

Arthur Percy Hobbs

1921 census, 7 Green St, Newport, Isle of Wight

Eliza Hobbs	Wife	43Y10M	Home Duties	Wootton, IW
John Hobbs	Head	54Y3M	Platelayer. IWC Railway	Barton, Newport, IW
George Hobbs	Son	21Y9M	General labourer	Barton, Newport, IW
Arthur Hobbs	Son	15Y6M	Farm Labourer	Barton, Newport, IW
Florence Hobbs	Daughter	10Y10M	Whole time education	Barton, Newport, IW
Frederick Hobbs	Son	7Y11M	Whole time education	Barton, Newport, IW

Isle of Wight County Press – 16 June 1923

FATAL SHOOTING ACCIDENT NEAR WOOTTON

A shocking shooting accident tragedy occurred on Wednesday afternoon at Lynn-common, near Wootton, resulting in the death of Arthur Percy Hobbs, 17, son of Mr. John Hobbs, of 7 Green-street, Barton-village, Newport. It appears that Hobbs was working on a smallholding with his brother George Henry, and on an adjacent allotment William James Kearley, 19, of Wootton, and formerly of Newport, was employed. At about 1.20 Hobbs went to a stable to borrow a horse collar from Kearley, preparatory to drilling turnips. Kearley came out with an old gun, which he used for scaring rooks, and aimed at a rook, which was passing over, but deciding that the bird was out of range he did not fire, but lowered his gun and had just placed it under his arm when suddenly it went off accidentally, and the full charge caught Hobbs, who was just in front of Kearley, in the stomach, inflicting terrible injuries, which it was quickly evident must terminate fatally. Kearley called for assistance and Hobbs's brother and others were quickly on the scene. Kearley cycled to the nearest telephone, at Sir Edgar Chatfeild-Clarke's residence, Oakfield, Wootton, and summoned medical assistance from Newport. Dr. E. F. W. Buckell motored quickly to the scene, and the sufferer was removed to the County Hospital, Ryde, in a hopeless condition. There he died at about 6 p.m. the same day. Kearley said he did not touch the trigger of the gun, which went off unaccountably. The inquest will take place this (Saturday) afternoon.

Isle of Wight County Press – 23 June 1923

DEATHS

HOBBS. - June 13, at Lynn-common, of gunshot wounds, Arthur Percy, third son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hobbs of 7 Green-st., Bartons-village, Newport, aged 17. - Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs and family wish to thank all those who assisted at the accident and their kind neighbours for sympathy and flowers sent.

Isle of Wight County Press – 23 June 1923

THE FATAL SHOOTING ACCIDENT.

The fatal shooting accident at Lynn-common, near Wootton, on Wednesday week, was the subject of an inquiry by the Deputy Coroner for the Island (F. A. Joyce, Esq.), at the County Hospital, Ryde, on Saturday. It will be remembered that Arthur Hobbs, a 17-year-old Newport resident, was shot in the stomach, and the injuries were of such a serious nature that he died at the Hospital late in the same day. The Coroner had the assistance of a jury, and the witnesses were called in one by one.

George Henry Hobbs, the deceased's brother, said that on Wednesday June 13 he and his brother went to Lynn-common, near Wootton, where they were cultivating smallholdings. Witness asked deceased to borrow a horse collar from William James Kearley, and immediately after the lad entered the shed there was a report of a gun, and Mr. Kearley called out. Witness hurried to the spot and saw his brother lying on his side. He did all he could to make him comfortable as he could see he had been shot through the stomach, and Kearley cycled for assistance. Witness asked his brother how he accounted for the accident, and he said "Kearley shot me." So far as he knew his brother and Kearley were on good terms.

In describing the accident, Kearley, who is 19 and is employed by his father at Wootton, told the Coroner that on the date in question he was at his father's farm with a sporting gun. He fired at a rook from inside the shed, and 10 minutes afterwards deceased approached. They entered into conversation, following which Kearley went six yards away from the shed, so that the rooks should not see him. He leveled the gun, but did not touch the trigger, and then turned round and placed it under his arm. At that time the gun discharged. Hobbs and he were the best of pals, and he had no intention of hurting him at all. The right barrel of the gun was out of action. – In reply to the Coroner, Kearley asserted positively that he did not touch the trigger.

John Edgar Dennis, market gardener, said he was at work in the fields adjoining the holding, when he heard the report of a gun and saw smoke coming from the direction of the shed. He went there and saw Hobbs lying just outside the door. Witness passed Kearley, who said "I have had an accident and shot the 'nipper.'" He hurried on in the direction of Wootton for assistance. He did not hear the unfortunate lad make any statement to his brother. As a matter of fact, Hobbs was so badly injured that he could say but little.

The Coroner: When Kearley returned, did he say anything to you?

Witness: Yes; he said he put the gun under his arm, and it went off.

Dr. E. F. W. Buckell, of Newport, deposed that he received a telephone message asking him to come to the spot as somebody had been shot. He met Kearley, and he followed him the way to the field. Witness asked some questions, and Kearley said "A chap has been shot in the abdomen ; I did it." He found deceased lying on his back at the entrance to the hut. An examination revealed a very serious abdominal wound, such an injury as would result from a gun shot at fairly short range. Dr. Buckell gave the lad something to ease the pain, and sent Kearley for the ambulance. Deceased was taken to the County Hospital at Ryde, where he passed away later the same day. Kearley said he did not know how the affair happened, but it was quite an accident.

Answering the Coroner, the Doctor said Kearley did not give him the impression of keeping something back. He was quite anxious to tell witness what he could.

Supt. John Salter said that Kearley came to Newport Police-station and made a very frank statement.

Elizabeth Mary Martin, house surgeon, said that the lad admitted to the Hospital at 3 p.m. on June 13. Hobbs had several wounds in the stomach and passed away later from hemorrhage and shock.

The Coroner said Kearley had adhered to his statement that he put the gun down to his hip, and it went off. It was impossible to say what actually caused the gun to go off, but he was convinced that it was an accident. Perhaps it was an accident that with more care might have been avoided, but Kearley could not be held responsible.

The jury agreed with the Coroner and returned a verdict of “Accidental death,” and expressed sympathy with the relatives.

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