



Hedge Fire

Bishopstone

1887

Swindon Police Court, Monday

Henry Dowling, 15, and **Charles Johnson**, 12, boys labourers, both of Bishopstone, were summoned charged with setting fire to a thorn hedge, at Bishopstone, belonging to Mr. Geo. Westell, landlord of the True Hearts Inn, Bishopstone, doing damage to the amount of 5s., on August 14.

James Robinson, of Little Hinton, deposed the on the day in question he was coming up the "Old Road" when he saw the hedge on fire; he saw the two boys Dowling and Johnson near the fire. When they saw witness coming the boys put the fire out, but as soon as witness was gone by, he looked back, and saw the boys had crossed the road, where there was another fire. He thought the boys in question had made the second fire, but did not see them set the hedge on fire.

Fanny Gee and Rhoda Adams, who accompanied last witness, corroborated.

P.C. Read spoke of the identification of the defendants, both of whom then denied being anywhere near the scene of the fire at the time.

For the defence it was stated that there was no evidence whatever against the defendants that they were guilty of setting fire to the hedge.

The Bench retired for consultation, and upon their return the Chairman said the Bench had decided to convict; defendants would be fined 2s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. costs each.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 27 August 1887