

Frederick Daish

Hampshire Telegraph, Saturday July 13, 1907

ISLAND SENSATION.

MAN SHOOTS AND CREMATES HIMSELF.

AN OFT-REPEATED THREAT.

On Tuesday night the Coroner for the Island (Mr. F. A. Joyce) held an inquest at the Barton's Village Mission Rooms, on the remains of Fredk. Daish, aged 72, who on the previous day set fire to the house in which he lived and then fatally shot himself.

Emily Hobbs, 12, schoolgirl, who had been recently working for deceased in the garden out of school hours, said that on the previous afternoon she was picking currants in the garden until it came on to rain just after five o'clock. Deceased then called her up-to his house and told her to go home with the currants, stating that when she returned he would pay her for what she had done. When she returned about ten minutes later flames were coming out of the window of the house, and as she got up to the door to look through the glass she heard a report of deceased's gun, and she saw deceased fall with the gun. The fire was already burning strongly at the back part of the premises, but not near the deceased. She ran for the workmen employed in the garden, and a gardener, Bull, and a man named Giles came at once, but the place was then in flames all over, and it was impossible for anyone to get near to drag out deceased.

Robert Bull, Army pensioner, of Royal Exchange, said he had been in deceased's employ in the garden for 28 years. At five o'clock on the afternoon in question deceased paid him his day's pay and 3s. extra and said "Good-bye," stating that he was going to Brighton on the following day. Deceased was in the habit of paying him every day. After he had gone the last witness came running to him and said "For God's sake come up at once. Fred has killed himself and his house is all in flames." He went at once with A. W. Giles, and the place was then enveloped in flames and no one could get anywhere near it. Deceased seemed better than ever on the previous day, but witness thought there was something the matter with him when he gave him the extra pay.

Have you ever heard him threaten to commit suicide? – Yes; I have heard him say hundreds of times in the last ten years that he should never leave the place alive, and that no one should ever have what was inside, as he was going to set fire to it and blow his head off.

Jurors said they had heard him say the same thing.

Witness said that deceased always kept the gun – a converted rifle – loaded, and once, about five years ago, he attempted to shoot himself. He first gave witness a cake tin full of silver, and said, "Take that, Bob, and put it in your pocket. I am going to do away with myself. Come to the fowl house with me." Deceased went down to the fowl house with his gun full cocked, but he could not get it to go off. He tried to fire it with a stick with a nail in it, but could not touch the trigger.

The Coroner: What were you doing all the time.

Witness: I was looking on. He would not allow me in there. I attempted to take the gun away, but he said, "I will shoot you if you touch me." Witness added that he kept the money for a week, and when

he returned it deceased did not want to have it, and gave him 10s. for keeping it. Deceased was not of sober habits, but on the previous afternoon he was sober.

Supt. Galloway, Deputy Chief Constable, who was called about six o'clock, said when he got to the garden the house was in flames, and the roof had fallen in. Police and other helpers were trying to extinguish the flames. He removed the debris as quickly as he could, and first came across the charred bones of the deceased's right leg, which fell to pieces when touched. He saw no flesh on the remains till he reached the trunk, which was burnt very badly. The arms were burnt completely away, and the head was off, the remains of the head being in an old bath behind where deceased fell. The muzzle of the gun was pointing away from the body of deceased, close to which was the burnt butt of the gun. There was a cartridge in the gun, which had been fired.

Frederick J. Harold Daish, nephew of deceased, tailor, etc., of Pyle-street, Newport, said he had seen deceased within a week, and he was sorry to say he was practically drunk. Deceased had no reason for anxiety. The garden had been bought by Mr Frank Mew, but deceased could have remained there as long as he liked on paying a nominal rent. He had not been told to clear out. Many times he had heard deceased threaten to commit suicide, but no one took him seriously, thinking it was bravado on deceased's part. Deceased told him about the fowl house incident, but witness did not think he knew what he was saying or doing that day owing to drink, and he laughed at deceased, and told him he did not think he had the courage to do such a thing. Deceased had been drinking neat brandy lately, and he was about early on the previous day drinking.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased committed suicide by shooting himself whilst of unsound mind.

Transcription by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2018
<https://www.foncc.org.uk>