

***FLOWER SHOWS,
FRAUDSTERS
& HORRIBLE MURDERS***

The Secret Journal of Aaron Allott, 1887-1950

Edited by
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To see a World in a Grain of Sand...

Auguries of Innocence
by William Blake

INTRODUCTION

Aaron Allott lived in sensational times. Between the year of his birth (1871) and the year of his death (1954), there were two World Wars, and many minor conflicts, while the Empires of the Romanovs, Ottomans, Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns, in Russia, Turkey, Austria-Hungary and Germany, came crashing down. At the same time, the British and French Empires expanded rapidly, reached their zeniths, and then started to fall apart in spectacular fashion, whilst the U.S.A. (newly expanded so as to include 48 states) and the U.S.S.R. (created in 1922) came to dominate the globe. One would never know any of this from Aaron's Journal, since he seems to have been entirely uninterested in current affairs and politics.

What did interest him were sales of land and goods, shows of all kinds, and criminal activity, especially fraud and murder, but also petty crimes committed by local people. He seems to have gathered his information from newspaper reports and local informants, since there is no evidence that he ever owned a radio or a television.

Despite his fascination for the local, Aaron Allott's Journal has much to tell us about his world. It was a world which resembled ours in many ways; but in others it was very different indeed. Aaron lived in an age when small farms and great estates still played an important part in many people's lives; and when local aristocrats – for example, Earl Fitzwilliam and the Duke of Norfolk - still had enormous power. In addition, 'King Coal's domain was still very extensive: there were several collieries in and around Thorpe Hesley (Barley Hall, New Drift, Mangham's at Scholes, Grange Lane colliery at Scholes Moor and Smithy Wood towards Chapeltown) and many local men were employed in the coal industry. The Church, whether Anglican or Methodist, was still the focus of many people's lives. Capital punishment was still the penalty for murder, and sentences involving penal servitude (or hard labour) were imposed by the courts as a matter of routine. Cars, radios and telephones were few and far between, televisions, computers and social media non-existent. The countryside looked quite different, since there were very few cars or buses, and no TV or radio masts in Aaron's young days. Foreign travel was for the wealthy. The old and the deviant could still be consigned to the local workhouse. On the other hand, there were many more local newspapers than there are now.

The sales recorded by Aaron were often farm sales, and may be considered of minor interest, although some may wish to note the sale of Sheffield United's Bramall Lane Ground in 1898. As for shows, the Journal lists many kinds – Agricultural Shows, Royal Shows, Great Yorkshire Shows, Dog Shows, Puppy

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Shows, Hospital Sundays, circuses, menageries, plays and the cinematograph. It is difficult to understand now why Aaron devoted a whole page to 'A Brief History of the World's Poultry Congresses'; but so he did, telling us that the first was held in The Hague in 1921, the second in Barcelona in 1924, the third in Ottawa in 1927, and the fourth at the Crystal Palace in London in 1930.

More interesting, at least for most of us, is the mention of General Tom Thumb, in 1891. In fact, Tom had visited Britain almost thirty years before Aaron was born; and by 1891 (the year in which P.T. Barnum died) the great showman was touring with Barnum & Bailey's 'Greatest Show on Earth'. This did not close until 2017!

Aaron's catalogue of crime included a wide variety of activity, from indecent assaults (which do not seem to have been reported in newspapers) to fraud, forgery and murder. Sometimes, the crimes he heard about were committed locally, or by local people, but others reached the attention of the nation as a whole, and were widely reported. Aaron habitually noted the arrest, trial or committal proceedings in the lower court, and where appropriate the trial in the higher court, as well as the sentence awarded where there was a conviction, and sometimes the date when the convict was released from prison.

Aaron Allott had no literary skills. His handwriting was somewhat childlike, he could not spell, he seem to have been unacquainted with punctuation and did not know when to use capital letters, and when not to. I have called what he wrote a Journal; but this is my designation not his. In fact, it is difficult to know when he wrote it, or compiled it. It is clearly not a diary; and indeed the entries are not made on any very systematic basis. Sometimes he seems to have noted events which interested him as they occurred; but on other occasions, he made lists – for example of Royal Shows, Sports Shows, Hospital Sundays, and Trials and Sentences. It follows that it is I who have re-organised its contents according to the year in which events happened.

So who was Aaron Allott? He was born in Thorpe Hesley and baptised here on 8 October 1871. His parents came from nearby Kimberworth, his father being Aaron Allott (b. 1842) and his mother Bertha Ann Cooper (b.c.1845). He had six brothers and three sisters. He was married at the age of 48 to Harriett Leese, a spinster aged 38, in the parish church of Mirfield on 13 April 1918, when Harriet declared that her father was Thomas Kelly deceased, a miner;¹ but we do not know how long the marriage lasted, or even if the couple lived together. Aaron died in 1954, possibly in Scarborough.²

The Census of 1871 shows Aaron as a baby, living with his parents and two elder siblings, Grace (4) and David (3) in Hesley Lane, his father being at that time a pit labourer. The family was still there ten years later, although his father was now a

¹ Marriage certificate supplied by ancestry.co.uk. Aaron stated that his father was Aaron Allott, farmer. Aaron's siblings appear on ancestry.co.uk, in the Allott Burrows Public Member Tree.

²Ancestry.co.uk, public member trees.

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general labourer, and the family now included brothers Cooper (9), Fred (7), Luke (3) and Willie (4 months) and a daughter Elizabeth (5). By 1881, Aaron senior had become a wheelwright, and there were two more children James (10) and Sarah (5). The family was still at that time in Hesley Lane; but by 1901, they had moved to The Gate Inn at 5 Brook Hill, Thorpe Hesley, where Aaron senior was the licensee, describing himself in the Census taken that year as both 'Innkeeper and Farmer'. Aaron junior, a coal miner in 1891 was now a wheelwright, while four of his brothers were 'employed on farm.'

The Census of 1911 records the Allott family as still being at The Gate Inn, but our Aaron was now a joiner – an occupation he was still pursuing in 1918, when he married. However, by that time it appears that he had moved to West Yorkshire, perhaps temporarily: on the marriage certificate, Aaron and his bride gave their residence as 'Greenside', which is now part of Mirfield, between Leeds and Huddersfield. His father retained the licence of The Gate Inn at Thorpe Hesley for many years³ and, when he died in 1929, was described as the oldest inhabitant of Thorpe Hesley.⁴

Aaron Allott seems to have led a remarkably quiet life; and his Journal shows a remarkable lack of interest in politics and current affairs. Thus he makes no mention of the Great War (1914-18)⁵, nor for that matter of the Second. Nor does he mention coal or coalmining, though he was at one time a miner himself, and there (as we have noted) were several pits which employed local men, in or near his village.

Aaron does not mention his wife, or his family, though people with the same surname are sometimes referred to. Nor does he refer to the hobbies he had, or sports that he played. Likewise, the Allott family rarely came to the attention of professional journalists, but on Monday 24 November 1902 *The Sheffield Evening Telegraph* reported that Ann Sylvester, Lucy Willis and Sarah Allott had appeared in Rotherham West Riding Court that morning charged with stealing potatoes to the value of 3 shillings, the property of Frederick Adamson, farmer of Thorpe Hesley on the 5th of that month. They had been seen to gather the potatoes in Adamson's field and, when spoken to by him, said they thought they had a right to gather them (though they had nearly 3 stones 10 lbs of potatoes in their possession); but the magistrates did not believe their story and they were found guilty and each fined 10 shillings. It may well be that this Sarah Allott was our Aaron's sister, since she would have been around 26 years old at the time; but we cannot be sure that it was her.

³ He is recorded in the Electoral Register there in 1926.

⁴ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, Wed. 27 March 1929.

⁵ There is a memorial in Flanders Court, Thorpe Hesley, to all those who served in the Great War, and 'A. Allott' is the first of those names; but one would have thought that Aaron was too old to fight, since he was 44 years of age in 1914; and when conscription was introduced by the Military Service Act 1916, this applied to men between the ages of 18 and 40. I have been unable to confirm the position by reference to the Military Service Records available on Ancestry.co.uk.

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More certainly, we know that in 1910, when the government legislated to impose a licence duty of £16 per annum, Aaron Allott senior was outraged.

He has closed the house, which has been in the occupation of the Allott family for more than two hundred years, and pulled down the sign, a swing gate, on which was the inscription

*This gate hangs well and hinders none;
Refresh and pay and travel on.*⁶

This protest, which was presumably short-lived, was reported in several local papers, including the *Leeds Mercury*, which added that The Gate Inn was 'one of the best conducted inns in the district'. This was quite a compliment since it is known that there were around 13 pubs in Thorpe Hesley in 1900, several times the number there are now, though the population of the village has greatly expanded in recent times.⁷

The Allotts made a third appearance in the news in 1930, when Aaron junior's elder brother David (1867-1947) was involved in an unfortunate altercation. David had become vicar of St Luke's in Barnsley in 1917 and a member of Barnsley Council in 1925, eventually becoming chairman of the Board of Guardians. However, he had also become unpopular with the N.U.W. (National Unemployed Workers), who alleged that he was not sufficiently generous to the poor, and staged a demonstration near his home. It was also reported that the secretary of the Barnsley branch of the Union said that the Rev. Allott was at odds with his Socialist colleagues.

On Sunday, Mr Allott preaches 'Feed My lambs' and on the Tuesday he refuses to allow things to be given with which to feed the lambs. Alderman Simpson at one time raised the question of hundreds of boots for children. Mr Allott pointed to the cost, with the result that they were refused. (Cries of Shame!)... One of our representatives went to interview the able-bodied relief committee when the chairman (Mr Allott) caught him behind the neck and threw him out of the room. Although he is getting old, he is still a big man.

Mr T. Degman described how he was ejected from the committee meeting and alleged that Mr Allott left his finger-nail marks on the back of his neck. "His tackle," he added, "reminded me of the time I used to play Rugby as a boy".

⁶*Stray Notes, Beverley and East Riding Recorder*, Sat. 3 September 1910.

⁷Robert Chesman, *History of Thorpe Hesley*, c. 1987, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies.

The reader of the Journal may conclude that these shenanigans involving members of the Allott family were as nothing compared with many of the events recorded by our Aaron.

From about 1914, Aaron's interest in local affairs appears to have become less intense. Perhaps this was due to the outbreak of the First World War, which must have put many things in perspective; and perhaps the onset of middle-age was a contributory factor. We should also remember that he was married in 1918, if I am right. For whatever reason, the entries per year became less numerous. In some of the lean years, I have supplemented our knowledge of local events somewhat, from the newspaper sources.

A NOTE ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

In order to fully understand the entries in the Journal relating to trials and sentences, it is as well to bear in mind that in Aaron's Allott's day, minor offences were dealt with the Magistrates Courts, or 'Petty Sessions', popularly known as the 'Police Courts', while more serious offences were committed by the magistrates to either Quarter Sessions or Assizes, sitting in regional centres. The main change here came after Aaron's death, when the Quarter Sessions and Assizes were abolished, and their jurisdiction transferred to the Crown Court, in 1971.

The main changes in sentencing since Aaron's day are twofold. First, the death penalty, which was not abolished in Great Britain until 1965, was mandatory in cases of murder. Second, it was common to impose sentences of 'penal servitude' rather than simple imprisonment. The Penal Servitude Act 1853 had replaced transportation. It involved hard labour, which included the treadmill, shot drill and the crank machine. Prisoners had to work six or more hours a day. The treadmill speaks for itself (prisoners were treated like hamsters today). Shot drill involved moving cannonballs from one pile to another. The crank was a device which forced four large cups or ladles through sand inside a drum. Male prisoners sometimes had to turn the handle around 14,000 times a day; and the warder could make the task harder by tightening an adjusting screw, which gave rise to the use of the term "screw" as slang for prison officer. Penal servitude was abolished in 1948.

NOTE ON CURRENCY

Before decimalisation in 1971, there were 20 shillings (s) in a pound and 12 pennies (d) to the shilling.

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Other books by Stephen Cooper

available from Amazon
(see also www.chivalryandwar.co.uk)

A House Divided (Bridge Publications, 1987)
Sir John Hawkwood (Pen & Sword, 2008)
The Real Falstaff, Sir John Fastolf (Pen & Sword, 2010)
Agincourt, Myth & Reality (Pen & Sword, 2014)
Earl Fitzwilliam's Treasure Island (Create Space, 2016)
Cocos Island and the Treasure of Lima (Create Space, 2017)

THE JOURNAL

1887

1887 was the year in which Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee; Zululand became a British colony; the British Empire took over Baluchistan; and Hovis bread was patented. None of these things seem to have interested Aaron Allott, who recorded only one event that year:

Alice the Big Elephant was burnt to Death in Barnum's Show in America on Nov 20th 1887.⁸

Aaron was not alone in noting the elephant's fate. The following report appeared in the *Worcestershire Chronicle* on Saturday 26 November:

BARNUM'S SHOW BURNED DOWN ANIMALS ROASTED ALIVE

The New York correspondent of the Daily News telegraphed on Monday: the winter quarters of Barnum's Show were burned last night with great destruction of animals and property. The building was wood, filled with all sorts of inflammable material, and in 15 minutes was burnt to the ground. The building burned was divided into three sections. The first contained the baggage waggons and few chariots and horses. Nothing was saved. At the end of the section the hippopotamus was caged, and perished with the rest. The middle section was where the wild animals were kept. Not a single animal escaped. There were zebras, ibexes, tapirs, wolves, hyenas, and many others.

The men had great difficulty in getting the elephants out of the barn, and all but four escaped. One small trick elephant was driven out four or five times and each time returned, and finally had to be left there. The other three elephants burned were Samson, the white elephant, and Alice, the consort of Jumbo in London. She was commonly known as Jumbo's widow. Of the elephants which escaped one small one started for Long Island Sound, and

⁸ Phineas Taylor Barnum (b. 1810), an American showman remembered for Barnum & Bailey Circus, and for the phrase "There's a sucker born every minute". He promoted human curiosities such as 'General Tom Thumb'. *The Guardian* for Tuesday 23 May 2017 reported that Barnum's 'Greatest Show on Earth' had finally closed, in New York, after 150 years.

waded out for half-a-mile. In the early morning the keeper and others started after him in a boat. The tide was running out, and he was unable to make headway back to shore against the strong current. He gradually drifted out till he was drowned. The rhinoceros also escaped with some bad burns but is expected to recover.

A Reuter's telegram says: Thirty-six elephants broke from their fastenings and dashed through the sides of the burning building, trumpeting loudly in their terror. Six of these and a large African hippopotamus rushed into the streets, their bodies, scorched and blackened by the flames, presenting a sickening appearance. The remaining 30 elephants and one lion escaped across the country towards Fairfield and their appearance causing great alarm among the inhabitants, many of whom, residing at the west end of Bridgeport, barred the doors and windows of their houses. Several persons were tossed by the escaped elephants. One of the watchmen is missing. It is thought that the fire was the work of an incendiary.

The above incident was not the only occasion when Barnum's Big Elephant came to the attention of the reading public in the West Riding of Yorkshire. There was a report of a more amusing, and less tragic, event in the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* on Saturday 18 March 1899:

BARNUM'S BIG ELEPHANT

This incident is said to have occurred at Barnum's Show. A visitor persisted in offering a bun to an elephant, and then pulling away before the animal could reach it with his trunk. The elephant was very good-tempered at first, but got more and more annoyed as the trick was repeated, and at last sulkily refused to take any more notice of his tormentor.

About half an hour afterwards, when he was allowed to come out of his cage, he observed the man who had teased him standing near. In a moment the elephant whipped off the man's straw hat. He held it in his trunk for some time and then offered it to the man, but always pulled it back just as he had done with the bun.

After teasing him for good while, the elephant held it out to him once more; but on the man trying to catch it, the animal quietly swallowed it, and left his tormentor standing bareheaded among the crowd, who laughed heartily at the way in which he was punished for his trick.

1888

1888 saw the 'five canonical murders' committed by 'Jack the Ripper' in the East End of London; but Aaron noted only that:

Sangers Circus was opened in Penistone St Sheffield on Nov 2nd 1888.

This Circus was reported in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on Monday 12 November 1888:

**SANGER AND SONS.
NEW ROYAL HIPPODROME, NEW PINSTONE STREET,
SHEFFIELD
Will
OPEN THIS DAY (MONDAY), NOVEMBER 12**

With the and best Equestrian Company that has ever appeared in Great Britain.

The same that appeared by royal command of TRH the Prince and Princess of Wales at Sandringham, the coming of age of Prince Albert Victor, January 8, 1885.

The Noblest and magnificent STUD OF ARABIAN, PERSIAN, HANOVERIAN AND ENGLISH THOROUGHBRED HORSES ever introduced to a British audience,

The Largest, and Best Collection of Ten Wonderful PERFORMING ELEPHANTS owned by any proprietor in that or any other country. Each performarncce will be enlivened by 12 Comical clowns, the best and drollest of their species.

GRAND ILLUMINATED DAY PERFORMANCES will take place on WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY, commencing at 2.30.

Carriages may be ordered for 4.15.

Open Every Evening at 7; commencing at 7.30. Carriages for 10.15.

Reserved Seats, 3s; Boxes, 2s ; Amphitheatre, 1s.; Gallery, 6d. Children under 10, half price to all parts except Gallery at Nine o' Clock.

Busses and tram pass the Hippodrome for all parts.

The Animals and Company will be conveyed by Special Trains from London

It is perhaps surprising that Aaron did not record the following events, which appeared in the local Press at the time:

(1) *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* - Saturday 3 March 1888

SHEEP WORRYING AT THORPE HESLEY

Mr. Bowman, who occupies a farm belonging to Messrs Newton, Chambers, and Company, Thorpe Hesley, has just had a flock of sheep attacked and worried by dogs. Four valuable sheep have been destroyed, after having been dreadfully torn and worried. A number of ewes have cast their lambs, several of the latter being dead. Some dogs seen prowling near the farm have been shot, and the carcass of one of the sheep is left lying on the ground, with a view of tracing the offending animals. Mr. Bowman estimates his loss at over £20.

(2) *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* - Monday 1 October 1888

SIR F. T. MAPPIN M.P., AT THORPE HESLEY OPENING OF A LITERARY INSTITUTE

On Saturday afternoon the formal opening of the Thorpe Hesley Mechanics Literary Institute, near Rotherham, took place in the presence of a numerous company. The foundation stone was laid on the 22nd of May last, by Lady Alice Fitzwilliam, and Sir F. T. Mappin performed the opening ceremony. He and Lady Mappin were met at Hesley Bar by the members of the Institute Committee and several local bands, a large crowd witnessing the procession on its way to the institute. Sir Frederick in his speech referred to the beneficial effect such institutions exerted, and expressed the hope that that one would enable working men to meet together and derive instruction and amusement without being brought in contact with beer.

1890

In 1890 the United Kingdom and Imperial Germany signed a treaty, whereby Britain ceded the tiny island of Heligoland in the North Sea, in return for Zanzibar. (Bismarck remarked that the Germans had exchanged 'trousers for a button'). In the same year Captain Willy O'Shea divorced his wife Kitty for adultery, naming Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, as co-respondent. This meant an end to his career in politics. Aaron noted:

Mr and Mrs Lund – the Lady was a female boxer – held their show at the bottom of Hesley Lane from Wed Oct 28th to Nov 3rd 1890 with Boxing and conjuring and during their stay Arthur Dobson and Jack Allott made an exhibition spar.

Female boxers were not uncommon, at least in the USA. On 26 June 1890 the *St James's Gazette* noted:

LADY BOXERS

Another step is to be noted in the progress of woman. Henceforth the noble art of self-defence is to be included in the list of her many accomplishments. The American girl appears to be responsible for this latest innovation, and the pugilists of the United States are said to be experiencing an era of unusual prosperity in imparting their science to Columbia's daughters.

For a long time there has been a great desire on the part of many of these daughters to acquire knowledge of what has hitherto been known as the manly art as there has been on the part of certain English ladies to display their prowess and ankles in the cricket-field. This desire has been intensified by the publication of a little encounter that recently took place on Fifth Avenue. One of New York's fairest and wealthiest was walking unattended down that fashionable thoroughfare, when man whom she did not know walked beside her, raised his hat, and spoke to her. Without a second's hesitation the young lady dealt the shiny and carefully brushed chapeau a right-hander that sent it rolling into the mud and planted a left-hander between her insulter's eyes that tumbled him after and on top of his hat. And now there is a legion of girls anxious to attain the ability, and to find an opportunity, of going and doing likewise.

As we have learned by now, Aaron showed little interest in politics – national or local. Had he done so, he might have noted a significant debate held in his home village by local trade unionists. According to the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Wednesday 8 January 1890, there was an

IMPORTANT MEETING AT THORPE HESLEY

On Monday evening a well-attended meeting of miners employed at the Drift and Norfolk Collieries, Thorncliffe was held in a large room at the Red Lion Inn, Thorpe Hesley, to further consider the question of going in a body to the Yorkshire Miners Association. Mr. Ben Mathews presided, and explained that at a previous meeting it was decided that the Thorncliffe men should dissolve their own union and join their friends at Barnsley.

Mr. George Senior read a letter he had received from Mr. Pickard, M. P., stating that the application of the Thorncliffe men to be admitted members of the County Association had been before the council of that body, and the latter had resolved that the application be granted, on either these conditions:—All members of the existing lodge shall join a body, pay 2s. 6d. each entrance fee, and stand good 13 weeks, or that all members pay down the sum of 9s. each, and be recognised full financial members at once. (Cheers.) He, Mr. Senior, thought the terms offered were generous, and should be accepted. Several miners spoke in favour going to Barnsley at once. [The motion was carried].

The name of the new branch is to be "Old Thorncliffe No. 2 Lodge."—Mr. B. Matthews was elected president, Mr. Geo. Senior treasurer, Mr. S. Beard secretary, Mr. Walter delegate to council meeting, Messrs. G. Turner, John Hornsby, F. Brookes, and C. Burgan were elected as local committee. —It was stated at the meeting that the dispute at Cricklestone had been settled, the men, after a strike of five weeks, receiving an advance of 2d. per ton, and house coals free.

1891

1891 saw the official opening of the London-Paris telephone system; the first appearance of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes in *The Strand Magazine*; and a Census which showed that the population of the United Kingdom was 41 million, and that cities of 20,000 or more accounted for 54% of the total English population. (The Census of 1891 shows Aaron living with his parents and siblings at The Gate Inn at 5 Brook Hill, Thorpe Hesley, where Aaron senior was the licensee, described as 'Innkeeper and Farmer', while Aaron junior was a coal miner). Aaron noted:

Pheneas Taylor Barnum the American Showman Born 1810 brought out Tom Thumb 1845 his Museum in New York was twice Burnt down re-erected in 18--. He brought his show to London and exhibited it at Olympia on April 7th 1891.

