



A Poaching Charge Dismissed

Sarum County Sessions - Tuesday

Frederick Purkiss, labourer, of Upton Lovell, was summoned for trespassing in search of conies at West Dean, on Monday, September 28th. Mr. W. J. Trethowan defended. William Hardy, thatcher, working for Mr. T. Pile, of West Dean, said that on September 28th between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, as he was walking across the fields he heard a rabbit "shout," and going in the direction of the sound saw a rabbit in a trap. When he got to the trap he saw Purkiss there taking the rabbit out. He could not say who set the trap. Cross-examined: Where he found the rabbit was some distance from a cottage occupied by the defendant, but belonging to Mr. Pile. There was no one with the defendant when witness saw him near the trap. He had no gun or dog. He knew the defendant was in the employ of Mr. Pile until September 12th, but he did not know that Mr. Pile would not pay Purkiss his wages.

Frank Coole, shepherd, of West Dean, said he was with the last witness when they heard the rabbit "shout." When they got near the trap they saw the defendant there. Cross-examined: this was about 7.30. They were walking across the fields when they heard the rabbit cry out. He could not say if Hardy put the trap there.

This was all the evidence for the prosecution.

For the defence, Mr. Trethowan said that from the evidence given there seemed to be but little doubt that these witnesses had not spoken the truth. He would bring witnesses to prove that on the day in question there was nothing said about poaching. On the 13th October when the defendant saw Pile he asked for his wages but Pile walked away and took no notice of him. In the County Court, the defendant gave evidence for a man named Needham, who sued Pile for wages in respect of work done, and counsel suggested that these proceedings were a signal to that action. The defendant was prepared to swear that he was not at the spot named and he (Mr. Trethowan) thought that the magistrates would agree when they had heard the evidence that these proceedings were taken to ruin this poor man because he came to give evidence for Needham who took out a summons to recover his wages.

The defendant went into the witness box, and in answer to questions by Mr. Trethowan said he was a labourer and had been up to September 13th working for Mr. Pile. He was now working for Mr. Read at West Grimstead, which was nearly three miles from the house in which he lived. He went to work every morning with his son and on September 13th they left about 5.30 in the morning and returned about 6.15 in the evening. When they got home they had their tea, after which he did some work in the garden that night. He was a witness at the last County Court for a man named Needham who sued Mr. Pile for his wages. On October 13th he saw Mr. Pile in Salisbury Market and asked him for his wages, but he walked off and would take no notice of him. Witness then threatened legal proceedings to recover his wages,

and had never heard a word about being summoned for a rabbit. He stoutly denied being on the spot when the rabbit was found in the trap.

Walter Purkiss, son of the last witness, bore out his father's statement as the time of their going and coming from work on the day in question. He also assisted his father in the garden the same evening, and proved that he could not have been at the spot named by the prosecutors.

Mr. Trethowan was proceeding to call further evidence when the Chairman said that the magistrates had decided to dismiss the case.

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