



Crime News - Stealing

*Little Hinton
1860*

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SWINDON POLICE COURT

Thursday December 6th

Magistrates present : - Rev. G. A. Goddard (chairman), Rev, Giles Daubeney, and W. H. Hitchcock, Esq.

Thomas Keene was brought up in custody charged with stealing a sheep skin the property of Mr Thomas Anger, of Little Hinton, farmer. The following evidence having been taken.

William King: I am a dealer. On Wednesday (yesterday) the prisoner offered me a sheep skin for sale. I bought it and gave him 2s. For it. It is a down skin. After I bought it I asked him where he got it from as I had a little suspicion about it, and he mentioned several places as the place where he had it from.

P.8. Beauchamp: Yesterday, in consequence of information I received from the witness King, I questioned the prisoner respecting a sheep skin. He said it was his own; that he had bought it of his master, Mr. Smith, at the "Black Dog" below Wootton Bassett, about a month ago for half a crown; that he had left his master's service about a week. I asked if that was the only account he could give of the skin, he replied it was, and I then took him into custody on suspicion of stealing the skin. The skin I now produce is the one I received from the witness King.

Mr Thomas Anger, of Little Hinton, farmer: The prisoner has been working for me; he left yesterday morning. I have missed a Down sheep skin from my premises of the same description as one now produced. My skin had a hole in the ear, and the one now produced has a hole in the ear also. The sheep was skinned by my shepherd.

In answer to the question whether or not he had any question to put to Mr Anger, prisoner said he hoped Mr Anger would forgive him.

Inspector Bullock said : Yesterday evening between 5 and 6 o'clock, I took charge of the prisoner and put him in the cell, as I did so I said you have been telling several different stories about the skin and I don't think you've told a word of truth about it. I have had certain information about a skin having been stolen from a certain place. Prisoner replied, "Ah, that's from Ogbourne, but I didn't have that one Ogbourne". I said to him now we understand each other pretty well let's have the truth about it. He said "If you won't tell

I'll tell you where I had it from." I said if he told the truth about it the magistrates might be induced to take a lenient view of the matter.

Some conversation here took place as to the right of Bullock to hold this conversation with the prisoner, the Bench expressing an opinion that he had exceeded his duty in doing so.

Bullock said he did not hold this conversation with the prisoner with a view to give evidence against him, but for the purpose of assisting the constable who had charge of the case.

Mr Anger recalled: "I cannot swear to the skin, nor can my shepherd. I had not missed the skin till after the policeman came to me last night. I saw it in its place two or three days ago. I don't think there is a doubt about the skin being mine, but I cannot swear to it.

Prisoner pleaded not guilty but afterwards withdrew the plea and pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to nine months imprisonment.

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