Buffalo Bills show first visit to Manchester and opened on Dec 17 1887 again in 1892 and held at Owlerton⁹ on Aug 10 1891 and following days. The Indian Chief Paul Eagle Star Died on Aug 24th 1891 as the result of an accident while riding during the Performance.

As is often the case with the Journal, the pedestrian style conceals an extraordinary and tragic event. An obituary in *The Yorkshire Post* for August 25 1891 tells us more: Eagle Star was a Sioux aged 25, and

One of the hostile braves held as hostages by Buffalo Bill died yesterday in the Sheffield Infirmary. On Friday week he was taking part in a performance at Buffalo Bill's show, and fell from his horse, fracturing one of his legs. The limb was amputated last Saturday, but the poor fellow died yesterday from the effects of the accident. Eagle Star was one of the hostile braves who took part in the battle of Wounded Knee Creek last autumn, which was fought against the whites and friendlies.

There was a much longer report in *The [Sheffield] Evening Telegraph & Star* for the same day, the headline being

⁹Sheffield.

DEATH OF A WILD WEST INDIAN

The news of the death of Paul Eagle Star, a prominent member of Buffalo Bill's band of Sioux Indians, caused much consternation yesterday at the Wild West encampment at Nottingham... On Saturday lockjaw¹⁰ set in, and it was seen that the only hope of saving life was to have the leg amputated. This operation was performed on Saturday evening, but the lockjaw becoming worse the Indian sank and died early on Sunday morning. Mr G. C. Crager, the Sioux interpreter, came over to witness the operation, and remained with the patient until his death. The Indian frequently expressed his gratification at the kindly treatment he had received from the surgeons and nurses, who had done all in their power to render his hard lot as comfortable as the circumstances would allow. He died holding Mr Crager's hand and murmuring 'Jesus, Jesus.'... Col. Cody has since been quite prostrated and was unable to come over to Sheffield to make the necessary arrangements... He intends presenting a marble bust of himself to the Infirmary as a token of his indebtedness to them... Chiefs 'Kicking Bear', 'Black Heart' and 'Lone Bull' and a young brave named 'Bull Stands Behind', cousin to the deceased, came over to Sheffield to attend the inquest and remove the body. The Indians, particularly 'Bull Stands Behind', displayed much emotion on seeing the dead body of their comrade...

[At the Inquest] Mr B. Folsom, American Consul in Sheffield, was present...

Mr G. C. Crager said [the deceased] was a Sioux Indian, and came to this country with Buffalo Bill's Exhibition five months ago. Witness did not actually see the accident on August 14, but saw deceased directly afterwards, and came with him to the Infirmary half an hour later. According to what Paul Eagle Star told him, and from what he saw himself, he came to the conclusion that the Indian's horse slipped and slid on its fore foot as the Indians were galloping out of the arena. The animal's belly scraped on the ground, and the rider's foot being between the two, caused an ankle to become dislocated...

Mr Hugh Rhodes, house-surgeon at the Infirmary, said he saw deceased on his admission to the Infirmary. He was suffering from a compound dislocation of the right ankle. On Saturday last, lockjaw setting in, it was decided to amputate the leg, that being the only means of saving his life. The operation was successfully performed, but the lockjaw, so far from diminishing, became worse, and resulted in the man's death on Monday.

The Coroner remarked that, as there was no one present who witnessed the accident the jury would have to return their verdict on Mr Crager's evidence.

¹⁰Lockjaw is or was a common name for tetanus.

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The jury agreed, and signed a verdict of “Accidentally killed.” ...

After the inquest, the remains – enclosed in a stout coffin – were placed in a hearse and driven off to the Midland Station en route for New Brompton, where they will be interred in a plot of land belonging to Buffalo Bill, and which already contains the remains of an Indian, who died in London during Jubilee year.“

Buffalo Bill's Wild West toured Europe eight times, the first four tours taking place between 1887 and 1892, and the last four between 1902 to 1906. Royalty from all over Europe attended, including the future Kaiser Wilhelm II and the future King George V. Several members of the *Wild West* show died of accidents or disease during these tours. Paul Eagle Star was buried in the same section of the New Brompton Cemetery as ‘Surrounded by the Enemy, who had died during the show’s visit to Manchester in 1887’. However, in 1997, his unmarked grave was re-discovered and he was re-buried, with ceremony, in 2000 in the vicinity of the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota.

1893

In 1893 the Independent Labour Party held its first meeting, in Bradford, chaired by Keir Hardie; an underground explosion at Combs Pit, Thornhill, West Yorkshire, killed 135; and the Brontë Society was founded, in order to establish what would become the Brontë Parsonage Museum. Aaron noted:

Sir Charles Wells known as Monte Carlo Wells received 8 years P-S [penal servitude] on March 15 1893 for defrauding the Bank of £27,000 he was released from Portland Prison in March of 1899.

Charles Wells (1841–1922) visited the Monte Carlo Casino in 1891. With an initial stake of £4,000, he won £60,000 (equivalent to £6m) and broke the bank several times. There were a number of men who did this, but Wells seems to have the best claim to be the person celebrated in the song *The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo*, which was written in 1891 or 1892. This in turn inspired the 1935 US romantic comedy of the same name.

The incident which came to Aaron's attention the following year was merely one of several frauds perpetrated by Wells. In particular, he posed as an inventor, putting the letters C.E. [civil engineer] after his name; and persuaded a gullible philanthropist, Miss Phillimore, to part with large sums of money. She brought a civil action, and criminal proceedings soon followed. Wells served around 6 years in prison, as Aaron accurately informs us.¹¹

¹¹ *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 15 February, 1893; *Lincolnshire Echo* 18 March 1893; *Grantham Journal* 18 March, 1893.

1895

1895 saw the première of Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest* at St. James' Theatre, London; the re-naming of the British South Africa Company's territory south of the Zambesi as 'Rhodesia'; a general election which led to the formation of a Conservative Government headed by Lord Salisbury; and the first ever indoor promenade concert, where Henry Wood was the sole conductor. Aaron noted three events:

The Trial began on April 3rd of Oscar Wild [sic] the Author and Dramatist convicted at the Old Bailey of a serious misdemeanour and sentenced to two years hard labour on May 25th 1895.

Thorpe Sports on Sat Aug 19th 1905 and Emily Jenkinson of the Horse an Tiger had the Tent. It was Blown over and could not be fixed for Wind so she had to sell from the outbuildings the same night. Rawsons beer cart had a severe accident at the Bottom of Coley Hill in taking the stuff back both Horses and Man were hurt.

Jabez Spencer Balfour had his Trial on Oct 26th 1895 he was sentenced to 14 Years imprisonment by Mr Justice Bruce on Dec 28th 1895.

Oscar Wilde:

On 25 May 1895 Wilde was convicted of gross indecency and sentenced to two years' hard labour. The judge described the sentence, the maximum allowed, as "totally inadequate for a case such as this;" but nevertheless the 'hard labour' in Wilde's case included (for several months) punishment by means of the treadmill. This took the form of a large paddle wheel with 24 steps around a six-foot cylinder. Prisoners had to 'work' in this for six or more hours a day, climbing the equivalent of 5,000 to 14,000 feet each time.

Jabez Balfour:

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

In his day this man was internationally famous, like Monte Carlo Wells and Whitaker Wright. He was born in London and was MP for Tamworth from 1880 to 1885, and Burnley from 1889 to 1893. In 1880 he was appointed chairman of the Northampton Street Tramways. Together with City financiers Leopold Salomons and Sir John Pender, he founded a firm which underwrote investments. In 1892, he was at the centre of a scandal over the failure of a series of companies, which left thousands of investors penniless. After the swindle was discovered, Balfour fled the country. He was arrested in Argentina in 1895. When extradition proceedings were held up by legal argument, the British detective bundled Balfour into a train and then a boat sailing for England. (One thinks of a similar episode involving Ronnie Biggs a century or so later). Balfour was then tried at the Old Bailey and sentenced to 14 years penal servitude, most of them served in Portland prison. South Norwood, in the London Borough of Croydon, has a Balfour Road which is named after him, as does Ilford, Essex; but his name has been erased from the memorial plaques at the Croydon University Hospital.

All this is well known. What is less well-known is that Balfour stood for Parliament in a by-election in Doncaster in 1888, when he was supported by the prominent Rotherham Liberal, Alderman George Gummer, though he was not elected. Gummer found him to be 'a man of charming personality, and an excellent speaker' and it is presumably because of this local connection that his trial was mentioned, a few years later, by Aaron Allott.¹²

¹² Gummer, *Reminiscences of Rotherham* (1927). Gummer tells us that there was heavy betting on the result, with odds of 10 to 1 on Balfour, but 'scores of voters accepted the odds' and voted for his opponent, the Hon. H.W.Fitzwilliam.

1896

In 1896 the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, when Great Britain and Ireland won 2 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze medals; the law relating to motor vehicles was changed so that a man was no longer required to walk in front of a moving car, with a red flag; the speed limit was raised from 4 to 14 mph, and, to celebrate this, an 'Emancipation Run' of cars from London to Brighton (continued afterwards as the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run) was held. Of more interest locally, on 24 June 1896, at St Paul's Cathedral, the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam (who was the largest landowner in South Yorkshire) married Lady Maud Frederica Elizabeth Dundas the daughter of Lawrence Dundas, 1st Marquess of Zetland and Lady Lillian Selina Elizabeth Lumley. Aaron noted none of these things. Instead we have:

Ecclesfield Farmers Show held in Hillsborough Park on Monday Aug 3rd 1896.

The show was extensively reported in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* for Monday 3 August; and there was even a short report in the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* on Tuesday 4 August 1896

ECCLESFIELD FARMERS' CLUB

The fifty-third annual show of the Ecclesfield Farmers' Club was held in Hillsborough Park, Sheffield, yesterday. The entries numbered 1,785, against 1,792 last year. There were 249 horses, 56 cattle, 24 sheep, 240 poultry, 439 pigeons, 229 rabbits, and 304 dogs. The agricultural classes were a decided credit to the district, and the heavy foals included some very fine young stock. Many well-known owners exhibited the hack, roadster, and harness classes, and the competition was keen, the quality throughout being very high. The cattle and sheep classes were fairly well filled. Hillsborough Show has always been noted for the exhibition of dogs, and this year was no exception. The usual official luncheon was presided over by Mr. Harrison Smith, president of the society, and the Right Hon. C. R. Stuart-Wortley. Q.C., M.P., and Alderman Batty Langley, M.P., were amongst those who attended.

1898

Smithy Wood Poaching affray took place by supposed Shiregreen Persons on Dec 27th 1897 and Joe Beecham¹³ and Fred Challoner was [sic] sentenced to 3 months imprisonment at Leeds in Mar of 1898.

The Duke of Norfolk sold Bramall Lane Ground to the United Cricket and Football Club for £10,134 on Sep 21st 1898.

Lord Wm Nevill sentenced to 5 Years P-S on Feb 15th 1898 for Forging and uttering Promissory notes for £3,113 and £8,000.

The Smithy Wood Poaching Affray:

This affair was fully reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for Thursday 24 March 1898:

THE ECCLESFIELD POACHING AFFRAY PRISONERS TRIED AT THE ASSIZES BY OUR OWN REPORTER

At the West Bid Assizes, Leeds, yesterday, before Mr Justice Ridley, the alleged case of night poaching at Ecclesfield was heard. The prisoners, who all surrendered to heir bail, were Joseph Beardshaw (56), potter; Frederick Challoner (43), William Wilson (57), and Arthur Higgins (54), forkmakers, and they were all for night poaching at Ecclesfield on December 27. Beardshaw was further charged with unlawfully wounding Albert Ashley. Mr. T. E. Ellison and Mr Wilberforce appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. H.T.Waddy (instructed Mr A. Neal, of Sheffield), defended.

Mr. Ellison, in his opening speech, said shortly after 10 o'clock the night of Dec. 27th., several gamekeepers in the service of Mr. Percy Hoole, accompanied by watchers, were on duty near Smithy Wood. They were in two bodies, one of a keeper and three miners as watchers, and the other of the headkeeper and his son, with three other miners.

¹³ It seems from what follows that Aaron intended to refer to Joseph Beardshaw.

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One the batches of men suddenly came upon a number of men setting nets near a field called Lady Clough. Parker, a keeper, rushed forward and seized the prisoner Higgins. Challoner then shouted. 'Look out, here they are' and at once attacked Parker with a stick, dealing one blow which was so severe as to bring the keeper to his knees, and following it with several others. Higgins also struck him and a man named Wilkinson was struck by the same prisoner when going to assist Parker.

The sound of a whistle brought up the other body of watchers, and all the prisoners immediately attacked them with sticks and stones. The son of Brodie, the headkeeper, was attacked by Wilson, whom he pursued, but failed to catch, as he fell over a net.

Among those who were throwing stones was Beardshaw, and one stone thrown by him struck a watcher named Ashley on the lip, cutting it and knocking him down. A struggle ensued between Beardshaw, Ashley, and a man named Brown, and the keepers succeeded in apprehending Beardshaw on the spot, but the other prisoners got away.

Later the same night, one of three of the watchers, standing by a hedge at Thorpe Hesley, saw a number of men coming along the road, among them one who they said was the prisoner Challoner. The men were talking about what had taken place earlier in the night, and Challoner said. 'I knocked the first -----down as they came through the hedge.' If the case for the prosecution were true, that exactly described the part played by Challoner. On an examination of the scene of the struggle there were found 200 or 300 yards of netting, net pegs, and other things, including some rabbits and pieces of slag which had been carried from the road ready for throwing in case of any attempt to apprehend them. The defence was in the nature of an alibi. No question of that kind could, however, arise with regard to Beardshaw, who was arrested at the time, and in the case of the other prisoners, witnesses who had known them before would identify them.

Thomas Parker, gamekeeper, in the employ of Mr. Percy Hoole, was the first witness, and bore out counsel's account of the affray. The keepers and watchers, he added, merely 'having a look round' to see if there was any poaching, as it was holiday time.

Joseph Wilkinson, miner, Thorpe Hesley, and one of the men who were acting as watchers on the night in question, said it was Challoner who called out, 'Heigh up, chaps; they're here.' and he struck Parker twice, and also struck witness. He had known Challoner from childhood, and identified him as the man whom he had heard say, later in the night, 'I knocked the first ----- down that came over the hedge.' One of his companions replied. 'You ought not to have left the old ----- behind.'

Mr. Waddy: It was something like an Irish fair, wasn't it? If you saw a head, you hit it? — I didn't get a stroke at all. (Laughter.)

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Some of the other men were more fortunate, were they not? — Yes. (Laughter.)

In answer to further questions, witness said he did not think Challoner was much of knurr and spell player.¹⁴ Asked if he knew that Challoner was playing at Peppers public house in the afternoon, and stayed in the house on the night in question, he said he knew he was there in the afternoon.

Albert Ashley, miner, Thorpe Healey, another watcher, said he was with the head keeper's party, and on hearing a cry for assistance went to the aid of Parker and companions. A stone struck him on the lip and cut it. It was Beardshaw who threw the stone, and on being taken hold by witness and a watcher named Brown he said he would give in.

Mr. Waddy: Beardshaw himself was rather roughly treated that night?— Not in my presence.

Do you know that a doctor was sent for and that he was plastered up?—I don't.

James Brown, miner, Thorpe Hesley, said he saw Beardshaw throw the stone which struck Ashley. Witness then struck him on the head with a stick, and captured him. There were some stones in Beardshaw's pocket. Witness also heard Challoner say to the other men, later that night, 'I knocked the first ----- down.'

Andrew Brodie, son of the head keeper, identified Wilson as being among the poaching party, and said that, but for falling over a net he would have caught him.

Robert Stotts, another miner, of Thorpe Hesley, corroborated as to it being Wilson who struck Brodie. He had known Wilson for a number of years. Witness also chased him, and also fell over a net.

Frank Parkin, another watcher, also gave evidence, but said did not see Wilson.

Mr. Waddy said it was not his intention to cross-examine the other witnesses in detail. It would be for the jury to decide which set of witnesses they would believe.

Replying to his Lordship, counsel said his defence was an alibi for all the prisoners but Beardshaw.

A miner named Tottie, who was the next witness, said he saw Higgins strike Parker with a stick.

Police-constable Hodgkinson, stationed at Blackburn, said at one o'clock on the morning of December 30th, he went with the three keepers and several watchers to the house of Higgins. The prisoner, in reply to witness's

¹⁴ Knurr and spell: an old English game, originating in Yorkshire, and especially popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 'knurr' was the hardwood or pottery ball, the 'spell' a stick of wood.

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apology for waking him, said 'I could not go to sleep. I know what they have come for.'

Andrew Brodie, head gamekeeper, gave evidence as to the presence of both game and rabbits in Smithy Wood but did not identify any of the prisoners.

This closed the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Waddy, in addressing the jury for the defence, pondered out how easy was, under the circumstances of the affray, that perfectly honest people might be mistaken in a matter of identification. It was true Beardshaw was caught red-handed, and would have to suffer, but Mr. Waddy hoped to show that his conduct was not as serious as the prosecution suggested. If he had not a single witness to call show where the other three prisoners were on the night in question, he would still ask the jury to look upon the evidence for the Crown with suspicion; but it would be shown that at the time of the fracas Wilson was three miles away in Shiregreen. Higgins was at Blackburn, and Challoner at Pepper's public house. As to the conversation in which Challoner was said to have remarked about knocking a man down, he suggested that it took place as Challoner and others were coming from the public house, and that the remark applied to a game at knur and spell, in which Challoner had been victorious.

Miss Mary Swift, of Blackburn, was the first witness called for the defence. She stated that on the night named Higgins visited her house at nine o'clock to see her father, who was ill, and stayed an hour.

Elizabeth Haughlon, single woman, Blackburn, said she saw Higgins at his home 10.20 p.m. and had then been in 40 minutes.

Thomas Wilkinson, labourer, Shiregreen, first witness called in the interest of the prisoner Wilson, said on the night in question he left Wilson at Beet's public house, Shiregreen, at half-past nine

Arthur Parker, who was also at the public house, said Wilson left the pub at 10 o'clock.

Thomas Beet, landlord of the Horse Shoe Inn, Shiregreen, said Wilson was at his house from seven o'clock till ten. The public house was three miles away from where the poaching affray took place.

Witness, cross-examined as to the circumstances which fixed in his memory the time of Wilson's leaving, said there had been a wedding party, and when at ten o'clock prisoner got up to go, witness suggested he should stay a little longer, but he refused.

Mr. Ellison: Why would he want to go so early on such a festive occasion?

Witness; There are some of us who think that enough is as good as a feast. (Laughter).

His Lordship; Are they all of that way of thinking at Shiregreen?

Witness: No, it would be better for some of them if they were.

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James Hanson, of Brightside, Wm Gregory, forkmaker, Shiregreen, and George Smith, milkman, Attercliffe, corroborated the landlord's evidence.

Albert Edward Sturdy of Stapleford, who' was visiting Shiregreen on the day in question, said he saw Wilson between Mr. Beet's house and his own home shortly after ten o'clock. Witness accompanied Wilson, who was the worse for drink, as far as his passage.

William Pepper was then called to give evidence favour of Challoner. He said he was the landlord of the Traveller's Inn at Cowley, near Smithy Wood. In the afternoon he and Challoner played a match at knur and spell, and afterwards they had tea together with nine others.

His Lordship: You call it tea?¹⁵

Witness: Yes. The match was won by Challoner, who left the house at at 11 o'clock.

George Steel, miner, Thorpe Hesley, said Challoner was at the inn to 11 p.m.

Corroborative evidence as to Challoner's movements was given by a large number of other witnesses, some of whom denied that when he was walking home, he made the remark alleged by the prosecution.

Counsel having addressed the jury, his Lordship summed up. The jury retired, and after an hour's deliberation stated that they were unable to agree regarding Wilson, and asked for the evidence of one of the witnesses called his behalf to be read. This having been done, they again retired; and in ten minutes brought in a verdict that Beardshaw and Challoner were guilty, and Wilson and Higgins not guilty. The latter two were therefore discharged. Beardshaw and Challoner were sent to gaol for three months with hard labour, the second indictment against Beardshaw not being proceeded with.

William Nevill:

Neville (1825-1915) was the 1st Marquess of Abergavenny. He had married Caroline Vanden-Bempde-Johnstone, daughter of Sir John Vanden-Bempde-Johnstone, 2nd Baronet and Louisa Augusta Venables-Vernon-Harcourt, daughter of Edward Venables-Vernon-Harcourt, Archbishop of York, in 1848. They had ten children. He wrote a book, *Penal Servitude*, which was published in 1903, following his imprisonment.

¹⁵ This is a well known cause of misunderstanding between Northerners and Southerners!

1899

In 1899, the foundation stone of the Victoria and Albert Museum was laid by Queen Victoria; Elgar's *Enigma Variations* premiered in London; and the Boers laid siege to Mafeking in South Africa; but, as was so often the case, Aaron's attention was caught by something else entirely:

Barnum's show in Sheffield on June 13th 1898 and held again in May of 1899 held in Barnsley on Oct 30th 1899.

What Aaron did not mention was an attempted suicide at Thorpe Hesley that year:

George Jenkinson, of Thorpe Hesley, attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat Sunday night. When, going to his bedroom he bade his sister Betsy "Good-bye." The father, hearing the remark, followed him and found he had inflicted a wound in his throat. Dr. Barr, of Wentworth, was called in, and after dressing the wound recommended his removal to the Rotherham Hospital. Yesterday he was admitted to the institution. He is stated to have been greatly depressed in consequence of his wife's death, which occurred in September last.¹⁶

Nor did he mention the laying of a foundation stone for a new chapel, for the United Methodist Free Church:

A very interesting ceremony took place on Saturday, when foundation stones were laid for alterations and additions to the chapel and Sunday Schools. The Rev. W. Locke-Smith presided over the ceremony, and presented to each of the ladies who laid the stones, on behalf of the trustees, a silver trowel suitably inscribed. A vote of thanks was passed. A public tea followed the stone-laying, at which about 200 persons sat down. A meeting was afterwards held in the Primitive Chapel, when Mr. James Mackinder presided. The ladies had contributed £22 10s., collection at the stone-laying £10 3s. 8d., proceeds of tea £6, Mr. Holland, M.P., £5, at the meeting £3 13s. 8d. This, together with other donations, brought up the proceeds of the day to £65 10s.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Tuesday 23 May 1899.

¹⁷ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Monday 10 July 1899.

1901

Following the assassination of President William McKinley by the Anarchist Leon Czolgosz, Theodore Roosevelt became President of the USA. The Commonwealth of Australia was formed out of the British colonies of Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. The House of Lords ruled, in the *Taff Vale* case, that trade unions could be held liable for damages caused by their members; and Queen Victoria died at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, after a reign lasting 64 years. The Census of 1901 shows that Aaron was still with his family at The Gate Inn in Thorpe Hesley; but that he had become a wheelwright, while four of his brothers were described as 'employed on farm.'

