



Charge of Uttering a Forged Cheque

Alfred Arthur Johnson, was charged on Monday, at the Devizes Borough Police Court, before the Mayor and Mr. Anstie, with uttering to Mr. Henry A. Wadworth a cheque for £10 14s. on the Devizes Branch of the Capital and Counties Bank, well knowing the same to be forged.

Mr. H. A. Wadworth deposed – I am a brewer living at No.6 Northgate Street. I have a customer at Marlborough, keeping the Duke of Wellington Inn, named Joseph Wyatt; on Tuesday evening last, about a quarter to five, the prisoner came to my office; he was a stranger to me; he asked me to book an order for his brother Mr. Joseph Wyatt, who kept the Duke of Wellington Inn at Marlborough. It was a kilderkin of pale ale and a kilderkin of stout. I was going to book the order, when he produced a cheque and asked me to cash it. The cheque produced is the same. I knew Mr Sloper's signature, and saw at once it was not his, I said "This is not Mr. Mark Sloper's signature". He said it was Mr. Mark Sloper's – of Bishop's Cannings, near Mr. Ruddle's, and if I would give it to him he would get it cashed at the bank. I offered to go to the bank with him, and we went out of the door together, when we got outside prisoner ran away; I followed him and overtook him by Mr. Burry's shop, and took him to the police station; the station was shut up, and the prisoner went into the Lamb. He then asked me for the cheque, saying I had no right to keep it. I gave it to him. He tried to burn it in the gas, but he was stopped from doing that. Inspector Manley then came and took him to the police station. I saw him searched, and the cheque was found on him.

Cross-examined: I won't swear you said "Book an order" - you gave me an order. Prisoner went freely to the police station.

Mr. Andrew Mark Sloper, farmer, of Bishop's Cannings said: I live near Mr. George Ruddle. I am commonly addressed in speaking as Mark Sloper. There is no other person of my name in Bishop's Cannings, except my son, a child 11 years of age. I have no account at the Devizes Branch of the Capital and Counties Bank, or any other branch of the same bank. I do not know the prisoner. The cheque produced was not written or signed by me or with my consent.

Mr. Joseph Wyatt said he kept the Duke of Wellington beerhouse, at Marlborough, and dealt at Mr. Wadworth at Devizes, for beer and porter. The prisoner was not his brother, and he never sent him to Mr. Wadworth's to give an order for him. He had never seen him before.

Mr. George Ruddle, farmer, of Bishop's Cannings said – On Tuesday afternoon the prisoner called on me between 3 or 4 o'clock . He came to me in the field and asked for a cheque, saying he had been down to Mr. Mark Sloper's, but he was not at home or he would have had one in a minute, for he knew him well. I asked him who he wanted it for, and he said, “for Mr. James White, a large sheep and cattle dealer in Hampshire.” I said the White's lived in Berkshire, and he said “yes, but they banked in Hampshire.” He said Mr. White had 100 bullocks in Marlborough market last Saturday. The trade was very bad and he could not sell them and he (prisoner) had not sufficient money to pay for their keep, and if he could let him have a blank cheque to get a little money, it would be all right when Mr. White came down on Thursday morning. On this and other similar representations I let him have a blank cheque on the Devizes Branch of the Capital and Counties Bank. I took the number of the cheque – 25420 [the same as the forged cheque] I thought it was a swindle, and wrote in to the bank directly.

Prisoner: When did you take the number of the cheque? - Before I let you have it.

Prisoner said he could ask this witness any number of questions, but as he supposed the Bench were going to commit him for trial, he should reserve them until then.

Inspector Manley deposed – On Tuesday evening about half past five, I went to the Lamb Inn and saw prisoner, Mr. Wadworth and others, in the bar. I asked them to come across to the station, and when they got there Mr. Wadworth told me the prisoner had offered him a cheque which he believed to be forged. I searched him, but could find nothing in his clothes. On his taking off his right boot the cheque fell out on the floor. I then charged him with forging and attempting to utter the cheque now produced for £10 14s. 0d., on the Capital and Counties Bank. Prisoner said, “Forging and uttering!. Remember I gave it to you.” He asked when the Assizes would be, and I said I did not know. (The cheque produced was a very clumsily made out document, in stiff handwriting, and the name and figures misplaced).

The prisoner denied some unessential parts of the Inspector's evidence, and on being charged said he should reserve his defence.

He was then committed for trial at the Assizes.

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