

# Crime and Punishment

*Hankerton*



**County Petty Session Tuesday 13 September 1881**

**Before Colonel Keene, Sir R Pollem, bart., and Mr W H Luce**

## **Trial of Richard Hiscock, John Field, William Hatton and others**

Richard Hiscock, farmer, and John Field and William Hatton, labourers, of Hankerton, and William Tidmarsh, farmer, William Vincent, George Hughes, and Walter Pinnell, labourers, of Minety, were summoned by George Beale, farmer and carrier of Minety, for having used towards him violent language, calculated to incite to a breach of the peace. The case occupied the bench over three hours. Mr Jackson, solicitor, defended, and Mr F Smith (Clark and Smith) appeared for the complainant.

Mr Smith, in opening the case, said that some 2½ years ago plaintiff purchased a carrier's business of the defendant Tidmarsh, who after he had sold the business started in opposition to the plaintiff. This had naturally led to a deal of ill-feeling, and culminated in the parties being brought before the bench and each bound over in £20 to keep the peace. Beale, the plaintiff, was fined for his cattle straying, and that had been since brought up in a variety of ways.

On the night of the 10<sup>th</sup> August, about 10 o'clock, the village of Minety was the scene of the wildest tumult and confusion, when some 30 or 40 persons assembled in Tidmarsh's yard and brought out a trap belonging to Tidmarsh containing a barrel of beer and an effigy of the complainant. The party were met by PC Orchard, who ordered them home, tore the effigy out of the trap, and took the mask off its face. A good many of the people went quietly home, but the defendants with a few more took the trap and its contents, replacing the effigy, into a field which ran down to within 10 yards of the plaintiff's house. Here they stayed all night drinking, shouting, dancing, and singing, the chorus of one of the songs being a verse alluding to the plaintiff and his being fined for cattle straying. PC Orchard described the swearing as something awful.

The next morning some of the young men invited the plaintiff over to breakfast. He flung them over part of a loaf with some not very elegant remarks, and the bread was flung back again, with, it was alleged, a challenge to fight from Tidmarsh.

For the defence it was alleged that it was simply a harvest party met to enjoy themselves in a field over a nine-gallon cask of ale, with singing, dancing, and playing at "Aunt Sally." The beer was brought by Tidmarsh from Cirencester, and they should have to pay for it.

The bench, after a most patient hearing, came to the conclusion that the parties were assembled in the field for an unlawful purpose. The chairman remarked that living in the same village he knew a good deal of what took place. It was most disgraceful that these feuds should be carried on in the parish, and both parties were to blame. Each of the defendants would have to be bound over to keep the peace towards all her Majesty's subjects in £20 for six months, and pay 13s 3d each costs. Beale would have to be bound in a similar bond for six months to keep the peace towards Hughes, Pinnell, and Hutton.

All the defendants in the above case, except Tidmarsh, were summoned by Supt Luffman charged with unlawfully assembling on the highway at Minety, on the 18<sup>th</sup> August. The bench, as defendants had just had to pay costs in the previous case for the same affair, dismissed the case.

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