Aaron Allott recorded only three events:

Thorpe Hesley Sports began after the Breakup of the Flower Show on Sat Aug 17th 1901.

Aaron Fisher of Chapeltown murdered his Wife on Dec 16th 1901 and sentenced at Leeds Assizes by Mr Justice Ridley to 15 years P-S on Thursday Mar 13th 1902.

F.D.Jackson otherwise Horos was sentenced to 15 Years P-S and the Swami or Edith L.Jackson or Horros was sent to 7 Years P-S at Central Criminal Court London by Mr Justice Bigham on Dec 20th 1901.

Aaron Fisher:

This story was first reported in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* on 17 December 1901.

**TRAGEDY AT CHAPELTOWN.
FATAL ENDING TO A FAMILY QUARREL.
COLLIER ARRESTED FOR WIFE MURDER**

The inhabitants of a village were startled last night by news of a ghastly tragedy which had taken place in their midst. Briefly summed up, the facts are that Emma Fisher was found lying dead, and her husband, Aaron Fisher,

is under arrest, charged on suspicion with having caused the death of his wife.

Details of the tragedy, so far as investigations made up to date, reveal, go to show that the sad affair is purely the outcome of matrimonial infelicity. The man and woman, it appears, have led a life of the cat and dog order for some time. Mere reproaches have ripened into personal abuse, and the crowning misfortune took place yesterday, when the woman lost her life. It is certain also that drink has played a fearfully prominent part in this domestic tragedy. Aaron Fisher is 37 years of age, and for some time has lived at Jovial Collier's Yard, Greenside, Chapeltown. His wife, Emma, is two years his junior. Both are natives of the village, and they have five children, whose ages range from 17 to three years, and who all live with their parents. The husband has worked for some time at the Smithy Wood Colliery, Newton, Chambers and Company, and has the reputation of being a hard-working man, although fond of stimulants. The wife appears to have been a woman of ordinary type.

Mrs. Fisher was confined about three weeks ago. but the baby died soon after birth. Her husband for some reason - probably was keeping "Saint Monday" - did not go to work yesterday. He was out a good portion the day, but returned to his house about tea time considerably the worse drink. Presently he lay down, and slept for an hour or so. Upon waking he upbraided his wife for taking more liquor than was good for her. Both of them got to high words, and a quarrel ensued. It grew to such magnitude that their fifteen year old son, who was present and heard all that took place, became much alarmed, ran to the house of Police-constable Ramsey, who lives close by, and appealed to the officer to use his influence to quell the conflict. Ramsey appreciated the situation, and at once went to the house of the Fishers.

The tragedy in the meantime had taken place. When the policeman opened the door he found the wife lying on the floor in pool of blood. He lifted her up, and discovered an injury over her left eye, and a severe cut on the left side of her neck, just below the ear. The injured woman gasped twice, and died in the constable's arms. The body was placed on a sofa by the constable, and Dr. Anderson was sent for. Sergeant Burrows, who has charge of the constabulary in the district, was also summoned. The husband was all the time seated in an armchair by the fire, smoking. Dr. Anderson soon arrived, and at once made examination of the corpse. He pronounced life extinct, and declared that the woman had bled to death through the severance of the left side of the jugular vein. A broken dinner knife bearing traces of blood was found on the floor, and was taken possession of by Police Constable Ramsey.

Sergeant Burrows was prompt to act. He immediately arrested Aaron Fisher, and after cautioning him, charged him on suspicion, with having caused the death of his wife. The prisoner made no reply. A policeman was

placed in charge of the house, and the prisoner was once conveyed to the chief police station of the division in Burngreave Road, Sheffield, and there placed in the custody of Superintendent Bielby.

At the present time, of course, the police have not concluded their investigations. Fisher will be brought at the Court this morning. It is probable that the doctor and the son may give evidence. In any case a remand will be granted, pending the inquiry of the Coroner.

The story resumed in the *Telegraph* the following day, Wednesday, 18 December 1901.

**THE CHAPELTOWN TRAGEDY.
HUSBAND CHARGED WITH MURDER.
POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS**

At the Sheffield West Riding Police Court yesterday, Aaron Fisher, miner, of Jovial Colliers' Yard, Greenside, Chapeltown, was charged with the wilful murder of his wife, Emma Fisher, by stabbing her with a knife on Monday evening. When case was called on, the prisoner stepped briskly into the dock, and beyond having a somewhat haggard appearance, seemed unaffected by the serious nature of the charge against him. Throughout the case he leaned with one arm on the rail of the dock and listened to the proceedings with apparent unconcern.

Superintendent Bielby explained that the prisoner was a collier, and resided at Jovial Colliers' Yard, Greenside, Chapeltown. He was before the court that morning on the serious charge of having caused the death of his wife, Emma Fisher, aged 35 years, by stabbing her with a knife on Monday night at Chapeltown. He (Mr. Bielby) only purposed to offer sufficient evidence to justify the magistrates remanding him for a week, in order that further enquiries might be made, and also to await the verdict of the Coroner's jury. The inquest was fixed for to-day, but it would only be opened for purpose of identification and the issuing of burial certificate. The prisoner, continued Mr. Bielby, was not working on Monday, and unfortunately he partook of more drink than he should have done. He returned home between five and six o'clock, and then appeared to have laid down and fallen asleep. From the statement made by the prisoner's son, it appeared that the deceased woman then commenced to prepare food for the prisoner to eat. The prisoner woke up, and some words ensued between him and his wife. He struck her, and his son, who was in the house, seeing the blow struck, fetched Police Constable Ramsey. The latter arrived on the scene, and found Mrs. Fisher lying on the floor in a pool of blood. He lifted her up, and she gasped once or twice, and then expired in the constable's arms. She was placed on the sofa,

and Dr. Anderson arrived, followed by Sergeant Burrows. Meanwhile Police Constable Ramsey found a broken table knife on the floor of the kitchen. He (Mr. Bielby) did not mean to infer that the knife was broken by the violence of the blow; it looked as though it was broken previously. It was, no doubt, the knife with which the deed was committed, because the prisoner, when the constable picked it up, stated that it was the weapon with which the deed had been done. As soon as the constable picked up the knife the prisoner made attempt to leave the house, but Ramsey stopped him. Sergeant Burrows then arrived, cautioned the prisoner, and charged him with unlawfully causing the death his wife by stabbing her. He made no reply.

Harriet Sharpe, widow, was the only witness called. She said she lived next door to the house which had been occupied by the prisoner and his wife. About half-past six on Monday night she was in her house, when she heard Fisher quarrelling with his wife. She heard him say, "If you say anything I'll cut your ----- heart out." She heard more until Fisher shouted "Harriet," calling to the witness. She was so frightened that she did not go out at first, and locked the door instead. Afterwards she looked out and saw the prisoner standing on the step of his door. His little girl, who was in the yard, said "Oh, Mrs. Sharpe, daddy has killed my mamma." Prisoner, who remained on the step, said, "Oh, Harriet. I have killed her: what mun I do?" He was throwing up his hands and crying something awful, added the witness.

Prisoner here interrupted with the remark, "It is false."

Supt. Bielby asked on this evidence that the accused be remanded for a week. Prisoner, being asked if he had any objection, replied, "No; I don't know that I have."

He was then remanded custody until next day.

The action now shifts to the Coroner's court. The proceedings were reported in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* for Monday 23 December 1901.

**THE CHAPELTOWN TRAGEDY.
CORONER'S INQUIRY.
VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER.**

At Chapeltown Police Station to-day the Deputy-Coroner, Mr. B. Bagshaw, concluded the inquiry into the circumstances attending the death of Emma Fisher, aged 35 years, the wife of Aaron Fisher, miner, who lived at Jovial Collier's Yard, Chapeltown. The husband is in custody on suspicion of having caused the death his wife, and was represented the inquest by Mr. H. D. Dungworth (of Mr. A. Muir Wilson's office).

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

The Coroner, the outset, said he had a very great reluctance in calling a child of the deceased as a witness. After consideration, however, he thought was his duty to call one of the sons to speak to certain particulars.

Joseph Fisher, aged 14 years, son of the deceased, who is nearly blind, was accordingly called. On Monday afternoon, he said, he returned home at halfpast five. He found his father lying on the sofa asleep; his mother was peeling potatoes. His father awoke at a quarter to six.

The Deputy-Coroner: Was there a quarrel between your father and mother? — About five minutes after.

About what?—My mother had had some beer. She had said she would not have any more, and my father started calling her.

Were any blows struck? — Yes.

Who struck the first blow?—My father.

Did your mother return it?—No, sir.

Witness added that five minutes later his mother went to the sofa, bleeding a little, and then went to the sink. His mother did not strike his father.

Did you see anything your father's hand?—No, sir.

Did he strike her more than once?—No.

Where did the blood come from? —Out of her mouth.

Continuing, witness said he fetched Police Constable Ramsey, who lives near. The latter returned with him to the house at once. The knife produced (half the blade being broken off) was one which his mother used for peeling the potatoes.

By the jury: The knife had been broken by the deceased earlier in the day.

By Supt. Bielby: His mother was standing by the fireplace when his father struck her.

Harriet Sharpe, a widow, who lives in the same yard as did the Fishers, said the latter had been neighbours of hers for about eleven months. The deceased used to take beer, but witness had never seen her drunk. The husband was sometimes the worse for beer on Saturdays. Witness had frequently heard the couple quarrelling. On Monday last about half-past six witness heard a row going on in Fisher's house: she could hear what the man was saying.

The Coroner: I am not going use the expressions I understand were used - they are too filthy for any sort of black and white. Did he say, however, 'If thou says Oh!, I'll cut thy ----- heart out? Yes, Sir.

Were these words used more than once?—Yes.

Did she reply? —Yes. She said, Oh, Aaron don't.

A few minutes afterwards, witness continued, the door of the Fishers' use opened, and witness heard the deceased say "Fetch the bobbie." A little later Fisher called out, "Harriet." Witness was frightened, and did not open

the door until she heard someone say. "Mrs. Sharpe, will you come? My dada's killed my mama. Blood is running out her mouth." Witness opened the door and saw Fisher standing on his doorstep. He threw his arms above his head, and said. "Oh, Harriet. I've killed her; what maun I do?"

Did he seem to be in grief? — Yes, his cries were something awful.

Have you expostulated with the prisoner about abusing his wife? - Yes. I once spoke to him.

On that occasion did you tell him he should not beat his wife as he did, and did he make use of a very offensive expression? — Yes, did.

The Deputy Coroner (to Supt. Bielby) - You can bring it out before the magistrates, superintendent, if you like. I am not going to have it in my depositions—it is too filthy.

After other evidence the jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against Aaron Fisher.

We now move back to the Magistrates Court, where the prosecution took a different view of the case from that taken by the Coroner's jury, and the magistrates agreed. As the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* reported, on Tuesday 24 December 1901: "The prisoner was committed on the charge of wilful murder."

The final chapter was written in when Aaaron Fisher appeared at the Assize Court, for his trial. We are already familiar with much of the evidence. The following extracts from the *Telegraph* for Friday 14 March 1902 will explain what was said that was new.

**THE CHAPELTOWN TRAGEDY.
SAD ENDING TO A MARRIED LIFE
THE PRISONER'S VERSION**

Aaron Fisher said he had been married 17 years. Except when his wife was drinking they lived on good terms. She was a good wife when sober. He had complained of his wife's habits for 15 years, and there had been many quarrels, in which he had used strong language to her. His wife pawned anything from the house in order to get drink - the children's clothes and pictures. He had threatened his wife in order to prevent her drinking. When he said he would "rip her up" he did not contemplate taking her life. He had not used any violence to his wife beyond striking her with his hand and fist. No police court proceedings had resulted. On the 16th December he had been to a public house, where he heard something concerning his wife. He reached home in the afternoon and found his wife there. She had been drinking. He spoke to her about fetching beer on the previous Sunday night. A quarrel

followed. He (the prisoner) had had a few drinks that day, but was not "fresh".

Mr. Waddy: What took place between yourself and your wife?

The Prisoner: I had been asleep for about an hour, and got off the sofa, .She had had some more beer, and I called her for drinking.

Did you use the expression that you would cut heart out?— No. Proceeding, the prisoner said he called her a bad ----- and she promised not to take any more drink. He struck her with his open hand on her face. She then went towards the sink and called out, "Oh. Aaron, don't." Afterwards she fell to the floor. He did not see her do anything before she fell. He went to her, and when lifting her up saw a wound on her left eye. He also saw the knife underneath her, and until then was not aware that she had been wounded in the throat.

Mr. Waddy: I ask you, upon your oath, did you strike your wife with that knife?

The Prisoner: No, sir; I did not. Further, the prisoner said when his wife fell she said, "Good God, Aaron!" He called Mrs. Sharpe, and had she come in time she would have seen his wife alive. Before falling his wife did not cry out for the police. He only attempted to leave the house in order to fetch the doctor. He did not attempt to escape when the police were in the house. After the doctor had pronounced his wife dead he produced his pipe, but could not smoke. He admitted saying to his little girl that if they hanged him she would be without a father. He did not intend this as a confession He was considerably upset.

By Mr. Thomas: After he had struck his wife on the face he sat on a chair. He did not notice that she had a knife in her hand when she fell. No-one called for the police. He did not say to a neighbour, "Oh, Harriet, I've killed her. What shall I do?" He told Police Constable Ramsey that his wife had stabbed herself, or that she had broken a blood- vessel.

By Mr. Waddy: His wife had often threatened to take her life.

FISHER'S CONSISTENT CONDUCT.

Mr. Waddy then addressed the jury on behalf the prisoner. The defence, he said, had been clearly indicated in the prisoner's evidence, and it was that the death of the unfortunate woman was brought about not by any violence of the prisoner but by rash and passionate action on the part of the woman herself. This, however deplorable it might be, was the more reasonable explanation of the way the woman came be injured. Were the jury

satisfied with the case as put forward by the Prosecution, for it must be remembered that it was for the Crown to make out fully any case against a prisoner? Mr. Waddy proceeded to comment on the evidence. It had been proved that blood was found on the prisoner's coat. This was extremely likely, as, when the woman fell and before the prisoner knew that she was wounded, he supported her by placing his arm under her head. There was no evidence at all that he (the prisoner) had the knife in his hand, or that he used it. His conduct subsequent to the affair was not consistent with that of a man who had killed his wife. The defence, remarked Mr. Waddy, was not the invention of an ingenious lawyer, or put forward at the last moment by a barrister at the Assize Court, but was the defence, stated by the man after his wife had died. It was the story of an honest man, and he asked the jury to accept it.

THE JUDGE'S VIEW OF THE CASE.

His Lordship, in summing up, pointed out that the question for the jury was, Did the woman die from a blow inflicted by Aaron Fisher or did she die from wounds self-inflicted? The counsel for the defence had not suggested an alternative verdict of manslaughter, and he (the learned judge) did not see how the case could be one of manslaughter. If it had been a case of provocation or of squabble, taking place when the parties were in a state of drunkenness, when blows had been struck in temper, it would have been quite a different story. Turning to the evidence his Lordship said that if the prisoner actually used the words attributed to him by Mrs. Sharpe, it amounted to a confession of his guilt. Nobody was in the room when the blow was struck except the prisoner and the dead woman, and the jury therefore had to choose between the evidence of the prosecution witnesses and that of the prisoner himself. The doctors stated that it was not impossible, but certainly improbable that the blows were self-inflicted. Cases of people cutting their own throats were frequent, but the jury must ask themselves if it was likely for a woman to inflict wounds of such a nature upon herself. If they were reasonably doubtful whether the prisoner had inflicted the blows, they must of course give him the benefit.

VERDICT AND SENTENCE.

The jury were absent over an hour, and returned into Court with a verdict that the prisoner was guilty of manslaughter. On being asked if he had anything to say before sentence was passed, prisoner said, "It is not right that they should convict me of anything. I am innocent.

The Judge said he agreed with the verdict in so far as it declared that the prisoner had caused the death of his wife. The responsibility was with the jury, and he accepted their verdict, as indeed he was bound to do. At the very

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

least, it was a most merciful view to take, and it was necessary to pass a severe sentence of penal servitude. His Lordship then passed sentence of 15 years' penal servitude.

The prisoner was entirely overcome on hearing the sentence, and walked from the dock with difficulty.

So, although the prosecution and the judge seem to have thought, with Aaron Allott, that the killing of Aaron Fisher's wife was murder, two juries had come to the conclusion that it was manslaughter; and the Judge had to sentence on that basis. Nevertheless, the sentence he handed down was only lenient when compared to a sentence of death, which he would have been obliged to pass if the verdict had been that Fisher was guilty of murder.

Even this is not quite the end of the story, however, because we know, from Aaron Allott's Journal, that Aaron Fisher, though sentenced to 15 years penal servitude in 1902, was released 11 years later, in 1913.

The Horos case:

The background here was that 'Swami' Laura Horos (c. 1849 – after 1909) was a medium who claimed to have been born in Italy in 1854, the daughter of King Ludwig I of Bavaria and the infamous dancer Lola Montez, but was raised by foster parents. She became involved in spiritualism in the 1860s and 1870s. She spent some time in South Africa, calling herself Helena Horos of the College of Occult Sciences, and then ran a fruitarian colony in Florida. She married Frank Dutton Jackson in Louisiana in 1899, calling herself Princess Editha Lolita.

The couple went to England in the 1890s, calling themselves "Swami Laura Horos" and "Theodore Horos". They set up a "Purity League" at the Theocratic Unity Temple, near Regent's Park in London, and worked as fortune tellers and diviners. They were arrested in Birkenhead in September 1901 and charged with obtaining property by false pretences, rape and buggery – the later charges being connected with sexual practices at their 'temple' in London. Aaron was correct in recording that the Swami was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment, and her husband to 15 years.

1902

Aaron noted several very serious criminal trials this under this year:

Lily Shore was tried the same day by the Same Judge and was acquitted for drowning her child in Elsecar Reservoir on Jan 7th 1902.

The Liverpool Bank Frauds. Goudie - Burge – Stiles – an[d] Kelly were sentenced at the Old Bailey by Mr Justice Bigham on Friday 22nd day of Feb. 1902 For Defrauding the Bank of 169,000 Pound. Goudie and Burge received 10 years, two of the 10 years hard labour, they were taken to Wormwood Scrubs Prison. Stiles and Kelly received [sic] 2 years hard labour each. They were taken to Pentonville Prison.

Mr[s] Penruddock the wife of a wealthy Wiltshire Justice of the Peace was ordered by Mr Justice Bigham to Pay a Fine of £50 at the Old Bailey on Fri Nov 1st 1902 for illtreating he[r] little Daughter in a Horrible manner.

Solomon Barmarsh 47 one of a gang of 9 sentenced to 15 years P-S by Mr Justice Darling for Forging Bank of England Notes value of £90,000 he committed suicide in Newgate Prison on Dec 20th 1902.

Lily Shore:

The newspaper coverage of this dreadful incident began with the report of the coroner's inquest on Thursday 9 January 1902 in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*:

THE ELSECAR RESERVOIR TRAGEDY VERDICT OF WILFUL MURDER

Mr. P. P. Maitland held an inquest at the Town Hall, Barnsley, yesterday, touching the death of Frederick Shore, the four months' old son of Fred. Shore checkweighman at the Rockingham Colliery, which occurred at the workhouse infirmary early on Tuesday morning.

At the outset, it was stated by the Coroner that the case was one which caused suspicion to be cast upon the child's mother, who, on Saturday, it was alleged, jumped with into the Elsecar reservoir. It was customary for any suspected person to be present at an inquest, but he was informed by the

workhouse medical officer that the woman was quite unfit at present, her mind being somewhat ranged.

Fred. Shore, the child's father, said the child had been very delicate from birth. Saturday morning last he left his wife and child in bed when he went to work. The house was empty when he returned, and he was informed that his wife had attempted to commit suicide, and that she had been taken in a cab to Barnsley. He went there, but it was deemed advisable that he should not see his wife, and he had not seen her since.

Jonathan Dyson, moulder, of Foundry Street, Elsecar, said that on Saturday morning last he was having a walk with a friend named William Turner, round the Elsecar reservoir. When near the bridge they heard a splashing in the water, and running to the spot, saw a woman in the reservoir. Turner immediately jumped in, whilst witness got hold of the bridge and hold of Turner's hand whilst he pulled the woman out. She appeared dazed, and witness, who was an ambulance student, commenced rubbing her. She seemed to come round, and then commenced struggling, and cried. 'Let me go back.' They then saw the child in the water, and Turner again went in, whilst witness held the woman with one hand, and Turner with the other. They got the child out, and took it immediately to the house of Mrs. Walker, who lived nearby whilst witness and Turner took the woman to the Elsecar policeman's house. She was rambling in her speech during the whole journey, and her eyes looked wild. Whilst they were at the house, Mrs Walker brought the child. It had nothing on but its wet nightgown.

Police-constable Eadie spoke to receiving the woman from the last witness. As soon as he saw her, asked "Whatever have you done a thing like this for?" and she replied that it was the drink and other troubles. After that she became very sullen, and refused to speak. About that time Mrs. Walker came in with the deceased child. It had its wet clothing on, and was as cold as ice. Witness gave it to his wife, who stripped it, and covered it with warm flannels. Witness took the woman to the Elsecar Police Station, and there noticed a cut about three inches long on the right side of her neck. She would not speak. Dry clothing was procured for her, and on the instructions of Dr. Ritchie, witness took both the woman and child to Barnsley Workhouse Infirmary.

Dr. Collins, workhouse medical officer, said he saw the child on Monday morning. It was in a very wasted condition, and he gave instructions for it to be kept in bed. He did not know until after death that the child had been immersed in a reservoir. He had since made a post-mortem examination of the body. The left lung was congested, but the other organs were normal. The immediate cause of death was pneumonia, though its condition was such that he did not think it would have lived.

The Coroner remarked that it was strange that the doctor was not informed that the child had been immersed in cold water. It was such an

extraordinary case that he ought to have been told of the circumstances of the child's admission to the infirmary.

The jury found that death was due to pneumonia, accelerated by the child's immersion in the reservoir.

The Coroner said that amounted to wilful murder. As to the state of the woman's mind at the time, that would be dealt with by another court. He should, however, give a warrant.

The following report appeared in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* for Friday 17 January 1902, and related to the proceedings in the magistrates court:

THE ELSECAR RESERVOIR TRAGEDY COMMITTAL FOR MANSLAUGHTER

This morning, Lily Shore, wife of Fred Shore, checkweighman. of Hovland Common, was again brought before the Barnsley West Riding Magistrates, charged with the wilful murder of her infant son, Frederick Winston Shore, on the 4th inst. at Elsecar. Mr. J. Hewitt defended.

On the day in question the prisoner was seen to jump into the Elsecar reservoir, carrying the deceased child in her arms. Two moulders, named Dyson and Turner rushed to the rescue, and succeeded in getting both out. The woman appeared strange in her actions, and was handed over to the custody of the police and subsequently taken to the Barnsley Workhouse.

