

**Frederick William Henry Cool
and
Ella Mary Cool**

Isle of Wight County Press – 16 April 1955

ISLAND FAMILY IN DORSET TRAGEDY

SOLICITOR AND WIFE DIE IN EASTER CRASH

DAUGHTER SERIOUSLY INJURED

One of the worst holiday tragedies affecting the Island in recent years occurred near Weymouth on Easter Sunday. A well known Newport solicitor and his wife were killed instantly and their only daughter was seriously injured when the car in which they were travelling crashed at the bottom of a steep hill. An elderly lady who was also a passenger in the car died shortly afterwards.

The victims were Mr. and Mrs. F. W. H. Cool, of Broadlands Lodge, Staplers Road, Newport, and their friend, Mrs. Edith Lillian Comben, of 72 Channel View, Portland. Mr. and Mrs. Cool's only daughter, Mrs. Jean Simmonds, received multiple injuries and is seriously ill at the Weymouth and District Hospital, where she was taken by ambulance after the crash.

Deep regret is felt, particularly in Newport, where Mr. and Mrs. Cool were well known and popular for their association with social and sporting organisations, and widespread sympathy is expressed with Mrs. Simmonds in her severe injuries and the shock occasioned by the tragic nature of her bereavement. She planned shortly to leave for West Africa, where her husband, Mr. Gordon Simmonds, of Carisbrooke, who left earlier this year, is an accountant with a large British firm in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

CRASHED INTO GULLY

Mr. and Mrs. Cool were killed outright when their Hillman car crashed into a gully in a field at the bottom of Abbotsbury Hill at the junction of the Abbotsbury – Bridport road just after 6 p.m. on Easter Sunday. Mrs. Comben died in hospital shortly afterwards.

The car, which had just descended the hill, failed to negotiate a bend, hit the grass verge, went through a wire fence and across a field for about 80 yards before plunging into a stream gully.

The front portion of the car was smashed, the windscreen fell out intact, the steering wheel was bent round the column and the front bench-type seat was forced forward. Ambulance men had considerable difficulty in extricating the women because of the position of the car. Mr. Cool's dog, which was in the car, escaped uninjured only to run across the road and get knocked down by another car without being hurt. The dog was brought back to the Island this week by Mr. Cool's brother.

Mr. and Mrs. Cool and their daughter had been visiting friends at Bridport and were returning to take Mrs. Comben home to Portland.

INQUEST ADJOURNED

The inquest was opened at Weymouth on Wednesday and adjourned until Thursday next.

The victims were described as Mr. Frederick W. H. Cool (54), solicitor, of 1 Staplers Road, Newport, his wife Ella Mary (63), and Mrs. Edith Lillian Gladstone Comben (67), of 72 Channel View, Portland.

Dr. J. M. E. Jewers, senior medical registrar at the Weymouth and District Hospital, said it was unlikely that Mrs. Simmonds would be able to give evidence for many weeks and the Coroner (Lt.-Col. G. G. H. Symes) said that, if necessary, next week he would take the jury to the hospital to hear her evidence. "I have her statement," he said. "She doesn't say much, but what she does say should be heard before a jury."

Evidence of identification of Mr. and Mrs. Cool was given by Mr. Leonard Gilbert Cool, of 97 Gunville Road, Carisbrooke, a brother of Mr. Cool. He told the Coroner that his brother had been driving for about 20 years.

Dr. T. V. Cooper, county pathologist, said that a post-mortem examination of Mr. Cool revealed multiple fractures. Death, he said, was due to shock arising from the multiple fractures.

Dr. Sydney Tilson, of Abbotsbury, said he was called to the scene of the accident at 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday and found Mrs. Cool dead in the car. She had a dislocated neck and a fractured wrist.

Dr. Jewers said Mrs. Comben was admitted to the hospital at about 7.15 p.m. on Easter Sunday and she died at about 9 p.m. as the result of chest injuries.

SOLICITOR AND BUSINESSMAN

Mr. Cool's career was an example of ability and perseverance. He entered the solicitor's office of Messrs. Gunner, Wilson and Jerome, High Street, Newport, from school as office boy, and showed such aptitude that he was articled to Mr. A. J. S. Jerome, the principal. He qualified as a solicitor in 1929, and when Mr. Jerome retired from active participation in the business some 20 years ago Mr. Cool took over and had since been in control. He was a very capable lawyer and businessman, frequently appearing as an advocate in local courts, and was prominent in the I.W. Law Society, being a committeeman and a member of the Legal Aid Panel. He recently served a term as president of the society. He was associated with the management of the Swainston Estate both legally and as a director of the Swainston Estate Company and the Swainston Holding Company, Ltd., and other

directorships which he held were those of Messrs. W. J. Rugg and Co., Ltd., and the Borough Hall Garage, Ltd.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cool took a keen interest in the I.W. Angling Society, which Mr. Cool helped to form 25 years ago and was its first honorary secretary. Angling was his chief hobby, and he spent much time indulging in the sport, often at the back of the Wight. He was the donor of one of the society's chief trophies, the Chale Cup, and was very knowledgeable, frequently identifying specimens for members. Mrs. Cool had also presented the society with a ladies' trophy. Mr. Cool was the only surviving honorary life member of the society.

