner of war."

A SAD CASE.

In his summing up the Coroner said the case was a very sad one as doubtless what Col. Thomson had told them was unfortunately the fact. They had heard that Brading had quarrelled with his father and that as a consequence his father had not remembered him in his will. Such a happening frequently caused trouble. Brading brooded over it and became violently affected by it. Davies tried to make a compromise by offering the gift of £500 by way of compensation, but Brading yielded to passion and doubtless intended to kill Davies.

Fortunately for the latter the ammunition was more or less ineffective, and finding that he had failed in his objective he turned the weapon on himself. He suggested that the jury had heard sufficient to say that the deceased man committed suicide by shooting himself, and that he was of unbalanced mind at the time.

The jury immediately adopted this verdict and the Foreman expressed their sympathy with the widow.

THE FUNERAL

took place on Wednesday, the service being held in St. Thomas's Church, the Rev. T. V. Ruddock officiating. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack. On it rested the deceased's military cap, the widow's wreath, and a wreath of white flowers and artificial poppies, surmounted with a lion and the word "Kut," and bearing the inscription "From the officers, N.C.O.s, and men of the garrison of Kut-el-Amara. With deepest regret at the passing of their old comrade." A detachment of eight sergeants and a trumpeter from the 219th A.A. Battery, R.A., T.A., under Battery Sergt.-Major Arnold, and including Sergts. Brewer and Bull, who served with the deceased in Mesopotamia, formed a guard of honour at the church and escorted the cortege to the Newport Cemetery, where the interment took place. After the coffin had been lowered into the grave Trumpeter Bloomfield sounded the Last Post and Reveille. The chief mourners were the widow, Mrs. King (sister-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. F. Sibbeck (brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Mr. S. Sibbeck (nephew) and Mrs. F. Robinson. Capt. H. A. Drudge represented Lieut.-Col. H. G. Thomson, D.S.O, and the following other old comrades of deceased in the 5th Hants Howitzer Battery were present: Messrs. H. Porter, F. Jilks, A. Morris, R. J. Breaker, C. Young, W. Wendes, G. Cooper, and G. Perkins. The floral tributes included wreaths from the officers, warrant officers, N.C.O.s, and men of the 219th (I.W.) A.A. Battery, R.A., T.A., and old comrades of the 1-5th. Hants (Howitzer Battery), R.F.A. Mr. H. W. Parnell carried out the arrangements.

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