Jonathan Dyson, Elsecar, gave details of the rescue of the woman and child. When they got her on the bank, the prisoner cried. "Oh, let me go back in again," and struggled to get away. She appeared dazed, rambled in her speech, and, in witness' opinion, did not know what she was doing. She had a wound in her neck, which was bleeding. She was asked how she had come by it, but she gave no explanation. Deceased was at the time clothed only in a nightdress and shawl.

Mr. S. J. Crawshaw, master of the Barnsley Union Workhouse gave evidence of the admission both mother and child to the house on Saturday afternoon, the inst.—the child died on the following Tuesday—and Dr. E. B., the medical officer, said he had examined the body, which was in very emaciated condition, and under any circumstances, he did not think the child would have lived. He had made a post-mortem examination, and was of the opinion that the immediate cause death was pneumonia, though the primary was the emaciation. He saw prisoner on the same day. She was not then responsible for her actions. Fred Shore, prisoner's husband, said that for one or two weeks prior to the 4th his wife had been greatly concerned about her father's health. When witness was told her there was hope, she began to fret, and was frequently strange in her actions.

Police-constable Edie proved the arrest of the prisoner, whom he asked: "Whatever have you done a thing like that for?" replied, "Drink, and other things." At the time she smelled strongly of drink. He asked her for her name and address, but she became sullen and refused to answer. Witness subsequently had her examined by Dr. Ritchie, who gave an order for her detention in the workhouse.

After considering the case privately, the chairman, Mr. C. Brady, said the bench were not disposed to commit the prisoner on the capital charge, but they should commit her the charge of manslaughter. They did not think it was in their province to say whether the woman was of unsound mind or not. That was a question which, in any circumstances, a jury would have to decide.

The story continued in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on Friday 14 March 1902:

WEST RIDING ASSIZES
LEEDS TOWN HALL – THURSDAY
CROWN COURT
Before Mr Justice Ridley
HOYLAND NETHER WOMAN ACQUITTED OF CHILD MURDER

Lily Shore (30), married woman, was indicted for feloniously killing Frederick Winstone Shore, her infant child, at Hoyland Nether, on January 7. Mr. Longstaffe prosecuted, and Mr. C. Mellor defended....

[the court heard from various witnesses]

Mr. Mellor called Fred Shore, the prisoner's husband. He said his wife was a fond and affectionate mother. Her father had been ill and this had affected her spirits. The doctor had told her that the child could not live long, and this had greatly distressed her. Witness was willing to provide suitable attendance upon his wife.

Mr. Mellor submitted there was evidence to show that the mother wilfully immersed the child. The doctor's evidence showed that emaciation was the primary cause of death.

Judge advised the jury not to convict in the case, and a verdict of "Not guilty" was accordingly returned.

When reading of these tragic events, it may be as well to recall that there was another, more cheerful, and even amusing side to the story of Elsecar Reservoir. Only a few years after the attempted suicide related above, in 1910, a local amateur photographer, Herbert Parkin, took some photographs of the reservoir and surrounding areas and sent them into the *Sheffield Star* under the caption 'Elsecar-by-the-Sea', though it is around 100 miles from the sea (about as far as one can get in

Britain). However, despite the geography, the name caught on and a thriving tourism business was established. (They even produced Elsecar rock, with the name running through it). The Hoyland council decided to create the public park to take advantage of the influx. The name is still jokingly used by locals.

The Liverpool Bank Frauds:

This note related to a very extensive fraud, committed in Liverpool, but where the committal, trial and sentencing took place in Bow Street and the Old Bailey, in London. Some details of the crime had been published in the *Worcestershire Chronicle* on Saturday 7 December 1901. The large scale of the crime becomes rapidly apparent:

LIVERPOOL BANK FRAUDS

In connection with the Liverpool Bank frauds a Bradford bookmaker named Thomas Francis Kelly, Tennyson Place, Otley Road, Bradford, was on Saturday brought before Mr. De Rutzen in Bow Street. Mr. Kelly, on Friday afternoon, having received information from his Bradford solicitor that a warrant was out for his arrest, surrendered by appointment with Scotland Yard. At Bow Street he was defended by Mr. Charles Mellor, a barrister, of the North-eastern Circuit, instructed by Mr. Chas. Law Atkinson, solicitor, Bradford. The prosecution was in the hands of Mr. Abraham.

The charge against the defendant was one of feloniously uttering cheques knowing them to have been forged. Mr. Abraham, who appeared on behalf of the Bank of Liverpool, said he intended simply to apply for a remand, and not to enter into the details of the case.

The bank clerk Goudie forged cheques totalling nearly £170,000, in all 27 forgeries. From investigation it had been ascertained that cheques and proceeds, amounting in all to £73,000, were addressed to Kelly, who carried on the business of clerk and commission agent in Bradford. About £53,000 were forged cheques that went directly into his hands. The remainder, it appeared, were proceeds sent to him from time to time by Goudie. Of the £170,000 £30,000 was remitted to a man named William Haines Styles, for whose apprehension a warrant had been issued. About £500 or £600 had been remitted by prisoner Goudie, and the man named Marks, who was also concerned in the robberies, apparently had committed suicide. He (Mr. Abraham) did not I know how true this report was. From a statement found by the police in his bag, this appeared to be so.

Mr. Rutzen interrupted by remarking: At any rate he is not here.

Mr. Rutzen refused bail, and remanded the prisoner until Monday, when the case for the prosecution may be opened by counsel for prosecution.

On 14 January 1902 the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* gave some of the details of the betting these criminals engaged in.

**THE LIVERPOOL BANK FRAUDS
FURTHER INTERESTING EVIDENCE
GOUDIE'S BIG BETS**

Thomas Peterson Goudie, ledger clerk; Richard Burge, pugilist; Thomas Francis Kelly, bookmaker; J. and William Haines Stiles, bookmaker, were again brought at Bow Street Police Court, London, yesterday, on the charges preferred against them in connection with the Liverpool bank frauds. The same counsel appeared.

Mr. Fenwick, the magistrate, took his seat shortly before eleven o'clock.

Alfred Charles Wicks, called and examined by Mr. Gill, said he resided at Fulham and was at present without occupation. He knew Stiles, and had been acquainted with him for twelve or fourteen years. Kelly had been known to him about ten years. Goudie he also knew, first making his acquaintance in the middle last year. In September or October, 1900, witness was at work for Mr. Stiles, whom witness had always known as a backer of horses. Kelly was more of commission agent than a backer. Kelly did commissions for various gentlemen. The business of witness carried him to race meetings. Stiles employed witness as a valet.

**THE LIVERPOOL BANK FRAUDS
SENTENCES ON THE PRISONERS
LARGE RESTITUTION**

At the Old Bailey on Saturday Goodie, Kelly, Stiles, and Burge were brought up for sentence in connexion with the Liverpool Bank frauds. The prosecution said that Burge would disgorge £30,000. Kelly £17,000 and Stiles £6,500. Counsel addressed the Court in mitigation. For Burge it was said that Goudie betted with anyone, and that Burge only went with him to get another customer. For Goudie it was urged that this was his first offence. The sentences on Burge and Goudie amounted to ten years' penal servitude; on Stiles and Kelly two years' imprisonment with hard labour. Mr. Justice Bigham said he was sorry he could not pass a heavier sentence upon the latter two men. Before rising he said wished thank the gentlemen who prepared the case for the prosecution for the great ability they had shown getting it up. He

wished also to say that he was satisfied that no blame should be imputed to the Bank of Liverpool for the series of losses which it had sustained. He thought no care would have prevented these frauds being practised. His lordship commended the Police.

For some reason Aaron was particularly interested in the fate of the defendant Burge, because he noted the date of his early release from prison, on the same page of his journal as the above

Dick Burge was released from Pentonville Prison on Tuesday Aug. 10th 1909.

The Penruddocke Sentence:

The *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* for Friday 28 November 1902 gives more information:

MATERNAL DISLIKE

A strange and painful case was heard this week, when Mrs Penruddocke, the wife of a Justice of the Peace, of Compton Park, Wiltshire, had, at the instance of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to appear before the magistrates to answer a charge of cruelty to her child, aged 6 years. It was alleged against the lady, not that she had beaten her offspring, but with slow systematic cruelty she had made the little one's life a burden, though she was in all other respects an exemplary mother to her other children. Counsel said she had expressed the wish that the girl would eat some poisonous berries and that she would break her neck and once she suggested placing her to sleep with a child suffering from chickenpox. Among other acts she was said to have given her daughter a raisin with mustard and was charged with supplying it with insufficient food, while its brothers and sisters had plenty – the child ate that set down for the dog – and making it stand in a forked tree on one leg in the rain. The child herself told the court her mother once put a wasp down her back.

There was an article in *The Lancet* about this case and questions were asked in Parliament.¹⁸

MR. TULLY, Leitrim, S.

¹⁸ HC Deb 26 November 1902 vol 115 cc 506-7506.

I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the result of the Penruddocke case, and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS

My attention has been called to the case, but it is not one in which I have any jurisdiction, nor can I express any opinion on the course which the Judge thought fit to adopt. The matter was entirely in the Judge's discretion, as the Act prescribing the penalties that can be inflicted in such a case fixes wide limits calculated to allow a suitable penalty for every case. The penalty on indictment may be anything up to £100, or may be a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding two years, either by way of alternative or in addition to the fine. The only alteration which would appear to be suggested is to the effect of prescribing a fixed or minimum penalty for all cases. This could only be done by legislation; and not only would it be sure to operate most unjustly in certain cases, but the principle of fixing minimum penalties is contrary to the whole tendency and practice of modern legislation.

MR. TULLY

Can the right hon. Gentleman say why there is one law for the rich and another for the poor? Why was not the lady sent to prison?

MR. SPEAKER

Order, order!

Solomon Barmarsh:

Solomon Barmarsh was only one of a number of foreigners who were involved in a vast conspiracy to counterfeit Bank of England banknotes in 1902. Their crimes received widespread publicity, and they received long (and in Barmarsh's case, extremely long) sentences for their crimes. The *Lincolnshire Chronicle* covered the story on Friday 7 November 1902:

THE BANK-NOTE CASE INFORMER'S REMARKABLE STORY

At the Mansion House Police-court, London, Wednesday, Alderman Strong resumed the hearing of charges preferred against six men in connection with

forging and uttering Bank of England notes. They were Solomon Barmarsh, 48, cigar merchant; William Barmarsh, 26, his son, described as a cigarette maker; Joe Zabeeky, 27, carpenter ; Matthew Rome, 47, of no occupation; Salisbury Israel, 48, bootmaker ; and Morris Males, 73, glazier.

THE PROCESSES OF FORGERY

Mr. Matthews, in giving an outline of the case, said that the principal witness for the prosecution was a man named Schmidt, who was the actual engraver of spurious notes, and who was in the position of informer. In June 1901, Schmidt was engaged in the manufacture of the forged notes—His immediate employers being Solomon and William Barmash. He would relate how different experiments were made for the production of the watermark, and, when that difficulty had been overcome, how he proceeded to manufacture notes of the face value of £5, £10, and £50. He was engaged, not only in London in this nefarious trade, but also at Southsea. It was intended in accordance with that scheme, that spurious notes should not be circulated in England, but in the United States. Early in the present year three of the forged notes were uttered in America, and resulted in an arrest being effected. A sample of the forged notes was sent by the authorities at Washington to England, and came into the possession of Messrs. Freshfield and Sons, solicitors to the Bank of England.

John Schmidt was then called, and as he walked past the dock Zabeeky gave a loud cry and banged his hands on the dock-rail, shouting, 'His name is not Schmidt; his name is Simon Schwartz. He lived in my house. He's an Anarchist; and God help me, he's against me.' He continued to shout out and tear at his hair; and eventually broke down and sobbed.

THE PRINTING OF THE NOTES

Jean Schmidt was then called, and he gave a detailed narrative of his association with Solomon & William Barmash, whom he had known, he said, for three years. His negotiations with the elder Barmarsh for the manufacture of the spurious notes commenced in June, 1901, and continued down to Jan. last. There was a conversation between them as to whether witness could do something for them in English or foreign money. Witness replied that to his mind Bank of England notes would be most convenient and cheapest, and would take the shortest time, and he reckoned that the cost would be from £70 to £80 to do a certain amount of £5 and £10 notes of the face value of £14,000. Witness and Mrs. Samuels were to be partners, and were to get seven and a half per cent, of the face value between them. That proposition was agreed to. Witness had asked for ten per cent of the face value between them, but the Barmarshes would not consent.

With a view to satisfying the Barmashes that he could do the work, could make the water-marks, he was given a room in their house, and in the space of a week made several specimen plates. The Barmashes pointed out some faults in the plates, and he altered them. The experiment cost about £2, which Solomon Barmash paid, while the witness received a few shillings as a weekly salary. A house in Andover Road, Southsea, was taken by the Barmashes. He went there with Wm. Barmarsh, and there he was engaged in making plates for the water-mark, in which he was successful.

Before going to Southsea there was a conversation, at which the elder Barmarsh was present, as to the cost, and they came to the conclusion that it would take too much time and be too expensive to make water-marks by hand, so witness suggested that they should have a machine for the purpose. He designed one, which was made and sent down to Southsea, but would not work properly, and it had to be sent back. Meanwhile witness was working on the plate for printing £5 and £10 notes, and he then made a complete sample of the notes. They found it would take too long to make £5 and £10 notes by hand, and they settled to make £50 notes and a smaller quantity of £5 and £10 notes. On his return he said they were quite satisfactory. Some of the electro plates which would not answer were dropped in the harbour at Southsea before he returned to London.

One of the reasons the story caused widespread outrage was that a number of the criminals were foreigners, thought to have abused British hospitality. For example, the report in the *Belfast News-Letter* on Tuesday 23 December 1902 carried this adverse comment by the Judge on the current state of British immigration laws:

JUDGE AND THE IMMIGRATION OF ALIENS

At the Old Bailey, London, yesterday, the trial concluded of six more foreigners concerned in the bank note forgeries. Israel Salisbury, Adolph Zeikel, Joe Zubesky, and Symon Obolnich were each sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour; and Morris Moles, who the judge described as a very old man. and a very bad old man, who rose direct from his knees in the synagogue to commit crime, was sentenced to twelve months' hard labour. Michael Rome was sentenced to ont mouth. Mr. Justice Darling, in passing sentence, said the sentences would have been much heavier but for the fact that the accused to some extent had been entrapped by the man Schmidt. ■ Some of tbe accused, he said, were disreputable foreigners preying on a country which gave them asylum, and it was high time, he thought, that something should be done to prevent people of their class coming to England without inquiry of any sort. The judge highly complimented the police on the case.

The sentence on Solomon Barmarsh was reported in the *London Daily News* on Monday 22 December 1902:

FORGED BANK NOTES SOME HEAVY SENTENCES

At the Central Criminal Court Saturday, before Mr. Justice Darling, the trial was continued of the men, foreigners, who are indicted for being concerned in conspiracy to forge Bank of England notes of various face value. At the commencement of the proceedings Phillip Bernstein and William and Solomon Barmash, who had pleaded guilty, the former to forging one of the notes and the latter to forging the notes generally, were brought up for sentence.

Mr. Warburton first addressed the Court on behalf of Solomon Barmarsh who, being paralysed, had to be carried into and out of Court in a chair. Counsel directed his observations to a plea for mercy. He urged that, although prisoner had been previously convicted of a similar offence, yet he took a small part in the present fraud. The informer Schmidt, it was asserted, first approached and made overtures to him. It was further urged that he had assisted the police as far as he could...

Next addressing Barmarsh [Mr Justice Darling] said he had been a forger all his life, and he had made his son one. Nothing could be said for him, and no-one could doubt that he had been involved in the Davenport case and many others. He was paralysed but he would be treated in gaol. He sentenced him to 15 years' penal servitude.

The outcome was reported in the *Western Daily Press* on Thursday 8 January 1903.

THE SUICIDE OF SOLOMON BARMASH INQUEST LONDON

The inquest was concluded yesterday on Solomon Barmarsh, one of the bank note forgers, who committed suicide in his cell at the Old Bailey, after being sentenced to a long term of penal servitude.

Evidence of warder showed that during the visit which the deceased's daughter paid him in the infirmary, witness had to stop them talking in Yiddish.

Another warder stated that Barmarsh was thoroughly searched on admission to prison.

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The Coroner asked whether the rules were all relaxed in the case of Barmarsh, owing to his being an invalid, and Warder Hutchinson replied: No, we knew he was an old hand; and so watched him more carefully. A son daughter, and daughter-in-law of deceased denied taking the revolver to him in prison.

The jury returned a verdict of *felo de se*.

Reverting to local events, Aaron also noted the following under 1902:

Larrett Parkin of Thorpe Hesley was sent to a month hard labour on Jan 7th 1902 for Breaking into Charles Smith's House in Hesley Lane, Thorpe Hesley between 6 – 7 April 1901 and stealing two silver watches he was captured by P.C.Ramsey of Chapelton at Geo Ackroyd's in Hesley Lane on Jan 2nd 1902.

Edward Allott sentenced to 14 days imprisonment at Sheffield on April 22^{ne} 1902 for assaulting Ellen Wood at Thorpe Hesley.¹⁹

Ernest Dobson sentenced to a month's imprisonment for indecency against young lads at Thorpe Hesley by Rotherham Magistrates on June 2nd 1902.

John Clark a Pit Sinker at Thorpe Hesley sentenced at Rotherham to 4 months imprisonment For indecent assault on a lad age 8 belonging to Teddy Tilley of the Huts Bottom of Thorpe Hesley on Oct 13th 1902.

Larrett Parkin:

Aaron had lived in Hesley Lane for much of his life and was even now living 'round the corner' in Brook Hill. Moreover, 'house-breaking' was regarded as being almost as serious a matter as burglary (the legal difference being that the crime of burglary was only committed if a house was broken into between 9pm and 6am.) Perhaps the proximity of the action explains why, for once, Aaron's account tells us as much – in fact in some respects more – than the newspaper report, which appeared in the *Yorkshire Telegraph & Star* for January 7, 1902.

¹⁹ See also 1915.

THEFT OF SILVER WATCHES

Larratt Parkin, a trammer, of no fixed place of abode was charged with breaking and entering a dwelling-house and stealing therefrom two silver watches, value £5 10s.

Charles Smith, of Thorpe Hesley, went to bed on Saturday, April 6, last year, leaving the two watches downstairs. The prisoner, who is a native of Thorpe Hesley, was seen in the neighbourhood on that night, and some time later he sold both watches, which had since been recovered.

He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one month's hard labour."

Ernest Dobson

The report in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for 3 June 1902 tells us little more, save that Dobson was a miner and 'well known to the Police'; and that he was fined 40 shillings.

John Clark:

This time, the report in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for 14 October adds very little, though the Magistrates expressed their dismay at the number of indecent assaults presented to them, and one of them blamed the increase in crime generally on drink, and in particular the growth in the number of clubs, which he hoped that a forthcoming Licensing Act would remedy. However, the name of the 8 year old boy is given as Thomas Henry Tilley.

1903

1903 was the year in which Edward VII was proclaimed Emperor of India; the Cuban-American Treaty is signed, providing for Guantánamo Bay to be leased to the United States in perpetuity; Russia's Social Democrats split into two factions: the Bolsheviks (majority) and Mensheviks (minority); at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina the Wright brothers make their first engine powered air flight. Aaton noted:

Thorpe Hesley Sports held on Sat Aug 22nd 1903.

Ald[erman] Charles Hobson sentenced to 3 months at Sheffield Sessions For an offence under the Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act in the 2nd Division in July 1903. He was released From Wakefield Prison at 9 a.m. on Sat July 19th 1903. He had just done 11 weeks to the day.

Edward North, 29, was sent. To P.S. For life at Leeds Assizes by Mr Justice Darling on December 5 1903 for attempted murder on [sic] Dr G.O. Whittenburg White by Stabbing him with a knife at the Sheffield Union Workhouse on Nov 21st 1903.

Alderman Hobson:

The proceedings regarding Alderman Hobson were reported extensively, indeed one might almost say exhaustively, in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*. Hobson, also described as a Britannia metal spinner, was initially accused of perjury, in relation to the bankruptcy proceedings of a firm called Slater Brothers; but the Attorney-General issued his fiat, consenting to a prosecution under the Corrupt Practices Act of 1889. There were discussions in meetings of Sheffield City Council, and hearings in the magistrates court and Quarter Sessions, resulting in a verdict of guilty and the sentence of imprisonment described by Aaron.

The accusation against Hobson was that he, being a member the Sheffield City Council “did unlawfully and corruptly solicit from one Warrington Slater (a member of the firm Slater Brothers, cutlery manufacturers) a gift, fee, reward, or advantage inducement for voting and using his influence in support of a proposed purchase by the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and councillors of the City of Sheffield of certain land in Northfield Road” (at a time when he had a personal interest in the land in question). Hobson admitted that it would have been wiser, with hindsight, to have disclosed his interest at the time; but denied any impropriety in the matter. The *Telegraph* affected to be horrified that any corrupt practice should have occurred at all in Sheffield, rather than in the USA (where corruption was known to be rife), or Manchester (where it had been known to occur).

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Hobson's counsel made the following plea on his client's behalf:

The matter now passes from my hands into yours. I ask you again to remember that you are dealing with man who has had an honourable record. I don't ask you this act of mercy, as an appeal to emotion or good fellowship, but as an act of common justice to a man who, however much you may disagree with him, has committed an error of judgment, which, through the malice of his enemies, has to-day placed him in the criminal dock. Remember his future is at stake this matter. He has suffered terribl... With the exception of one, or, at most, two people, who have followed this case, men of this city will desire that this man, who has lived a life of honour and usefulness, shall live with the sad memory of this incident... "To err is human, to forgive is divine." There are some people in this city who have never learnt grace and forgiveness at all. ..

Hobson was nevertheless convicted and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment. He appealed but the appeal was dismissed. Subsequently he was removed from his office of Alderman, by vote of the Sheffield Council; but, as Aaron noted, he was released after serving 11 weeks of his sentence.

Edward North:

The story was briefly reported in the *Western Times* on Tuesday 24 November 1903; and again in the *Gloucester Citizen* on Saturday 5 December 1903:

Sheffield man Edward North, 29, applied for admission to the Workhouse, but Dr. White certified him [fit for work?]. North thereupon, it was alleged, attacked the doctor with a big knife, badly cutting his hand. It was further stated that would have killed the doctor but for the assistance of two officials. North has been committed for trial.

ATTEMPT TO MURDER A DOCTOR PENAL SERVITUDE FOR LIFE

Edward North (29), labourer, was in Leeds on Saturday sentenced to penal servitude for life for attempting to murder Dr George Whittenburg White, medical officer. The Prisoner felt aggrieved because Mr. White had ordered him to work, and stabbed him in the neck, afterwards saying he intended to kill him.