Mr. and Mrs. Cool were also keenly interested in the Newport Musical and Dramatic Society, to which their daughter has belonged for some time, and a few years ago Mr. Cool accepted the presidency of the society and still occupied that office. They were also associated with the Newport Victoria Sports Club, of which Mr. Cool was a vice-president.

They had for many years been regular visitors to Portland when in need of rest and relaxation, and the lady who was also killed in the accident, Mrs. Comben, was the landlady with whom they spent their honeymoon 25 years ago, and with whom they became close friends. They had always promised to return to Portland at the time of their silver wedding anniversary which they celebrated at Christmas-time but were unable to make the journey due to snow, and they had taken Easter as the first opportunity of fulfilling their promise.

A TRIBUTE

In a tribute which gives a good insight into Mr. Cool's character, Mr. G. H. A. Cantopher, C.A., writes :

"Many hearts will be made sadder and many lives lonelier by Fred Cool's sudden and tragic death, and to those of us who loved and respected him his loss will be irreparable. I met him first some six years ago and had the great good fortune to come into regular contact with him thereafter. His humanity and intense sincerity were his outstanding characteristics. Nothing was a trouble to him, and his wise advice was given as readily to the poor as to the rich. I felt I owed him so much for the help he had given me so generously over the years that I wrote him on March 25th last expressing my gratitude. His reply was characteristic: 'I have come to the conclusion' he wrote 'that we are here not only for ourselves but to try to help others – if we can. To help others gives a sense of satisfaction, a sense that is greatly increased when one knows it is appreciated.' "

THE FUNERAL

The widespread feelings of sympathy and regret evoked by the tragedy were reflected in the large attendance at the funeral service which took place yesterday at the Newport Parish Church, a large number of firms and organisations with which Mr. and Mrs. Cool had been

associated being represented in the congregation. The organist was Miss K. Lower, and the service included the hymns "Let saints on earth" and "How bright these glorious spirits shine."

The Vicar (the Rev. C. R. Farnsworth) officiated and made brief reference to the circumstances. He said that the season of Eastertide with its message of hope would give consolation to those who mourned, in the knowledge that their dear ones had passed to a fuller life. All present would be gladdened to know that Mrs. Jean Simmonds, who was seriously injured in the crash, had been reported to be fairly well in hospital at Weymouth.

The mourners were Mr. L. G. Cool, Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Ayers, Mrs. I. Bell, and Miss V. Cool (brother, brother-in-law, and sisters), Mr. G. Simmonds (son-in-law), Mr. A. Punch (uncle), Mr. and Mrs. F. Simmonds, Mr. A. L. Hayles, Mr. and Mrs. W. Hayles, and Mr. D. Punch (cousins), Mrs. A. P. Chapman (niece), Mr. R. Breaker, Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Ovens, and Mr. J. R. Toogood.

The Mayor of Newport (Mr. E. C. Pearson) and the Deputy Mayor (Mr. W. G. Bull) were present, with other members of the Corporation, and the Chairman (Mr. E. W. Landon), the Clerk, and Borough magistrates, and the Registrar and staff of the County Court. Organisations and firms represented included the I.W. Law Society, Gunner, Wilson and Jerome, Lamport, Bassett, and Hiscock, Damant and Sons, Buckell and Drew, Parker and Gurney-Champion, J. Robinson and Jarvis, Roach Pittis and Co., Henry J. Way and Son, Gordon Burke and Co., Joyce, Bunday, and Cross, James Eldridge and Sons, A. E. Hook and Co., J. R. Buckett and Sons, J. B. Purkis and Son, W. C. Black and Co., Groundsells, A. A. and R. J. Westmore, G. H. Brown and Son, H. Margham and Sons, Gordon Bright and Co., Arnold Hill, Ltd., W. Blake and Sons, Rowlett and Co., Gubbins and Ball, Cheek Bros., Ltd., Hooper and Ashby, H. Steadman and Co., W. H. Upward and Sons, Ralph's Nurseries, Elders and Fyffes, W. J. Rugg and Co., the Borough Hall Garage, Edward Morris, Wadham and Sons, Ltd., Dabells, Weeks, Ltd., H. A. Wills, Ltd., Hampshire Constabulary, I.W. Auctioneers, Estate Agents, and Surveyors' Association, Newport Post Office, Swainston Estate Co., I.W. Trustee Savings Bank, National Provincial Bank, Westminster Bank, Lloyds Bank, Royal Insurance Co., Solent Riviera Holiday Camp, General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, Ltd., I.W. Angling Society, Vectis Boating and Fishing Club, Newport Amateur Musical and Dramatic Society, Newport Musical Society, Newport Victoria Sports Club, Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, National Opera and Dramatic Association, I.W. British Legion, I.W. Rifles' Association, Carisbrooke Rifle Club, I.W. Civilian Rifle Clubs' Association, Ancient Order of Foresters, Probation Service, I.W. Moral Welfare Society, I.W. Grocers' Association, Brav's Detective Agency, S.S.A.F.A., St. Paul's Church Council, St. Thomas's Church Bible Class and Sunday School, Church Army Home, Newport Salvation Army, Newport County Secondary Grammar School Old Students' Association, Barton and Carisbrooke Women's Institutes, and the Darby and Joan Club.

Interment was at Newport Cemetery and there was an exceptionally large number of floral tributes, including those from organisations and firms with which Mr. and Mrs. Cool were associated. Messrs. H. and F. Damp made the arrangements. – The members of the family sincerely thank all who sent messages of sympathy and flowers.

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