



## **Falsely Accused of Hay Rick Fire**

On Saturday afternoon last, a hay rick containing about 30 tons, which stood in a field on Biddesdon Farm, the property of Mr. Thomas Steele, was set on fire and consumed. A little boy, seven years of age, named William Smith, was pig keeping for Mr. Steele, in the next field and he told his master that as he was returning from dinner he found the rick on fire and then saw a strange man in the next field running away towards the village of Ludgershall.

This information was given to the police and the same night a man was brought from Burbage by Sergeant Luffman, answering the description of the person who was seen running away by the boy.

The man was taken before Mr. T. E. Fowle, at Chute Lodge, on the following day, the boy also being present, when he admitted that he fired the rick himself with a Lucifer match which he had in his pocket and which he said he took out close to the rick for the purpose of cutting it with his knife, when the match caught fire and fell down on some straw close to the rick, and thus set it on fire. The man was at once discharged. We understand that the rick was insured.

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