1904

1904 was the year in which number plates were introduced for cars, and a speed limit of 20 miles per hour introduced; a British expedition under Colonel Francis Younghusband took Lhasa in Tibet; and J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* premièred in London. Locally, the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam left Southampton in October, with a party of friends and some miners from his Yorkshire pits, on board a ship which he had bought and renamed *Véronique*. Though he told the public that he went in search of coal, he had actually gone in search of buried treasure, thought to be on Cocos Island in the Pacific.²⁰ Aaron noted the following:

Whitaker Wright took is Trial before Mr Justice Bigham and Died in half an hour after a sentence of 7 years PS had been passed upon him by Justice Bigham on Jan 27th 1904.

Wilton Brook Secetary [sic] and Manager of Rylands Glass Comp. sentenced at Leeds Assizes to 18 months on Mar 17th 1904 for obtaining money by False Pretences.

Buffalo Bill show opened at Olympia London on Dec 26th 1902 and closed on April 4th 1903.

Buffalo Bill come again to Sheffield and landed on Sunday Oct 11th 1903 opened at Rotherham on June 28th 1904 opened at Mansfield on Mon June 27th 1904 and Mr Carter the Cowboy Cyclist Fell with his Cycle and was injured during the Performance.

Tom Sylvester Sale at Holme Farm Thorpe Hesley on Tues July 26th 1904.

Ramsdens Sale at Coley Manor Farm on Fri Oct 7th 1904.

Tom White's sale of Iron and Lumber in Thorpe Hesley on Oct 26th 1904.

Whitaker Wright:

Like the entry relating to 'the man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo', this brief entry refers to another major swindler. James Whitaker Wright (1846 – 1904) was the

²⁰ See *Earl Fitzwilliam's Treasure Island* (Cooper & Moorhouse, 2016) for the full story.

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eldest of five children, born in Stafford. On the death of his father in 1870, the family emigrated to Toronto, Canada. Wright then travelled to Philadelphia, U.S.A. where he made a fortune by promoting silver-mining companies in Colorado and New Mexico. He returned to England and promoted a multitude of Australian and Canadian mining companies on the London market. His career as a swindler peaked in the 1890s, when he formed the London and Globe Company which floated a variety of stock and bond issues dealing with mining.

In 1900 he sought to float a bond issue for the building of the Bakerloo line. This was difficult and costly to construct, the bond issue strained his resources, and few people were willing to subscribe. This started the collapse of Wright's empire.' Like Robert Maxwell a century later, he tried to maintain an image of solvency and success by moving money from one company to another, but when he announced that there would be no dividends, people became suspicious. In December 1900, the entire edifice collapsed. Wright fled, but was brought back to stand trial.

The trial took place in January 1904 before Mr. Justice Bigham; and Wright's attempts at obfuscation were shown for what they were. He was convicted of fraud at the Royal Courts of Justice and given a seven year prison sentence; but committed suicide by swallowing cyanide in a court anteroom immediately afterwards. The inquest revealed that he had been carrying a revolver in his pocket, presumably as a backup.

Wilton Brooke

One might wonder how this conviction in Leeds attracted Aaron's attention. The answer is that the convict was Wilton Brooke, a businessman who lived in Stairfoot, Barnsley, only a few miles from Thorpe Hesley. Brooke had been the general manager and secretary of the Rylands Glass and Engineering Company. When his businesses came crashing down around his ears, his affairs were subjected to substantial scrutiny in Barnsley County Court, and the proceedings were reported in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Wednesday 9 March 1904. They throw considerable light on the Edwardian middle class.

Brooke was a manufacturing chemist, who had been employed at Rylands since 1881; but that he had started a business of his own, the Standard Essence Company, also in Stairfoot in 1886 or 1887. The real cause of his financial difficulties, was the decline in trade affecting his own business, and especially in the mineral water trade, which had set in around 1899.

Naturally, at the creditors' meeting, interest focussed on the value of Brooke's assets, and what they might fetch. Brooke said his stock was worth about £1,500 if sold to a customer, but only £600 if sold at auction, or to the trade. The machinery, which had cost him £500 was possibly worth around £250. Trade fittings etc, which had cost him £1,200 might fetch £250. 'I don't include in that account my laboratory', he said 'Goodness knows how much that has cost. I am afraid it cost

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me £2,000 altogether, and if we get £100 for it, we shall be thankful.' He explained that the laboratory contained chemical apparatus and microscopes, most of which had been made specially for his own purposes.

Brooke also explained that his furniture, plates and pictures had cost him £5,000. He had a good many valuable pictures, though he had not bought any for about 10 years. He could not be sure of their value but there was a small one entitled 'Ruth' which was insured for £200. When pressed by the Official Receiver he said that if all his plate, furniture and pictures were sold together, they ought to fetch £2,500; but he added that he did not think they ought to be sold in Barnsley. He said 'I know nothing about Barnsley sales of pictures.'

Replying to further questions, he said that a watch and guard, which cost him £75, together with two gold locket, a gold watch and a sovereign purse, which were all in the hands of the authorities, ought to realise £50. In his furniture, he had not included his horse, two carriages, and harness, for which he had paid £250. Perhaps these would fetch £75.

The court then turned to his 'house properties.' He said he had six houses, and half a factory, mortgaged to the Star-Bowkett Building Society. These should produce their full value, because the £1,000 due on the mortgage was balanced by the amount paid into the society by subscriptions. Four other houses were mortgaged with the Permanent Building Society for about £500, which was now owing. There were twelve houses altogether, all of which he built himself at the average cost of £250 per house. They were all in good repair. The land and the greenhouse at the end of the essence factory were mortgaged to Mr Ford for £400.

Asked how much his own house cost, Brooke replied that he did not know, nor did anyone else in this world. At a very low estimate, it had cost him £3,000

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders of the World toured Britain at this time. According to the advertisements, one of the principal attractions this time was Carter the Cowboy Cyclist in his 'Aerial Leap through Space.' Indeed, he topped the bill. The act had not escaped the attention of the assiduous Aaron. Unfortunately, all did not go well:

Buffalo Bill

The accident was reported in both the local and the national Press, in identical terms, the headline in the Sheffield paper being **BUFFALO BILL AT MANSFIELD, AN ALARMING INCIDENT** while the one used by the *Mail* was **COWBOY CYCLIST'S CRASH**.²¹

Large crowds witnessed performances of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in Mansfield on Monday. In the afternoon, when 8,000 persons were present, an

²¹*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Tuesday 28 June 1904; *The Daily Mail*, Tuesday June 28 1904.

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alarming incident occurred towards the close of the performances. The last item but one on the programme was a daring feat by Carter, the cowboy cyclist, who leaps, on a cycle, from one platform to another, across a space of 50 feet. Owing to the highly dangerous character of this act the management do not guarantee that Mr Carter will make the jump in a very high or heavy rain.

Monday was fine, and the cyclist attempted to repeat his ride. He came down the steep gradient all right, but as he rose in the air on his jump he appeared to twist his machine slightly, and this threw him out of his course. An arc lamp close to the wooden slope was struck with his head or shoulder, and he fell heavily, coming into contact with one of the arena poles which carry the electric lamps. Carter lay apparently unconscious, and was removed with all speed. Dr Oldham, of Mansfield, and Dr Nesbitt, of Sutton-in-Ashfield, attended to the injured man, who was cut rather badly about the head. In inquiry later it was stated that the cyclist was not dangerously hurt.

Carter must have recovered quickly from his accident, because he performed again in Rochdale later that year, without any mishap.

Mention must be made of the bicycle leap through space of George C Davis, the cowboy cyclist, who after riding down a steep incline, jumps his machine across a chasm, finally dropping on to another platform and riding out of the ring."²²

²²*The Rochdale Observer*. 8th October 1904.

1905

Revolution broke out in Russia; the first public protest by suffragettes took place at Westminster; Arthur Griffith founded Sinn Féin in Dublin; the Conservative Party split over tariff reform, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour; the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam, who had succeeded to the Earldom in 1902 and thereby become master of Wentworth Woodhouse, only a mile from Aaron's home, returned to Southampton from a treasure hunt on Cocos Island, in the Gulf of Panama. Aaron noted:

John Beckett's Sale in Thorpe Hesley on Thursday Jan 19th 1905 Auctioneer was Johnson S.

Mrs Sanderson case of Thorpe Hesley was put off at Sheffield on Tues May 2nd 1905 For obtaining money £3 by False Pretences From Joe Lindley at Sheffield Sessions. It was tried and dismissed on Friday June 30th 1905.

Tom Rogers of Thorpe Hesley was captured at Thorpe by PC Golding and the Police Sergant [sic] after 14 years absence for the maintenance of a child. The money due at the time of his capture was £142-10s. He was captured on Tuesday Oct 31st 1905 and tried at Rotherham on Thurs Nov 2nd 1905 and recieved [sic] 3 months imprisonment.²³

The second case is of interest because it shows, once again that what we may think of as a modern problem (hire-purchase) has been with us for longer than we imagine. The report in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Wednesday 10 May 1905 tell us more.

WEST RIDING COURT A Married Woman Sent for Trial

In West Riding Court, before Messrs. C. Chapman and J. Moxon. A married woman named Elizabeth Ann Sanderson, of Thorpe Hesley, was charged on

²³ However great the powers of the modern Child Support Agency are, we may doubt if its arm is quite as long as this!

remand with obtaining £3 by false pretences from Joseph Lindley. Mr. Ernest W. Clegg prosecuted. The case was before the Court a week ago, and was adjourned for further evidence to be called. The prosecution allege that the woman obtained the money from Lindley representing that a certain sideboard was her own, whereas, as matter of fact, it was held on a hiring agreement from a firm at Leeds, the amounts not being paid up. At the time of the alleged offence the woman had the bailiffs in the house, and sought monetary assistance by selling the sideboard to Lindley. Additional evidence was now called in support of the prosecution's allegations that the sideboard was on the hire system. The woman, who denied the offence, was sent for trial at the Sessions, bail being allowed.

1906

In the General Election of 1906 the Liberals, led by Henry Campbell-Bannerman, won a landslide majority. The Conservatives under Arthur Balfour, who had been in government, lost more than half their seats, including Balfour's own seat in Manchester East. The primary reason was the Tory split over free trade. The infant Labour Party was returned with 29 seats, with Keir Hardie as leader. This was the last election in which the Liberals won an absolute majority in the House of Commons, and the last election in which they won the popular vote. Aaron noted:

Ernest Chappell of Thorpe Hesley was fined £1-17s-6d at Rotherham for breaking a rule by going across the New Pit Bottom at the Bottom of Thorpe Hesley on Mon. Sep 24th 1906.

Wm Wentworth Clark was fined £5 and costs at Barnsley on Friday Mar 15th 1907 for Furiously Driving a Motor Car without lights and running into WmWhitham a Waggonette Proprietor of Ecclesfield and killing one of his Horses and damaging his turnout on Aug 27 1906.

The second incident resulted in both criminal and civil proceedings, both of which occupied several columns of newspaper print over the next six months or so, under the headline 'The Tankersley Motor Smash.'

The basic facts were reported in a short piece in the *Sheffiled Evening Telegraph*, as early as 7 September 1906. The Barnsley Police Court²⁴ had been told that morning that William Wentworth Clarke, who was a mining engineer of Tankersley

²⁴Magistrates Court.

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had been charged with having recklessly driven his car on 27 August. A Mr R Bury applied for an adjournment, telling the magistrates that a civil action had already been begun, and that his client was 'most anxious that his lawyer, who was now away in Scotland, should hear [of] the case.' In addition, Mr Clarke was still suffering a good deal from the effects of the accident and, the accident not being 'a particularly serious one', he asked for the case to be put back for three weeks, which the court agreed to.

Subsequently, a further adjournment was applied for on 28 September on the grounds that civil proceedings were pending and that these might be prejudiced if the criminal proceedings were dealt with first. Police Superintendent Guest objected to the adjournment, saying that "the issue was a very simple one, either the by-law was broken or it was not;" but the case was nevertheless put back. In fact it was then adjourned several more times, on the same grounds.²⁵

Eventually the civil case came on in the Barnsley County Court²⁶. It appears from the newspaper report that the Plaintiff²⁷ William Whitham sued the Defendant Clarke for £64 5 shillings, for injuries done to his waggonette and both his horses; but also that Clarke counterclaimed for £93 12s 6d! Both sides were represented. Mr A Neal, for Whitham explained that his client's son had been driving Whitham's vehicle, but was an experienced driver. He had taken a holiday party from Ecclesfield to Barnsley in a waggonette drawn by two horses.

The party commenced the return journey at a quarter to seven, and all went well until five minutes to eight, when the waggonette was passing between Wentworth and Chapeltown, approaching very near a hill known as 'jail bottom'. The Plaintiff was going down this hill on his proper driving side, and at a slow pace, when suddenly he saw a motor car, driven by the defendant, coming down the opposite hill. It travelled at a great speed and, as it came up the incline down which the party was travelling, it struck his near side horse, breaking its leg, it also damaged the other horse, and eventually the car became lodged under the pole of the waggonette, allowing that it had been a direct frontal attack.

Mr Neal added that his client did not know the defendant, who he said at the time smelt of liquor, and plaintiff at once told him that he was drunk, though he (Mr Neal) did not think the evidence on that point would be strong enough to justify his Honour in coming to that conclusion, because a man might smell of liquor without having had very much.

²⁵*Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, Friday 28 September, 1906; *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, November 16, 1906.

²⁶*Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, Tuesday Evening, January 8 1907.

²⁷ He would now be called the Claimant.

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Mr Neal added that the Defendant was injured about the face to some extent and was taken to a cottage in the neighbourhood...

William Whitham, the driver, stated that the first horse was so injured by the collision that a gamekeeper had to shoot it, while the second horse was so injured that it had not worked since, and looked as if it had been in a war. He had been that day with a party to Cooke Park, Barnsley, and in cross-examination he said he spent all the time he was in the town at the park.

After further evidence the hearing was adjourned once more.

The civil case was eventually disposed of in Barnsley County Court in March 1907, when Judge Dodd gave judgment for the plaintiff against Clark, for damages in the sum of £52 10s, and a counterclaim (the nature of which is unspecified) was dismissed.²⁸

This cleared the way for the criminal proceedings to be disposed of by the Magistrates a week later.²⁹ On this occasion, William Whitham, who was a 'waggonette proprietor' and the only witness, told the court that

as he was driving a party home from Barnsley on the night of August 27th last, defendant, driving his car in the opposite direction, without lights attached, ran into him, killing one of his horses, and doing considerable damage to his turnout.

For the defence Mr J Hewitt pleaded guilty, pointing out that the defendant had already had judgment given against him in the county court, and he asked the Bench that they should not endorse his licence.

Defendant was fined £5 and costs, and the Bench decided to endorse the Licence.

Looked back on it, we might wonder why this story was regarded as newsworthy; but clearly it was. The explanation must surely be that motor cars were relatively rare on the roads of Britain in 1906; and they were regarded by many as something of a menace to the traditional way of life, which in many areas was still lived at the pace of the horse. It is also worth remembering that it was less than three years since the Motor Car Act of 1903 had introduced registration of motor cars and licensing of drivers in the UK, though no driving test was yet required. The same Act had increased the speed limit from 14 to 20 miles per hour. Compulsory third-party insurance was not introduced until 1930.

²⁸*Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 7 March 1907.

²⁹*Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 15 March 1907.

1907

Aaron noted various local events under this year:

Stacey Sale at Coley [sic] Manor Farm on Thursday Mar 21st 1907.

Charles Swift a Butcher of Thorpe Hesley was sold up by the Bailiffs on Mon April 8th 1907.

Yeardley Sale at Barley Hall Farm on Thursday of May 30th 1907.

A Puppy Show held at Wentworth on Thurs Aug 22 1907 a Polo Match was also played in Front of the House the same day Aug 22nd 1907.

Fred Desmond with his Circus at the bottom of Hesley Lane from Thursday November 21st – 25th 1907.

Leybourne's Theatre on their 2nd visit to Chapeltown and Fixed in Wm Platts Field in Dec 1907 and opened on Dec 14th 1907 the First Play being The Fatal Brand.

However there were several far more serious matters to report on:

Earl Fitzwilliam Point to Point Races at Scholes on April 22nd 1907 a Bookie from Manchester having his leg broke on the course.

Aaron Allott devoted a whole page in his Journal to these races, noting that they were held at Scholes in 1907, 1908, 1910 and 1920, but at Hooper (near Wentworth) in 1913. However, it was the Point to Point at Scholes in 1907 which proved the most remarkable, because of the legal argument which arose during the prosecution which followed. There is a newspaper report in *The Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* for May 2 1907 which carried the news under these headlines.

FITZWILLIAM POINT TO POINT

The Betting Charges

Important Arguments

Decision of the Bench

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The facts were that a Mr Herbert Smith of Buckley Street Barnsley was charged with (1) loitering in a public place at Scholes for the purpose of betting; and (2) unlawfully using part of an enclosed field for the purpose of betting with persons resorting thereto upon certain race horses. Contrary to the Betting Act 1853.

There seems to have been no dispute that Smith was in an enclosure in Scholes on the day in question, and that he had a 'bookmaker's box' at the time of his arrest – indeed Inspector Gower gave evidence that he had taken possession of the box at the time of Smith's arrest. The case was heard by the Magistrates at Rotherham Borough Court late in April and then again after a short adjournment on 2 May 1907. The first charge was abandoned.

Mr W.M.Gichard, defending, submitted that there was no case to answer on the second charge. He cited case law. The Deputy Town clerk, who was prosecuting, relied on other cases. The Magistrates Clerk Mr Parker Rhodes, said that he had looked at all the case law and advised that, on the facts presented by the Prosecution, Smith could not be convicted – he cited several cases, but principally the majority judgment of the House of Lords in Powell v The Kempton Park Racecourse Company Limited,³⁰ The Deputy Town Clerk asked if the clerk had taken into consideration that in addition to a bookmaker's box, Smith was also known to have used a landau³¹. The Clerk said this did not carry the case any further.

The Bench dismissed the case against Smith.

More sensational was Aaron's note of the following case:

Willie Greaves 34 of Chapeltown who was said to have thrown his child on the Fire 2 years 7 months on Whit Tues of May 21st 1907 that She Died on the 29th 1907 he took his trial at Leeds Assizes he was found guilty and sentenced to Death by Justice Ridley on Mon July 15th 1907 he was reprieved afterwards.

As usual Aaron cuts to the chase – he tell us the whole story in one paragraph, which summarises the murder, the trial and the outcome in very few words. This is typical of the way in which he kept his Journal, bringing all the

³⁰ [1899]A.C.143. In this case there was an enclosure of about a quarter of an acre, fenced in by iron rails, to which the public were admitted by the owners of the racecourse on payment of an entrance fee. Among the 500- 2,000 persons admitted there were always 100-200 professional bookmakers, and most of the public went for the purpose of backing horses with them. The bookies did not use any equipment, and the use of the enclosure by them was known to and permitted by the landowner. The House of Lords (Lords Hobhouse and Davey dissenting) held that the enclosure was not "a place opened, kept or used" for the purposes prohibited by the Betting Act of 1853.

³¹ A type of horse-drawn coach.

information about an event together on the same page, rather than setting it out in the form of a diary. The trial of Willies Greaves at Leeds Assizes was in fact widely reported. The *Yorkshire Telegraph & Star* began with the shocking headlines

CHAPELTOWN MURDER CHARGE
Facts Few, Simple and Horrible.
FATHER PUTS HIS BABY ON THE FIRE.
TRIAL AT ASSIZES
DEATH SENTENCE PASSED

The report which followed informed the reader that the victim was Willie Greaves's two year old daughter, Hilda, and that the 'horrible' event had taken place on 29 May in Chapeltown. The prisoner had pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder. Prosecuting counsel Mr Corrie Grant K.C.³², had told the jury that

Greaves was a labourer and a widower, with two children. In the early part of this year he went to lodge with a Mrs Woods, at Lane End, Chapeltown. His two children were Sidney, aged 4½ years, and Hilda, aged 2 years and 7 months. On Whit Tuesday, May 21st, the girl child was so burnt on the lower part of her back, thighs and legs that on May 29th she died in the Infirmary at Sheffield.³³

The prosecution opened its case by producing a full-scale model of the fireplace in Mrs Woods's house, and a statement as to the dimensions. Mrs Woods then gave evidence that when she got up a 8 o'clock on the morning in question she found that he had gone out, but that he came back at about nine, and was already the worse for drink. He went out again, and she got the child Hilda up, and put her on the sofa in the sitting room, and left her in the care of her own daughter Annie, aged 11, because Hilda was recovering from measles.

A neighbour, Mrs Thorpe took up the story. She said that at about 11 o'clock she saw Greaves pass the window of her house and go in Mrs Woods'.

He was still the worse for drink and was muttering. After he had gone in Mrs Thorpe heard him say something to the child in angry tones, and then she heard a thud in the fireplace. She asked her next neighbour Mrs Williamson, to go in and see what was the matter. Mrs Williamson did so and found Greaves sitting in a chair smoking, and the child Hilda lying at his feet on her back, trembling and sobbing. Greaves denied having whipped the child, but

³² King's Counsel.

³³*Yorkshire Telegraph & Star*, Monday evening, July 15, 1907; *Nottingham Evening Post*, 16 July 1907; *London Daily News*, 16 July 1907; *Wells Journal*, 18 July 1907.

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she was restless and uncomfortable, and Mrs Williamson put her on the sofa. When Mrs Woods came back she examined the child and exclaimed "Oh my God, you've chucked the child on the fire!"

There were in fact deep burns on the child's back and thighs and legs, and the distance between the burns was an inch and a half, which was about the distance between the bars of the firegrate.

Counsel made the point that, although Greaves denied that he had put the child on the fire, it was impossible that the child could have done it herself. Mrs Woods gave evidence as to Greaves's character. She said he was 'kind enough when out of drink' and very fond of his children; but that he was usually drunk at the week-end. She was shown the clothes worn by Hilda that morning and gave evidence as to the burns. Dr Barraclough of Chapeltown gave medical evidence as to the burns, and said in his view the child must have been put on the fire. He did not think that the child's injuries were consistent with the idea that she had fallen onto it. In reply to the Judge, the Doctor said he believed the child must have been on the fire more than a minute. His evidence was corroborated by evidence from a Mr Peak, the Assistant House Surgeon at the Sheffield Royal Infirmary.

Finally prosecuting counsel made the point, very fairly, that when Greaves was cautioned and charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm, he had said

"I never hurt the child. She was laid on the hearthstone when I went in. I picked her up, and put her on the sofa. I didn't know there was anything the matter with her."

When he was later charged with murder, Greaves had said "I didn't do it."

Greaves's brother-in-law Nicholls, with whom Greaves lodged before he went to Chapeltown, said Greaves was subject to fits, and he described one whose symptoms were those of epilepsy.

When he gave evidence in his own defence, Greaves said that when he returned home at about 11 o'clock, the child Hilda was on the hearthstone. He picked her up and put her on the sofa. Mrs Wood [sic] came in shortly afterwards and charged him with putting the child on the fire. He denied the charge and he denied it now. Under cross-examination, he denied it again and denied telling Mrs Williamson that the child had fallen out of the chair, also denying several other details of her story, "and especially the suggestion that he had ever treated the child cruelly."

Counsel for the Defence, Mr Leader, told the jury that the prisoner's offence was one of manslaughter, not murder; but in any case, they must be satisfied that Greaves had put the child on the fire before they could justly find him guilty of either offence. When the Judge came to sum up he told the jury that he did not see

how the verdict could be one of manslaughter. "He should think the jury must return a verdict either of guilty of wilful murder or of acquittal."

The rest is best told by means of the headlines:

PRISONER FAINTS IN THE DOCK

As his Lordship finished summing up the prisoner fainted in the dock and had to be medically attended.

VERDICT AND SENTENCE

Greaves was found guilty³⁴and sentenced to death."

However, what this does not tell us is that the jury recommended Willie Greaves 'to mercy'; and we know from Aaron's Journal and other newspaper reports that although he was taken to Wakefield, and a date set for his execution by hanging, he was in fact reprieved, by order of the Home Secretary.³⁵

There was yet another homicide to report on this year:

Pedlar Palmer, 31, sentenced to 5 years P-S at Guilford [sic] Assizes on Friday July 19t 1907 by Judge Bigham for the murder of Robert Choat in the Railway Train while returning from Epsom Races.

'Pedlar' Palmer was a world famous boxer, from Canning Town. Born in Canning Town, London, his father had been a bare-knuckle boxer and rumour had it that his mother could take on and beat any woman in London's East End. As a boxer, Palmer gained the nickname "Box o' Tricks". He held the world bantamweight championship from 1895–1899, and defended it five times. But, in 1899, he was knocked out in the first round by Terrible Terry McGovern. He was still only 22.

Palmer was a heavy drinker. In April 1907 he killed Robert Croat on a train to Epsom races, for which crime he was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five years in prison. The trial was reported in several newspapers, including the *Western Times* for Saturday 20 July 1907:

³⁴Of murder.

³⁵ *The Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury*, Thursday, August 1, 1907; *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 31 July 1907; *Manchester Courier & Lancashire General Advertiser*, 2 August 1907.

**"PEDLAR" PALMER
Sentenced to Five Years Penal Servitude
SCENE IN COURT**

The trial of Pedlar Palmer for the manslaughter of Robert Choat, in the Epsom race train, was resumed at Guildford Assizes yesterday. Further evidence was given respecting what occurred in the train, and the police stated that when arrested accused admitted that he had struck the deceased. They further stated that they knew Palmer for a clever boxer. He was not hard hitter, had never knocked anybody out, and always won on points.

The medical evidence showed that death was due to the rupture of blood vessel of the brain caused by injury to the jaw. The blow must have been a severe one. The prisoner, who had listened to the evidence with obvious anxiety, then entered the witness-box. He stated that Choat gave him a dig in the ribs, and he only slapped the man's face twice. The blows were not hard enough to knock a child out. In cross-examination, Palmer admitted that he had not suggested, till coming to that Court, that he was struck in the ribs by Choat. Prisoner's counsel urged, in his address to the jury, that Palmer acted in self-defence, and that the blows given did not cause death. At this stage prisoner became faint, and rocked about in a violent and nervous manner. The warders administered to him smelling salts, and later the jury, after three minutes' deliberation, found prisoner guilty. A detective-sergeant informed the Court that Palmer had been previously convicted. He had degenerated into a public nuisance, and was a terror to the East-End. The Judge sentenced him to five years' penal servitude.

Upon hearing the sentence Palmer ejaculated, "Oh! Oh! and reeled.

There were women's cries at the back of the Court, and prisoner shouted, "All right, Becky, I'll be a game 'un."

On his release Palmer boxed again, but never enjoyed his earlier levels of success. For the last 20 years of his life he was a bookmaker in Brighton. He died in Brighton on 13 February 1949, aged 72.

And finally , a fraud:

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

Arrest of Geo. Edwin Howey [sic] for nearly 30 years a Rate Collector for Barnsley Corporation charged with been [sic] deficient of £6,000 on Sep. 7th 1907 committed for Trial and sent. To 4 ½ years. P.S.

The news appeared in several newspapers. The *Sheffield Independent* for Wednesday 27 November 1907 reported:

Mr. Ellison then explained to the Judge that for many years the prisoner had collected the District rate, and also other accounts owing the Barnsley Corporation, and, no doubt owing to some extent to that position, he had been able to carry an extensive practice as a rent collector and general manager for various properties.

'He is allowed to do that, is he?' queried the Judge.

Upon reply in the affirmative he remarked that some Corporations did not allow it.

For many years, continued Mr. Ellison, he had enjoyed the absolute confidence of the Corporation, and the respect and esteem of his fellow townsmen. He was appointed to the Corporation as long ago as January 7th. 1875. and held the post until August 27th last, a period of 34 years, but in August last, discrepancies came to light, and he was dismissed.

He was a man, remarked Mr. Ellison, who seemed have been in the enjoyment of a fair income. The salary from the Corporation was £290, but he was receipt of an income from his private business of upwards of about £700 a year, or a total of £1,000 a year. Mr. Scott-Fox interrupted with the observation, that out of the £290 the Corporation had to keep a clerk, that the net income from the Corporation was only about £220. And he collected for that between £40,000 and £50,000 a year.

NO ATTEMPT TO REFUND THE MONEY.

Mr. Ellison intimated that of the £8,000 deficiency £2,000 is covered by insurance. "It may be some satisfaction to the ratepayers of Barnsley to know that", he remarked. The prisoner had given no assistance in the unravelling of the accounts, nor had he made any attempt to replace any of the money that had been taken, though he had been realising his properties.

Mr J. Carr (the elective auditor) was called, and stated that in several cases, he found the amounts had been credited to the Corporation three months, four months, and six months after they were received. The deficiency was close on £8,000.

On behalf of the Prisoner Mr. Scott-Fox stated that when confronted with the defalcations he practically admitted what he had done. He had received sums which he had not accounted for at the time, in the hope of replacing them out of his own business later on. He requested time to permit him, if possible, still to meet it as a matter of account, but that of course could not be done. "But I think", said Mr. Fox, "that this offer having been made and rejected, it should now be made a matter of reproach, that no further step treating this as a matter of account should have been taken."

WHY HE TOOK THE MONEY

He pointed out that no one had suggested that the money had been spent in gambling or high living or anything of that sort. The whole sad affair was the result of his having put money into a colliery, which sold a year or 18 months ago and failed to realise the thousands of pounds which he had put into it. That brought him to the temptation to take, temporarily, the Corporation money. He still hoped he would retrieve his position.

It was said that he had made no reparation, but all his mortgages had foreclosed upon him. Directly he was arrested, he was a ruined man...

Then Mr Fox alluded to the family, who hold positions of respect and confidence. The prisoner had nine children, the eldest a son who is a solicitor in Barnsley, and he had other sons who were and in business and in trade in the town and elsewhere.....

The Judge described it as a very painful case for everybody. It was also a very bad case. Prisoner admitted the defalcation was £4,000 and he would take it at that figure, though before the magistrates, it was stated to be £5,000 and was now said to total nearly £8,000. Nor was that all, for from time to time he committed frauds and embezzlements appropriating at least the interest that was due to the Corporation. He received moneys, gave receipts, and did not account for the moneys to the Corporation for four or six months. "My mind" said the judge, "has wavered only between two figures, one half a year less than the other, and after bearing what Mr. Scott-Fox has said I am glad to be able, though with hesitation, to take the lower figure. You will be kept in penal servitude for four and half years."

Bankruptcy proceedings followed and were reported in the *Hull Daily Mail* for Wednesday 12 February 1908.

1908

The Model T Ford was introduced; the first ever beauty contest was held in Folkestone; the "Young Turk" revolution took place in the Ottoman Empire; Bulgaria declared independence from the Ottomans; Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by Austria-Hungary; a meteor struck Siberia in the "Tunguska Event"; S.O.S. became the standard international radio distress symbol; Mother's Day was celebrated for the first time; Robert Baden-Powell organized the first Boy Scout troop; and the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam opened a new colliery near Wentworth, known as Elsecar Main.³⁶ Aaron noted only the following:

A dismantle Sale at the Grange Lane Colliery Scholes Moor on Mon Mar 23 1908.

York cruelty case. A solicitor and his wife found guilty at York Castle on Sat Jan 11th 1908. Mrs Rushforth sentenced to 9 months and Mr Rushforth was fined £50 for horrid cruelty to two little adopted children.

The *Hull Daily Mail* for Monday 13 January 1908 gave details of this case:

YORK CRUELTY CASE SCATHING ADDRESS FROM THE BENCH A THREATENING CROWD

The hearing of the charges of cruelty to two girls made against Mr Rushworth, solicitor, of York and his wife, was concluded on Saturday. Both defendants were convicted, Mrs Rushworth being sentenced (as stated in the late editions of the 'Hull Times') to six months' imprisonment in the second division³⁷ for her cruelty to Olive May, and three months, also in the second division, for ill-treating Dora Crees, the sentences to run consecutively. Mr Rushworth was fined £25 in each case, and both defendants were ordered pay the costs of the prosecution.

³⁶ Elsecar Main closed in 1984, the year of the last Miners' Strike.

³⁷ In 1933 the Home Secretary told the House of Commons that "the second division is intended to provide for the separation of prisoners of previously good character from those of depraved or criminal habits."

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

In sentencing the female prisoner, the Chairman (Sir John Grant Lawson), who spoke with considerable emotion and amid deep silence, said:

"You have been charged with perhaps one of the most cowardly offences known to the English law, with ill-treating children who have come under your control, in conjunction with your husband. You have been most ably defended. Your counsel have made the best they could of the rather small material it was possible for them to bring. They have not our opinion met the case, which was ably and in every way fairly and so temperately, made against you by the counsel for the prosecution. I will state the facts as shortly as we consider them proved. We consider that as regards Olive Mabel May, she was, when you received her in February 1903 – received her with fair promises – a very bright and very intelligent child, as Mrs Wilson described her, at any rate a very different object, from that unfortunate creature who was found still in your care in November 1907. She was then an object of pity that ought to have aroused the pity of any man. and even more of any woman.

With regard to the other child Dora Crees we consider that your conduct was not so outrageous. She was not so long in your power. She had a mother living, though far distant, from her. You did not treat her with the same cruelty as you treated the other child, but still you fell very, very far from the care which was demanded you by reason, by the law, and even by common humanity. We, therefore find you guilty of neglecting and ill-treating Dora Crees. We find you guilty of both these charges. We feel that we ought to pass separate sentences upon you in respect of each them. It is quite obvious that no monetary penalty could meet this case.

(The Defendant: "Oh!").

If you had been a poor ignorant woman, driven perhaps to callousness by the rough surroundings in which you lived, then there might have been something to be said for you, but we consider that your superior position and education is an aggravation rather than a mitigation of your offence.

A huge crowd had gathered outside the Castle gates in anticipation of the defendants leaving the court, their attitude very menacing, and as the magistrates came out of the Castle gates they were received with hooting, the crowd evidently thinking they were the defendants, for it immediately ceased when they discovered the identity of the persons.

1909

In 1909, the Americans began to construct a naval base at Pearl Harbour; fingerprint evidence was used for the first time in a murder case; the first Men reached the North Pole, and the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam became Lord Mayor of Sheffield. Aaron jotted down details of four different kinds of event:

Joe Hodson's Theatre come to Thorpe Hesley on Mon Jan 4th 1909 From Killamarsh and Fixed in John Myers Garden their first play was on Wed Jan 6th 1909 entitled Driven From Home on Thurs Jan 7th Flowers of the Forest on Friday Jan 8th Uncle Tom's Cabin Sat Jan 9th Murder at the Old Toll Gate and on Tuesday Feb 23rd 1909 Faith Hope and Charity for the benefit of Geo Steel and on Fri Mar 19th 1909 the Mechanic Wife for the Benefit of Walter Sylvester and the following Week My Sweetheart for Benefit of Charles Fox.

Proctors Circus Fixed in Isac [sic] Charlton Field Thorpe Hesley on Wed night of Mar 24th 1909.

HOUDINI APPEARED AT SHEFFIELD HIPPODROME ON JULY 26TH 1909.³⁸

Martin Riely [sic], Miner of Wombwell sent for trial for shooting with intent at Sam Roebuck, miners secretary [sic]. On Dec 6th 1909 he was sent[enced] to 3 months hard labour.

Unfortunately, a search of the local newspapers reveals no entry relating to Joe Hodson's theatre, nor to Proctors circus; but we do know something about one of the plays which was put on by Hodgson in 1909. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a dramatization of Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous anti-slavery novel was one of the most successful American plays ever written. First produced in 1852, no fewer than sixteen companies included the piece in their repertoire in 1902. It was clearly also popular in this country.

Houdini's appearance in Sheffield was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for Tuesday 27 July 1909. Harry Houdini (1874 –1926), was a Hungarian-

³⁸ He also noted that Houdini had appeared at the Sheffield Empire between 18th and 23rd January 1904 and again on 11th March 1911 and 11th March 1914.

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

American illusionist, known for his sensational escape acts. He had first attracted notice in vaudeville in the U.S.A., and then on a tour of Europe, where he challenged police forces to keep him locked up. According to the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Wednesday 10 February 1904, he first attained local fame by escaping from the Sheffield police cells in the presence the Chief Constable and other officials. However, by 1909 he had started diversifying his act, because of imitators. The *Independent* reported that:

Houdini must have made many friends in Sheffield by his previous visits to the city, for a rousing welcome met his appearance on the stage the Hippodrome last night. Then both houses were packed, and the magic words that denote an artiste's status, "Free list entirely suspended," show on the bills for the week. And Houdini and his marvellous feats are worth seeing. First of all he is bound in a regulation strait jacket by local men who have much experience of this work, yet, a moment or two after twisting and twirling, jumping and whirling he is free. At one time this was a most wondrous performance, and it took considerable time to effect, but persistent practice has now made it a captivity of moments only. But Houdini's greatest sensation is his escape from a huge can filled to the brim with water, then locked with six padlocks by a committee from the audience. In a minute and a half he is free, but how he does it is mystery, for the audience does not witness the escape in this case, the vessel being hidden in a cabinet; but at least the act is marvellous and mysterious.

The criminal proceedings against Martin Riley took place in Barnsley Magistrates Court and these were reported in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on Saturday 18 December 1909:

SHOTS AT WOMBWELL Alleged Attack on Miners' Official

The sensational shooting affray which occurred during the afternoon of the 6th inst., when miner named Martin Riley (55), of Wombwell, is alleged to have attempted to shoot Mr. Samuel Roebuck, a prominent Yorkshire miners' leader, was investigated yesterday at the Barnsley West Riding Police Court. Prosecuting, Mr. Raley explained that Roebuck, who lived in Station Road, Wombwell, was the secretary of the Darfield Main branch shire Miners' Association, which defendant was a member. It was Mr. Roebuck's duty to first deal with all cases of compensation before they were sent to the Miners' Association.

On the day in question Mr. Roebuck was walking along station Road, Wombwell, when he met the prisoner. Thinking he wanted to speak, Mr. Roebuck stopped, and Riley, walking towards him, deliberately fired a revolver at the lower part of Mr. Roebuck's body. Riley was an old soldier, having served in India, but, fortunately, on this occasion his arm was shaking, and he missed his aim. He tried to pull the trigger again, but it did not fire, and Mr. Roebuck immediately got away round a corner of an adjoining building.

Only to Frighten Him

When he returned Riley had gone away, and was arrested a day or two later at Selby. Then, said Mr. Raley, he virtually admitted his guilt, though he said only fired at Mr. Roebuck to frighten him, adding further that threw the revolver into the canal next morning. Mr. Raley said he should prove that the revolver was bought at Barnsley on July 14th last, when the compensation case in which Riley was the applicant was dealt with at Barnsley County Court. On the very day of the attack the accused took out a gun licence.

Mr. Raley, explaining the circumstances of the compensation claim, said that in January, 1905, Riley met with an accident at the Darfield Main Colliery, which led to the removal of one eye. The Miners' Association, along with Mr. Roebuck, had done their best to support his case. The colliery offered him light work, which he said he could not do, but when the case was before the court he agreed to try. After the trial, which went against Riley, Mr. Roebuck expressed regret that the award was not more satisfactory. This prisoner remarked:

"The next judge I go before will be Judge Parry, and someone will hold up their hands to their heads, but it will be too late, for the old soldier will shoot straight."

Mr. Roebuck attached little importance to this expression, but, unfortunately, declared Mr. Raley, the accused had been saying the same thing to other people, adding that he intended to shoot two men, one of whom lived in Station Road, where Roebuck lives.

Proceeding, Mr. Raley said these facts would prove that the prisoner intended to cause bodily harm, and he ought to be thankful he was not there on a more serious charge.

According to the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* for Saturday 18 December 1909:

Two very singular points were advanced. One was that the revolver was bought on the day when the compensation claim was dealt with at Barnsley

County Court, the other that accused took out a gun licence the day of attack. Prisoner reserved his defence.

Further details of the evidence appeared in the *Barnsley Chronicle*, for Saturday 25 December 1909. All these accounts confirm that the prisoner was then committed for trial at Leeds Assizes; but I have been unable to trace the record of the proceedings there, though I have no reason to doubt that Aaron Allott's account of the trial and sentence there was accurate.

1910

On February 10 Old Trafford opened to the public; on March 18 the first filmed version of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was shown; on May 6 George V became King; on July 4 African-American boxer Jack Johnson defeated white American boxer James J. Jeffries in a heavyweight boxing match, sparking race riots across the United States; on November 20 the Mexican Revolution broke out. Also, it was in 1910 that the government's decision to impose a licence duty of £16 per annum provoked Aaron Allot's father to close The Gate Inn at Thorpe Hesley, in a protest which attracted the attention of the local Press. However, Aaron noted only the following:

Sale of the late Sam Jarvis Furniture of Thorpe Common suide on Thursday Sep 22nd 1910 the Auctioneer was A E and E A Sides.

Sale of Mr Whites Furniture Thorpe Hesley Wesleyan School Master but lived in Wortley R.D.

Thorpe Hesley Sports after been postponed 14 Days was held on Sat Sep 3rd 1910. Geo. Matthewmans Fishing Trip from Foresters Inn Thorpe Hesley went to Brigg same day.

Dr Skelly of Ecclesfield went away with Wm Unwins wife from Ecclesfield on Sat Sep 3rd 1910.

Mrs Miriam Charlesworth and her Daughter Violet were each sentenced to 5 Years P-S at Derby Assizes by Mr Justice Darling on Feb 23rd 1910 for Conspiracy to obtain money by Fraud. The sentences were reduced on Friday Feb 25th 1910 to 3 years. Miss Charlesworth [was] released from Alesbury [sic] prison on [sic] Feb 1912.

None of these events – not even Dr Skelly's elopement with Mrs Unwin, which must have been something of a local sensation - featured in the local newspapers, except for the last. This, 'the Charlesworth case', was widely publicised, in dozens of articles and very many of the counties of England and Scotland.

On 8 February 1910 the *Nottingham Evening Post* reported the following proceedings in the Derby Magistrates Court:

CHARLESWORTH CASE
Accused Women Brought Up at Derby and Remanded
ALLEGED CONSPIRACY
Violet and her Mother Looking Ill and Apprehensive
HEAVY BAIL DEMANDED

The notorious Violet Charlesworth to-day experienced a new sensation—that of the prisoner in the dock; and judging by her appearance she by no means found it the most pleasurable episode of her momentous and extraordinary career. She entered the Derby Police Court with her mother by a door to the rear of (he magistrates' bench, again cheating the little crowd which had gathered in the precincts of the court in the hope getting a glimpse of the famous prisoner; and if ever there appeared on a woman's face the expression of fearful apprehension it was in the face of Miss Violet Charlesworth at that moment. Her face is thin almost to haggardness, the cheek bones showing prominently; her complexion, pale to absolute sickliness, giving greater prominence to the startled eyes which roved furtively about the court with the fear of the hunted.

Prisoners in the Dock

The two women (who were accompanied by inspector Allbutt, the officer who fetched them from Scotland the previous day) came hesitatingly into the court, and, guided by the inspector, passed round and into the dock, where they stood to hear the charges against them with heads bowed as though in vain endeavour hide their faces from the 40 or 50 people in the well of the court, whose eyes were fixed upon them. They murmured "Good morning" to their solicitor, who sat in the front of the dock, but that was the only occasion on which either them spoke during the whole of the proceedings. They were not asked to plead.

In the dock the mother appeared the more distressed of the two, and each moment seemed as though she was about to burst into tears—but no tears came.

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

Dry-eyed also, the younger woman maintained her self-control sufficiently to enable her to bow with some degree of dignity when her name was called; and a distinct frown crossed her face when the clerk referred to her as "May" instead of her adopted name of Violet. Afterwards she showed little interest in the proceedings, though the frequent moistening of her bloodless lips and the wearied manner in which she occasionally pressed back her hair from her forehead were indication of the uneasiness of her spirit.

Mr. W. Durnford (London) was their solicitor.

The charges read out against them by the clerk were as follows.—

Miriam Charlesworth and May (otherwise Violet) Charlesworth, Windsor Cottage, Moffat, Scotland:

By unlawfully incurring a certain debt and liability to Martha Smith (57, Victoria Terrace, Macklin Street, Derby), to the amount of £401 7s; did obtain credit by means of fraud other than false pretences, contrary to the form of statute in such case made and provided;

and further that they did unlawfully on November 12th, 1908, and on certain dates theretofore, by means of certain false pretences obtain from the said Martha Smith the sum of £401 7s with intent to defraud contrary to the statute in such case made and provided;

and further that in the month of October, 1903, and on divers other days unlawfully did conspire by divers false pretences to obtain from the said Martha Smith and Edward Hughes Jones (Rhyl), medical man, large sums of money, and cheat and defraud them thereof.

The *Leamington Spa Courier* also reported on the proceedings before the Magistrates, and on 11 February 1910 the report included the fact that bail had been refused, and that the Charlesworths were remanded in custody to appear at the local Assize court for their trial:

Mr. William Durnford, a London solicitor, who appeared for the defence, applied for bail. He said he had had no opportunity whatever of obtaining any instructions from the prisoners, and apparently they would not know what the case against them was until next Tuesday. With reference to the question of bail and the propriety of allowing it, he said the case of the younger defendant was common knowledge, and although there might be some aspects in her case which would possibly disincline the magistrates favourably to consider the question of bail, he was sure the Bench would be influenced by the fact that although they had been residing under another name, the reason for adopting that name was not in the least improper, and after the wide publicity the case obtained some time ago one could quite understand them wishing to shield themselves from public observation.

It had been perfectly well known to the trustee of the creditors of Miss Charlesworth where they had been, and he had no doubt that the prosecution had not experienced the slightest difficulty in finding out at any time their place of residence. There had been no concealment whatever, and it was only to shield themselves from public curiosity that they adopted the assumed name.

As the amount of bail, it was well known that prisoners were in exceedingly distressed circumstances at the present time, and bankruptcy proceedings had stripped the younger defendant of every shilling. If the Bench were good enough to allow bail he hoped they would not fix a prohibitive amount.

The Chief Constable said did not offer any objection to bail being granted, but must remind the Court of the large amount of money involved and referred the information of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He would only remark that bail should be substantial. Mr. Durnford said he had only to remark that substantial bail would be prohibitive, and tantamount to a denial of that liberty which was necessary to enable the prisoners to instruct him.

The magistrates having retired, the Mayor (Dr. Arnold Bemrose) said the Bench had decided to remand the case until that day week, and to allow bail in £200 in the case of each prisoner, who would also have to provide sureties of £300 each, or they could have bail in the surety of £400 for each prisoner.—The prisoners were removed in custody.

The proceedings at the Assize court were reported in many local papers, including the *Nottingham Evening Post* for Wednesday 23 February 1910:

VIOLET IN TEARS.

The Charlesworths on Trial at Derbyshire Assizes

PRISONERS GHASTLY PALE

Story of a House Worth £18,000 as a Coming of Age Present

Every inch of seating accommodation was occupied at the Derby Assize Court this morning when the hearing of the four charges against May (otherwise Violet) Charlesworth and her mother, Miriam, was taken by Mr. Justice Darling. The court is an extremely small one, and only a fraction of the general public who wished to see the prisoners—because that was what they came for—was able to find accommodation. It was not surprising that the majority of those who were spectators, were members of the fair sex—ladies of a fairly good social standing, judging by appearances—and the smart apparel lent a dash of brightness to the otherwise sombre interior the court.

The two prisoners were at once placed in the dock, the hum of whispered conversation which had prevailed prior to their appearance being immediately hushed. They were accompanied by female warder. Mrs. Charlesworth was the more affected of the two prisoners, appearing very weak and much dazed the circumstances in which she found herself. Violet, on the other hand, was quite cool and collected, but both prisoners looked ghastly pale. Violet sat quietly in the dock and followed with evident interest counsel's opening statement for the Crown. Mr. Ryland Atkins, K.C., M.P., and Mr. A. M. White were for the prosecution, and Mr. H. Maddock and Mr. L. Freedman defended.

A £75,000 Fortune

Mr. Atkins first characterised the facts as not being complicated. Ten years ago the Charlesworths were living in Derby in small house in Jackson-street. The father was a working engineer, and the family was not particularly well off. While living in Derby the elder prisoner told a Dr. Barratt that her daughter, Violet, was coming into a large fortune when she came of age. They went to Wolverhampton, but in 1903 returned to Derby, when the first sum money was obtained from Mrs. Smith, the story being told that Violet was coming into fortune of £75,000. The money, she was told, was left to Violet by a man to whom she was engaged, but who died on his way home from India, his body being buried in the Bay of Biscay. Violet, the story went, was looking forward to dropping a wreath as near to the spot possible where the body of her lover was buried. For two or three years further sums of money were obtained from Mrs. Smith, by Mrs. Charlesworth and her daughter.

A good deal of correspondence passed between the Charlesworths and Mrs. Smith, the three characteristics being expressions of faith in God and references to Divine guidance; of references, obscure references, to litigation; and expressions of regret that they had not paid Mrs. Smith, and wishing her every kind of happiness.

Mr. Atkins then related an incident connected with Dr. Jones. In 1907 Violet was suffering from some illness, and Dr. Jones was called in to attend her. Soon afterwards Dr. Jones received a letter from a London firm of solicitors, Messrs. James and James, thanking him for the care he had taken with her, and later received two scarf-pins from a Mr. Robert Gordon, through the firm of solicitors, one for himself and one for his brother, who was in partnership with him. These, it was inferred, were chosen by Miss Charlesworth herself. In May, 1907, Dr. Jones became engaged to be married to Violet, who told him the story

of her coming into a fortune of £150,000 when she was 23. A letter was received by Dr. Jones enclosing £30 for Violet to go away, purporting to come from Gordon.

The next facts, however, were very different, said counsel. A few days after the engagement Violet's fiance lent her £100. The letters from Roberts were written from Derby, and were in handwriting which would be deposed to that of Miss Charlesworth; and he would prove that the £100 lent to her by Dr. Jones was cashed in Derby a person who signed herself V. M. G. Charlesworth. Six five pound notes were sent to Dr. Jones through James and James.

The Welsh Cliffs Incident

In the course of eighteen months Dr. Jones advanced Violet a sum of no less than £5,000, and during the correspondence between the two the fortune had risen from £150,000 to £250,000. It was after receiving the sums of money that Violet launched out into all sorts of expenses. She took a house in Wiltshire at a rental of £180 per week, and used it for her St. Bernard dogs; and a few weeks afterwards she took a house in Scotland at a rental of £250.

In January, 1909, the "month of the happy birthday," continued counsel, Miss Charlesworth and her sister motored in North Wales, and Violet disappeared over the parapet of the road. It was supposed that she was killed, but she was afterwards discovered by the enterprising Pressmen at Oban. Then followed proceedings in bankruptcy.

The wildly extravagant life was begun, concluded counsel, only when the large sums of money had been obtained. No-one had seen the strange, benevolent man who, after an introduction at a ball, left Violet £150,000 or £250,000, and he submitted that the whole story of the fortune was all false statement. Evidence of the bankruptcy proceedings was given and showed that the liabilities were £12,719 and the assets £2,232. There would be very little for the creditors after the winding-up expenses. There was also an item of £12,714 with regard to Stock Exchange liabilities which were not included in the other amount.

The Charlesworth's dealings with Mrs. Smith were outlined in the witness-box by the lady in question, and she said that the largest sum she advanced them was £80. The cause of witness's going up Rhyl was that she heard Miss Violet was giving cups away in connection with rifle competitions. "I thought if she could do that she could pay me some money." Cross-examined, witness said she believed Mrs.

Charlesworth was speaking the truth when she spoke about the fortune.

Mr. Justice Darling: Can you tell when people are telling the truth?

—It did not prove so in this case. (Laughter.)

The Judge - If you do, I wish you would tell me.

Violet in Tears

Dr. Edward Hughes Jones then gave evidence. He related the story of the fortune and of the engagement, and said that he was told that the alleged trustees objected to the latter. He received a letter in which occurred the passage: "Colonel Williamson (one the alleged trustees) is determined win me yet". In another letter she said: "I shall not get a penny from Colonel Williamson unless I break the engagement . . . All my fortune will be yours." This had reference to the request for money from the doctor, and the writer expressed her regret having to make such a request. "I who will one day have £7,000 a year and an estate. It is cruel, bitterly cruel, laddie."

There were many terms of endearment in the letters, and when counsel read them, Violet for the first time broke down. She sobbed for some time, and was attended by the female warder.

Counsel then read out a long list of monies advanced by the doctor to the younger prisoner, amounting to £5,430 all.

Did she give you any reason why she said the gift was £150,000 instead of £250,000?

Witness: She said she did not like to boast.

The verdict and sentences were reported in the *Dundee Courier* for Thursday 24 February 1910:

COLLAPSE

The jury retired to consider their verdict at half-past seven, and returned twenty-five minutes later with a verdict of guilty against both prisoners. His Lordship said he could not differentiate between them, believing that the mother originated the plot, evidenced by her statement to Dr Barrett ten years ago, but that Violet's remarkable ingenuity developed it. He then passed sentence [– five years's penal servitude in each case]. Both prisoners collapsed the dock on hearing the sentences.

However this was not the end of the matter, because two days' later the Judge decided to review the sentences. This unusual practice was reported in the *Express and Echo* for Friday 25 February 1910:

THE CHARLESWORTH CASE.

Sentences Reduced to Three Years' Penal Servitude

At Derby Assizes to-day, Mr. Justice Darling reduced the sentence of five years penal servitude passed on Violet Charlesworth and her mother to three years' penal servitude. Mr Justice Darling gave instructions for Violet Charlesworth and her mother to be brought from prison and placed in the dock but the latter was too ill to leave gaol.

Addressing Violet, who looked extremely haggard, he said that when he passed sentence of five years' penal servitude on the prisoners he gave directions that it should not be recorded. He had since considered the matter carefully. He had refrained from passing sentence on the conspiracy indictment. Violet had not added to the enormity of the crime by going into the box and committing perjury, which was often done, though could argue that he had taken this into consideration. As he had given her the maximum sentence he felt justified in reducing the sentence to three years' penal servitude. The same reductions would also apply in the mother's case, he understood that she was very ill and would spend a good time in the prison infirmary.

This may seem like a strange, and not wholly logical, decision; but perhaps we can assume that Mr Justice Darling was to some extent motivated by feelings of pity for what was still generally regarded by the judiciary as the fairer and gentler sex.

It is clear from a comparison of the newspaper reports and Aaron Allott's account of this case that, although Aaron's version was brief, it was accurate. He clearly followed the proceedings through from the committal proceedings in the magistrates' court, to the trial and the final reduced sentence at the Assizes, and even gives us the date when young Miss Charlesworth was released from prison, some two years after her trial.

1911

In London, in what became known as the Siege of Sidney Street, the Metropolitan Police and the Scots Guards engaged in a shootout with a criminal gang of Latvian anarchists held up in a building in the East End; the First Monte Carlo races were held in the South of France; the first Indianapolis 500-mile was run; George V was crowned King; a German Warship named 'Panther' triggered the Agadir Crisis, widely regarded as a harbinger of the First World War; Hiram Bingham founds Machu Picchu; revolutionaries under Sun Yat-sen overthrew China's Manchu dynasty and established a republic; the capital of India was moved from Calcutta to New Delhi; the Census of 1911 recorded the Allott family as still being at The Gate Inn, Thorpe Hesley, but our Aaron had now become a joiner (an occupation he was still pursuing in 1918, when he married). He noted the following:

Fred Charlton of Grenoside was Tried at Sheffield on Tues Jan 3rd 1911 for Mottie Stealing at Smithy Wood Colliery the case was adjourned until Friday Jan 6th 1911 adjourned until Sheffield Session Sat Jan 7th 1911 and then sentenced to 12 months in the 2nd Division

On Tues Jan 28 1911 a prize for the oldest woman in the show was Mrs Watson of the Red Lion, on Thurs. Mar 30th 1911 a comic singing contest took place Frank Allott got First, Jos Jenkinson also took a Prize has been [sic] the oldest man in the Show, the Farewell contest for a silver cup was sung on April 18th 1911. Frank Allott received [sic] the Cup. The Show left for High Green on Wed April 19th 1911.

Mr Reed's Sale of Furniture at Thorpe Hesley Bar on Monday Feb 6th 1911 the 2 houses as sold at the Ball Inn Hesley Bar For £405 on Mon Feb 13th 1911.

Tiller's Cinematograph Show (in John Myers' Garden in Thorpe Hesley Lane, Feb – March 1911), when the first 'play' was *Fair Lass of Lichfield*.³⁹

³⁹ *The Fair Lass of Lichfield* was a Victorian, or Edwardian, melodrama, also known as *Michael Erle the maniac lover*. The Cinematograph Show left John Myers' Place on Wed March 22 1911; but elsewhere Aaron tells us that Joe Hodson's Theatre came to the same place on Saturday April 6th 1912, when the first play was *Murder at the Old Town Gate*. The theatre came again, and to the same venue, on Wednesday April 29th 1914, the first play being *Hidden Treasure*.

On Wednesday March 22 1911 a singing contest was held during the time it was there on Mon Mr 27th 1911 John Ed Portman won First Prize, Frank Matthew 2nd Prize. Harry Kinstone 3rd Prize.

Earl Fitzwilliam Point to Point Races held at Scholes on Thursday Mar 23rd 1911.

Military Tourement [sic] and Sports at Wentworth on Sat May 27th 1911.

Retirement of Mr D Wightman Coroner for Wombell and Hoyland District in May of 1911.

Of these events, the one of most general interest is the first, relating to 'mottie stealing' – the theft of tokens, attached to corves of coal, to indicate the value of their contents. The details of the crime were reported in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on Wednesday 4 January 1911. The initial report was very brief:

MINERS' "MOTTIES"

In a charge of false pretences relating to the changing of "motties" on tubs, the question was discussed at Sheffield the number of tubs a man working without assistance could fill in the course of a shift. A Grenoside miner named Fred Charlton was committed for trial, bail being allowed.

A fuller report followed:

MINERS' "MOTTIES." HOW MANY TUBS CAN A COLLIER FILL? GRENOSEMAN'S RECORD. SENT FOR TRIAL ON SERIOUS CHARGE

Fred Charlton, a Grenoside miner, employed at the Smithy Wood Pit of Messrs Newton, Chambers, and Co. Limited, was committed to the Quarter Sessions by the Sheffield West Riding magistrates yesterday on attempted false pretences.

Mr. Ernest Clegg, who appeared to prosecute, said that, if the case was proved, it would disclose one of the meanest forms of dishonesty. The defendant had endeavoured to get from Messrs. Newton Chambers, Limited, money which had been earned by his fellow-workmen by changing other people's "motties," and substituting his own on tubs of coal.

Having pointed out that it was always difficult to get direct evidence in cases of that kind, and that he would produce the strongest circumstantial evidence, Mr. Clegg stated that on December 14th the defendant was engaged on the night shift. He commenced at 10.30. and had to work alone, owing to his trammer suddenly becoming ill, worked for six hours, during which he

had not only to get the coal himself, but to tram it to the pass-by. When he commenced there was no coal down, and at 5.30 a.m. he told his deputy he had not trammed any coal; he made similar statements to two other men later.

But at the end of the working day he had fourteen tubs of coal to his credit, and four or five corves of coal waiting for filling.

When the deputy visited defendant's working place at 3.30 there was a quantity of dirt down, which the defendant was told would want clearing. Subsequently he was seen to take a tub of dirt to the pass-by and place it with two corves from a collier named Dearden, whose working number was 90: the defendant's number was 77. Having placed his tub alongside Dearden's corves he sent the pony boy away. Returning, the boy noticed that one of Dearden's tubs had gone, and later discovered it with defendant's number on it.

A physical impossibility

It would be a physical impossibility, said Mr Clegg, for one man, single-handed, to get and tram 14 tubs of coal, and leave another six tubs ready for filling, in six hours.

That was the extent of work done, according to the defendant's record for that particular date, despite the fact that he had told three men that he had not trammed any coal. The next morning some eleven tubs were missed by other workers...

For the defence it was contended that the entire case was founded on suspicion...

Answering Mr Clegg, defendant said he only claimed to have filled nine tubs, not fourteen. He believed the latter number had been put down by mistake. He had lost as many as eight tubs in a week, owing to mistakes being made in counting.

Mr Clegg: What is the greatest number of tubs you have ever filled in a shift, when your trammer has been helping you? - My record is 15.

Mr Clegg then produced books to show that, on previous occasions when the defendant had been working alone, he had been credited with having filled as many as 23, and on another occasion 20 tubs. On the latter occasion, the defendant's book only showed that 16 tubs had been filled... Defendant was allowed bail.

The result of the trial at Quarter Sessions appeared in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Monday 9 January 1911:

DISCORD IN THE MINE

HEAVY PENALTY FOR CHANGING MOTTIES GRENOSIDE MINER CHARGED

A case of considerable interest to miners generally was Heard at the Sheffield West Riding Quarter Sessions on Saturday, when Joseph Frederick Charlton, miner, Grenoside, was charged with obtaining money by false pretences by changing the "motties." Prisoner was employed at the Smithywood Pit, near Ecclesfield, and the offence was alleged to have taken place on December 15th of last year, while he was working at the pit. The sums to have been paid were six in number, and varied from 9s. 7d. to 10d.

In opening the case. Mr. Colin Smith said that the alleged offence occurred on the night shift of December 14. It was important to remember that this night the prisoner was working without his trammer, and would thus be severely handicapped work. Just before half-past three there was a fall of dirt, which made the line impassable, and would take some time to clear away. When asked if he was going to fill any coal, prisoner answered that he could not tram because his clog was split. He was some time later seen at the junction where the filled trucks were gathered, and where no collier had any right to be. That morning fourteen tubs bore the prisoner's motty, while eleven trucks belonging to other miners were missing. There were also six tubs of coal found by the prisoner's gate. It was significant that some of the missing tubs were claimed by a miner named Deqrden, who alone mined wet coal.

Several of the tubs on which was alleged the mottles had been changed were filled with wet coal, though prisoner's "stall" was a dry one.

It would a physical impossibility for a man to fill fourteen tubs when working alone. Prisoner himself admitted that he was only entitled to nine tubs. Prisoner afterwards told a fellow collier that that night he had only filled one tub of dirt and of coal.

Witnesses bore out these statements.

Prisoner, in the witness-box, said that on the night in question he got and trammed nine corves, leaving enough to fill two tubs lying loose. He denied having changed a single motty.

He had only had a motty for sixteen weeks, and every week except three he had missed some tubs. The reason why went the junction was to get some "woods." He could give no explanation why his motty had been placed on fourteen trucks....

The Jury found the prisoner guilty, but strongly recommended that mercy be shown! The Chairman of the Bench said he could not understand the recommendation, which was expressly made on the basis that 'there was much conflicting evidence and doubt about the case'. The Jury had found Charlton guilty

(thereby putting the matter beyond reasonable doubt); and for his part he thought the offence was a despicable one. Addressing the prisoner he said "You could not offend worse, than by robbing your fellow workmen."

He passed sentence of 12 months imprisonment in the second division.⁴⁰

For once, Aaron Allott does not give us the whole story, because Charlton appealed, though his appeal was unsuccessful. The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Tuesday 31 January 1911 reported that:

MINER'S FALSE PRETENCES

On grounds law and of fact Joe Frederick Charlton, miner, who was sentenced at the West Riding (Sheffield) Sessions to 12 months in the second division for attempting to obtain money by false pretences, appealed against his conviction and sentence. The allegation against the appellant was that he had gone to the junction in the mine and placed his motty upon coal obtained by another collier in order to have credited to him the benefit of the other man's work. The Court held that there was ground for interfering with the conviction and sentence, and dismissed the appeal, the sentence to run from the date of conviction.

⁴⁰ In 1933 the Home Secretary told the House of Commons that "the second division is intended to provide for the separation of prisoners of previously good character from those of depraved or criminal habits."

1912

In 1912 New Mexico was admitted as the 47th US state; Captain Scott reached the South Pole; Arizona was admitted as the 48th US State; RMS *Titanic* struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic on its maiden voyage, and sank with the loss of over 1,500 lives; Alaska became a United States territory; in the U.S. presidential election, Democratic challenger Woodrow Wilson won a landslide victory over Republican incumbent William Howard Taft; the frozen bodies of Robert Scott and his men are found on the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica. Aaron noted:

Albert Tyre was sent to a month hard labour at Chesterfield on Sat Mar 30th 1912 for Stealing five Fowls at Brimington, value 15 shillings.

This case was reported in the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, on Saturday Evening, March 30:

COLLIER'S THEFT OF FOWLS

A raid on a fowl-house at Brimington led to the appearance of Albert Tyre, collier, before the Chesterfield County Bench, today, on a charge of stealing five fowls, value 15s, the property of Sarah Mitchell, wife of a Brimington butcher.

Tyre was committed to gaol for one month, with hard labour."

We would never know from this report that the culprit came from Thorpe Hesley.

1914

Aaron makes no mention of the beginning of 'the First World War', though at the time it was called 'the Great War'. We can see now that 1914 marked the end of an era and of a way of life; but, at the time, people could not know how long the War would last, let alone what its consequences would be. It was only much later that my grandmother referred to the years before 1914 as the time 'before the World went mad.'

One way or another, the British people did hear that the Germans invaded Belgium on August 4th and that Great Britain declared war the same day. The declaration of war was followed by minor but at that time shocking actions between British and German vessels at sea; and the British Expeditionary Force of around 100,000 men (known as 'the Old Contemptibles') was sent to France. By the end of August, these men were retreating from Mons (assisted by angels, according to some); and terrible casualty lists began to fill the national newspapers. This continued to happen for four long years. By the time of the Armistice in November 1918, Britain had suffered around 750,000 military deaths; but all Aaron noted under this year was:

Frank Howell of Ecclesfield was sentenced at Sheffield to 4 months hard labour in Jan 1914 for wounding his Father with a knife while asleep.

Decased [sic] Frank Smit of the New Inn Barley Hall their sale was on Thursday May 7th 1914.

Berwick Sunderland was charged at Sheffield on Tues. May 12th 1914 with Wounding his Father-in-Law with a Fire Poker at Thorpe Hesley.

Dale Bros Sale at Hesley Hall Farm of furniture on Monday July 6th Mr Robert Low began the sale but it was carried out by Messerrs [sic] Ncholson Greaves, Barber and Hastings.

The only entry relating to events of national importance in 1914 is the one reproduced below. I hesitated to include it, because many modern readers will think it puerile and vulgar, as well as 'politically incorrect'. The facts were that the lady he mentions was *Arabella* Scott (1885?–1980) was a Scotswoman who attended Edinburgh University and was awarded an M.A. There, she became involved in the women's suffrage movement. After an unsuccessful arson attack on Kelso

Racecourse, she was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, went on hunger strike and was force-fed. She was then released and re-arrested several times under the so-called 'Cat and Mouse' Act of 1913 and her case was raised in Parliament in 1914;⁴¹ but, in the same year, the Suffragettes suspended their political activities because of the outbreak of War, and the Government responded by releasing all suffragette prisoners, unconditionally. The issue of votes for women, and the way in which the authorities treated the suffragettes in prison, were serious matters; but Aaron clearly thought the suffragettes were a bit of a joke; and that in itself has something to tell us about the man and his times.

Fable an Verse

Miss Arrebla [sic] Scott at a Suffragette meeting said

'We mean to have what the men have got (Loud applause). It is not much but we will have it and they will find that we will [not?] take it lying down but with our backs to the wall (Loud Cheers). We mean to take it quietly if possible but if they want friction they can have it and we cannot get it through organisations we will have it through our combinations (Loud Cheers).

A drunken loafer in the crowd is shouting 'down with the petticoats'; but I say 'up with the petticoats' and 'down with the trousers' and then things will be visible in their true light.

We refuse to be poked in the gallery and we insist on being placed on the footboard of the house (Applause). We must get together for has [sic] long has [sic] we women are split up has [sic] we are the men will be trying to get on top of us frantic (Applause).'

⁴¹ www.latebloomers.co.uk; www.hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1914/Jul/27.

1915

1915 saw the first Zeppelin raid on the East Coast; the German imposition of a submarine blockade on Great Britain; the disastrous Gallipoli campaign and the Second Battle of Ypres; the sinking of the Lusitania; and the decision of Italy to join the Allies, rather than the Central Powers; but Aaron noted only four events under this year, all of them local sales of farm produce or equipment. Note however the last sentence. Aaron noted:

Dale Bros Sale at Thorpe Hesley Hall Farm on Wed Feb 24th 1915 the Auctioneer was Mr Geo Elliott the Chopping [sic] machine knocked down to Mr Thornton of Rotherham at £36 Pound.

Harry Binders Sale at Kimberworth Park of all farm stock on Wed Mar 31st 1915.

Tom Parham's Sale Bottom of Thorpe Hesley on Mon 12 of April 1915 Robert Law was auctioneer Tom Bamfor[th?] of Hesley Bar was interred at Thorpe same day.

Walter Binders of the Red House Farm Scholes Coppice Sale of Cattle and Farm Produce on Thursday Mar 18th 1915 Edward Allott locked up the same night.

The last sentence refers to Edward Allott, who was previously mentioned under 1902. In neither case, however, do we have any further details; and in particular we cannot be sure that he was a relative of Aaron's.

1917

1917 was also the year in which Imperial Germany announced that her U-boats would resume unrestricted submarine warfare; the United States severed diplomatic relations when the US ambassador to the UK was shown the intercepted Zimmermann Telegram, in which Germany offered to give the American Southwest back to Mexico, if Mexico declared war on the United States; the United States declares war on Germany; on the Western Front, the disastrous Nivelle Offensive was abandoned, but there were widespread mutinies in the French army; the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, in the October Revolution. Meanwhile, between July and November, the Battle of Passchendaele, or 'Third Ypres' was fought in Flanders, when the British Army suffered between 200 and 400 thousand casualties.

We also know now that in 1917 Aaron Allot's elder brother David (1867-1947) became vicar of St Luke's in Barnsley; and at a meeting at *The Ball Inn* in November, it was decided to form a Thorpe Hesley Allotments Association, consisting of two districts: Hesley Bar and Hesley Lane.⁴² As it was the only entry in the Journal was as follows:

Isaac Charlton Sale in Thorpe Hesley on Friday April 27th 1917 the Auctioneers was Shearman and Johnson.

⁴² *Sheffield Independent* - Tuesday 27 November 1917.

1918

There are no entries in the Journal relating to 1918, but we do know from other sources, that this was the year in which Aaron Allott married Harriett Leese in Mirfield near Leeds. He was 48 at the time; and he and his new wife gave their residence as 'Greenside', which is now part of Mirfield, between Leeds and Huddersfield.

1918 was also the year in which the German Spring Offensive, or *Kaiserschlacht* was launched on the Western Front, resulting in 236,000 British, 92,000 French, and 348,000 German casualties. It was also the year when the British later won significant victories on the Western Front, leading to the Armistice of 11 November 1918.

1919

Although Aaron does not mention the Great War, his Journal could not help but mention some of the consequences. The War saw a vast increase in state control of business and industry, of civil servants and of regulations of every kind. He therefore mentions two Orders imposed by the Government in relation to the slaughter of animals. He does not, however mention either the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, which put an end to the First World War, or the continuing Spanish Flu pandemic, which killed over 50 million people worldwide.

Charles Swift, a Thorpe Hesley Butcher was at Rotherham on Thursday June 24th 1920 charged with infringing the Live Stock Slaughtering Order of 1919 and the Meat Dealers Restriction Order of 1919. He was fined £5 in each of the two cases.

George Bennett a Thorpe Hesley Butcher was at Rotherham on Mon. June 28th 1920 charged with infringing the Live Stock Slaughtering Order of 1919. He was fined £40 an [sic] costs. Coddington of Sheffield was his Barrister.

1920

Charles Moxon Landlord of the Horse & Tiger Thorpe Hesley was fined £5 at Rotherham for Filling Drink after time, and Jim Gibson of the mail coach Rotherham fined £5 for consuming it on Thurs. Oct. 28th 1920.

Joe Lindley Lanlord [sic] of Blacksmith Arms Thorpe Hesley was at Rotherham on Thursday Oct 28th 1920 Fined £10 for Filling Drink after time and Mr Kelby was fined £10 for consuming it.

The Duke of Norfolk Estate Sale at Cutlers Hall Sheffield on Mar 24th – 25th 1920.

Miss Constance Jenness of 442 Manchester Road Sheffield a Servant Girl, daughter of Mr and Mrs Jack Jenness of Thorpe Hesley was sent to prison for a month For stealing wearing apparel [sic] Value £7 belonging to her mistress at Sheffield on Thursday Dec 2nd 1920.

Another novelty which resulted from the First World War was the introduction of fixed opening and closing times for pubs.

The Duke of Norfolk's sale was big enough to attract the attention of the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* on Thursday 25 March 1920

THE NORFOLK ESTATES FURTHER SALES AT SHEFFIELD

A sale of further outlying portions the Duke of Norfolk's estates at Sheffield was opened yesterday, at the Cutler's' Hall, and will continue to-day. Last summer, the instructions of the Duchess about 1,500 acres of land in the localities of Hollow Meadows, Darnall, and Handsworth, were disposed of, now a further 3,000 came into the market, skirting the northern boundaries of the city. Yesterday's sale was concerned with properties in Shiregreen, Ecclesfield, Grenoside, and Oughtibridge; and to-morrow other portions of the estate in Chapeltown, Cowley, Potter Hill, High Green, Mortomley, Bracken Hill and Birley Edge will be offered.

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

Thus, about, half the Norfolk property in the neighbourhood of Sheffield will have changed hands... [But] there is no present intention to dispose of the valuable interests which the family has in Sheffield itself.

As with most other family estates put into the market, the tenants in this case have been given the option of buying privately in advance, and it was announced yesterday that this option had been the case in 20 out of the 50 lots scheduled. These included 12 farms, seven of which were secured privately to the tenants. And of the remaining five, two were bought by the occupiers under open competition. Practically, the tenants had been asked to name their own figure, and if this was found at all reasonable, the agent (Mr. Coverdale) closed with the offer.

The sale being conducted by Messrs. Eadon & Lockwood, and in opening yesterday's proceedings, before a large company, Mr. W. M. Eadon alluded briefly to the circumstances well known to all—which at the present time are compelling landowners to part with their estates; pressure of taxation, costs of upkeep, and so on.⁴³ This case was, he said, no exception to the general rule, and the severance of old associations must be regretted; the severance seemed inevitable, and the only course was to face it courageously.

Asked if the tenants had had notice to quit, Mr. Eadon replied that an Act of Parliament was passed last year rendering inoperative any notice given to a tenant previous to sale.

So far as the fourth entry is concerned, it is interesting that someone by the name of Jenness was also involved in similar criminal activity in 1922 and 1930; but we do not know if these people were related. Nor do we know why Aaron was interested in them.

⁴³ For the circumstances, see David Cannadine's brilliant and magisterial *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (Yale, 1990). (Eadon might have added as causes: the First World War; political changes; and the difficulty of getting servants.)

1921

Major World Events in 1921 included the creation of the Irish Free State; and a major famine in Russia. Aaron noted:

Thomas Oswald Carlos Bennett, 19, of Scholes Lane was bound over at Rotherham Sessions and placed under supervision for two years on Tues Aug 2nd 1921 For having broken into the Dwelling House of Morris Vernon of Scholes Lane and Stole a Wallett containing £8 in notes on June 27 1921.

Geo Bennetts sale at Holm Farm Thorpe Hesley on Feb ? 1921 Johnson was Auctioneer.

Tommy Atkins sale of Furniture at Barley Hall on Thursday Nov 17th 1921 A.E. and E.A. Sides was Auctioneers.

Charles Swift Jumble Sale at the Red Lion Thorpe Hesley on Thursday 27th 1921.

1922

Phyllis Jenness of Wortley Road Thorpe Hesley was sentenced by S E Howell and Mr J G Evans to two months imprisonment on Mon Nov 13th 1922 for attempting to obtain clothing by False Pretences from Messrs J A Brookes Fargate, shoes, stockings value £6 3 11 and from Messrs J B Cockayne Ltd Angel St Gloves, Clothing and Stockings Value £4 6 3, For obtaining Fruit and Flowers from Rotherham Value £4 9 0. She used her name as [sic] Kitty Dixon the Niece of a Rotherham Lady and From Messrs Cole Bros Ltd Value £10 17 6 on Nov 8th 1922.

This entry should be compared with that relating to Constance Jenness under 1920. On this occasion, however, the matter was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for Tuesday 14 November 1922:

THE LURE OF FINERY

Young Woman's Frauds on Sheffield Tradesmen

Charged with obtaining goods by false pretences, and with attempting to obtain goods, Phyllis Jenness, whose home address is Wortley Road, Thorpe Healey, was at Sheffield, yesterday, committed by Mr. S. E. Howell and Mr. T. G. Evans for two months.

At the end of the case Detective-inspector Elliott said that the girl was most untruthful, wore her mistress's clothes to appear fashionable, and was one of 16 children of respectable parents. The defendant covered her face with her arm when in the dock.

She was charged with attempting to obtain by false pretences from Messrs. Cole Brothers, Ltd., a quantity of underclothing valued at £10 17s. 6d., in November; with obtaining by false pretences from Messrs. T. A. Brooks, Ltd., Fargate, three pairs of shoes, and a pair of stockings, valued at £6 3s 11d; and obtaining from Messrs. T. and W. Cockayne, Ltd., Angel Street, a pair of gloves, underclothing, and stockings, value £4 6s 3d.

Major events included the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; the strengthening of the Prohibition Laws in the USA; the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen; the formation of the BBC; and the imprisonment of Mahatma Gandhi.

1923

According to the Journal, Bostock and Wombwell's menagerie had visited Sheffield as early as 1906; but it appeared again in the 1920s:

Wombwell and Bostock's Menagerie opened at Sheffield Fair Ground on Tuesday Jan 16 1923.

Aaron also reported as follows:

Mr Beaumonts Sale at Hesley Hall Farm Thorpe Hesley on Thursday April 5th 1923.

Mrs Laura Beard of the Red Lion Inn Thorpe Hesley⁴⁴ was Tried at Rotherham for selling Drink after time on Thurs Mar 8th 1923 and the case was dismissed. She was Defended by Mr Furniss. P.C.Denton and P.S.Hodgson took the Case.

This case was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* on Friday 9 March 1923

NO CASE TO ANSWER

Rotherham Bench, yesterday, dismissed a case in which Laura M. Beard, licensee of the *Red Lion Inn*, Thorpe, was summoned for supplying later than 10 p.m. on 6 February. Mr A. S. Furniss for the defence, said there was no case to answer. That drinks had been supplied was admitted, but payment for them had been received.

Another case of indecency caught our amateur Journalist's eye in 1923, though it does not seem to have attracted the attentions of the local Press:

Walter Sykes of Wentworth and late Thorpe Hesley was sent to Goal [sic] for 3 months at Barnsley on Friday of May 18th 1923 for indecency.

⁴⁴ See also 1929!

Finally, there was a prosecution affecting Mangham's Colliery at Scholes

Arthur Mangham and his son Bert Proprietors of the Scholes Colliery Nr Rotherham was [sic] ordered to Pay £103 12s 7d by Rotherham Bench on account of not having the mens insurance Cards stamped on Thurs July 12th 1923 . Bert Mangham of Scholes Colliery was Fined £20 at Rotherham on Thurs Dec 17th 1925 for failing to pay contributions under the National Health Insurance Act also ordered to Pay off the £19 3s 2d the amount [sic] of arrears and £1 10s costs in Dec 17th 1925.

This was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* on Friday 13 July 1923:

At Rotherham yesterday Messrs Arthur Maugham and Bert Mangham, trading as Scholes Colliery were summoned for failing to pay contributions under the Unemployment Insurance Act and under the National Health Insurance Act.

Mr. Ashworth, solicitor, from the Ministry of Health, prosecuted, and Mr. F. J. Mason defended.

Mr, Ashworth said defendants employed about 20 men at the colliery. It had been found that although deductions were made from the men's pay, the employers had not stamped the cards for a long period. The position was serious with regard to the men's loss of benefit.

In July last year there were found to be contributions unpaid amounting to £17; and in March this year more than £71.

Mr F. Mason, for the defendants, said they had endeavoured to stamp the whole of the cards, and the only amount remaining was £8. Defendants had paid something like £64 now towards the arrears.

Mr Ashworth said that not all the arrears had been paid; in some cases the cards had not been stamped since 1920.

Mr. F. Mason said the explanation of the prosecution that the defendants had rather made a muddle of things was correct.

The Bench fined the defendants £3 each on each of the summonses, making £78, costs, £6 16s, witnesses' expenses and order for payment of contributions £16 6s, total £103 12s 7d.

1924

Wentworth Agricultural Show on Aug 30th 1924 Mr Leonard Fern of Barley Hall Farm was awarded a Silver Cup by the Notts Farmers Association for the best ever Cow fed on Cow cake.

Fred Desmond came with his Circus and Fixed in Jos Carnley's Field at Thorpe Hesley and showed on Friday night of September 6th 1924. He pulled down and then fixed up again and showed again on Fri Oct 3rd 1924.

1925

Aaron's elder brother David was elected to Barnsley Council; but all Aaron noted was:

Thorpe Hesley Sports held on Saturday Aug 15th 1925 and Charles Swift from the Horse and Tiger having the beer tent.

1927

Bostock's Great Jungle and Fun City opened at the Norfolk Drill Hall, Sheffield on Sat Feb 5th 1927.⁴⁵

Hy Smith of Kirkcroft Farm Sale at Thorpe Hesley Thorpe St on Friday April 1st 1927 Shearman Johnson was the Auctioneers.

A Travelling Wild Beast Show while visiting Edlington Nr Doncaster at the week ending Sat April 9th 1927 news spread that a Lion had got loose but after being chased it was found to be a Great monkey that knocked down a boy Stanley Moffitt age 3 and severly bit his leg at last it was shot by a sharpshooter belonging to the Wild and Wooly West Show travelling with the Fair.

Bostock's Great Jungle

The first and third entries here appear in Aaron's Journal under 'Miscellaneous Shows', while the third appears on a separate page entitled 'Sales – Shows.' The first two relate to show put on by the same company, the third to two different organisations which travelled together; but all four clearly relied on the power of 'wild beasts' or 'the Wild West' to attract the public..

An advert placed in newspapers in preparation for the arrival of the first of these spectacles in 1923 proclaimed that it was 'gigantic', and indeed 'one of the world's greatest zoological collections, now 'LARGER AND GRANDER THAN EVER.' Admission, including tax was 1s 3s for adults, children 6d(?)⁴⁶.

The Menagerie seems to have been both a travelling zoo and a circus, with lions, tigers, elephants, camels and giraffes. One of the favourite attractions was Billy

⁴⁵ There has long been a pub in Thorpe Hesley called the *Horse and Tiger*. In his *History of Thorpe Hesley* (c. 1980, in Rotherham Archives) the late Robert Chesman wrote that the name is said to originate in an incident when a tiger escaped from a travelling zoo and attacked or frightened a horse. One cannot help wondering if there is a connection with visits made to the village by one of Wombwell & Bostock's shows.

⁴⁶*The Sheffield Independent*, Friday 12 January 1923.

the Pelican. As for the Jungle, this seems to have had more sideshows, more in the way of novelty. According to a report in *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, those visiting it in Sheffield in 1927 might expect to be entertained by some 'beautiful performing ponies', 'three most amusing little live teddy bears', and a young lady "who had decided to join the great majority of her sex and become shingled". This sounds alarming but it meant no more than having her hair cut short, as fashion dictated in the 1930s. However, the Sheffield girl in question had decided to "make this most uninteresting of events memorable by choosing to have her locks shorn in a lion's den".⁴⁷

Who was Bostock and who was Wombwell? George Wombwell was originally a shoemaker from Essex, who began his career in entertainment by exhibiting snakes, and founded a Travelling Menagerie in 1810. By 1839 he had 15 wagons, and his collection included all manner of animals. He owned the first lion to be bred in captivity in Britain, which he named William Wallace, after the great Scottish hero. Wombwell was invited to the royal court on five occasions to exhibit his animals, three times before Queen Victoria. He died in 1850 and is buried in Highgate Cemetery, where a full-size sculpture of a lion sits on top of his grave. In 1852 his niece Emma married James Bostock, who had given up farming to work as a waggoner with the Menagerie.⁴⁸

The Lion and the Monkey

The third extract from Aaron's Journal concerns an incident which occurred about 20 miles from Thorpe Hesley, near Doncaster, and once again the essential details recorded here turn out to be true. The escape of a lion, which turned out to be a monkey, were reported in *The Sheffield Independent* for Wednesday 13 April 1927. This is summarised on the next page.

CROWDS CHASE A LION AND KILL A MONKEY

Considerable excitement, and some alarm, was caused in Edlington, near Doncaster, during the weekend, when a large, fully grown monkey escaped from the custody of its keeper, who is a travelling showman attached to a fair paying its annual visit to the town.

After being chased by some children, the animal took refuge in the back yard of some houses near the fairground.

⁴⁷*The Sheffield Daily Independent*, Tuesday 1 March 1927.

⁴⁸ Melvyn Jones has written extensively and most interestingly about *Wombell's Menagerie* in *Discover Your History*, October 2014, Issue 58: www.discoveryourhistory.net.

Stanley Moffatt, aged three, was knocked down by the monkey, and was severely bitten in the leg.

The monkey was immediately chased by the infuriated neighbours, and was at length shot by a sharpshooter attached to the "Wild and Woolley West Show" travelling with the Fair.

CHILD BITTEN

[There follows an interview with Mr Sam Moffitt, father of the child].

BIG GAME HUNT

Immediately, the wildest of rumours got around, and the neighbours, believing that a lion was loose and had mauled six children, got down guns⁴⁹ and prepared to hunt the animal in real earnest.

The monkey took refuge on top of an outhouse in Dixon Road and sat contemplating the angry crowds, until the sharpshooter from the fair put an end to his existence.⁵⁰

There were several other noteworthy events in 1927, according to our Aaron:

Wentworth Poultry Show opened on Sat Aug 20 1927. It began to rain about 10-30 and at noon it poured down.

Wentworth Garden Fete at Wentworth House on Sat July 3rd 1927.

Thorpe Hesley Sports held on Sat Aug 13th 1927 great disappointment with the mark given to Geo Stacey's son when he won the 80yd race and the Sprint race. Charles Swift having the beer tent.

The worst rainfall ever experienced for Peniston [sic] 67 Agricultural Show held on Thursday Aug 18th 1927. It rained that Fast while everyone everone [sic] including Cresswell Prize Band had to take shelter.

⁴⁹ This is surprising. There were many guns in circulation after the First World War, but Parliament had enacted the Firearms Act of 1920 in an attempt to control the situation.

⁵⁰ Note that the journalist did not like to write 'killed him.'

Wm Smith a seedsman Traveller sentenced to P-S For life on Sat Feb 19th 1927 for attempting to murder P.C. Dainty by shooting him on Jan 7th 1927 nr Nottingham. He was sentenced by Justice Branston at Nottingham Feb 19th 1927.

William Smith

The prosecution of Smith was reported in the *Lincolnshire Standard and Boston Guardian* on Saturday 26 February 1927:

“TERRIBLE SENTENCE”

Penal Servitude for Man in Newark Case.

The trial of Edgar William Smith (29), the Lincoln commercial traveller, charged with the attempted murder of Police-constable James Edward Dainty, by shooting him on the Fosse Road, near Newark, the night of Jan 7th, ended at the Nottinghamshire Assize on Saturday. The prisoner, whose defence was that he did not know Dainty was a policeman and that he shot in self-defence, was found guilty and sentenced to penal servitude for life.

The case was invested with added interest by reason of the discovery, a month after the crime was committed, of an attache case containing two Indian clubs, a false moustache, black velvet domino mask, with a piece of elastic for securing it to the head, spirit for fixing the moustache, a dessert fork, four metal clips, a box containing six zinc letters two each the letters “E”, W, and “S” and some zinc numerals. The printed figures on the number plates marked N370 correspond in size to the zinc letters and figures found in the case. It was proved on the first day of the trial on Friday that N370 was not the registered number of any car.

When the hearing was resumed on Saturday the accused went into the witness box and gave his version of the grim struggle, during which six shots were fired from his pistol, the last-shot being deliberately aimed at Dainty with intent to disable. Smith calmly examined the contents of the attache case, and emphatically denied that they were his.

The jury, which included two women, were absent about half-an-hour considering their verdict. When the Foreman announced that they unanimously found the prisoner guilty on the chief of five counts in the indictment, Smith turned pale. Mr. Norman Birkett, K.C., who with Mr. A. Davis, appeared for the Crown, said a police superintendent was present if his Lordship (Mr. Justice Branson) wished to hear him. ,

Mr. Justice Branson asked there was anything ought know and Mr. Birkett replied that thought not.

SERVED IN WAR

Mr. A. M. Lyons, counsel for defence, pointed out that the prisoner was 29 years of age and married. He in served the war and was gassed, and since then had held a responsible position and had given every satisfaction. I ask your Lordship to take as lenient a view as possible, he added.

Asked if he had anything to say why judgment should not passed upon him, the prisoner answered "I am not guilty. If I had known that Dainty was a policeman I should not have shot him."

In passing sentence, the Judge said: "You have been convicted on evidence on which, so far as I can see, the jury could come to no other conclusion. I perfectly agree with that conclusion. You shot an unfortunate man who was attempting to do his duty, three times. There is only one penalty I can inflict upon you, and that is penal servitude for life."

His Lordship's concluding words fell like a bombshell on the crowded court. The prisoner turned ghastly white and reeled slightly. "My lord" he remarked, when he had recovered his composure somewhat, "Can't you have mercy and reduce it for the sake of my wife, not for mine. It is a terrible sentence."

The Judge: "It is a terrible sentence, but you have done a terrible thing, and it is only by the mercy of God that you are not there charged with murder."

The prisoner was then conducted to the cells below.

Police-constable Dainty, wearing his war medal ribbons, was sent for at the Judge's request, and his Lordship addressed him as follows - "I wish to express publicly to you the gratification which I have felt at listening to the evidence of your courage in attempting to arrest the man whom I have just sentenced.

No one could have blamed you if, seeing that he was armed, and having got one bullet wound through your body, you had ceased to try and arrest him. Notwithstanding that, two more shots were put into your body before you ceased your efforts to do your duty, it is a record of which any man could be proud, and I hope that your future in the police force will reflect the glory of the beginning."

Dainty bowed acknowledgment. A storm of applause followed the Judge's words of commendation, but it was immediately suppressed.

Smith appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeal – a relatively new court, which had only been established in 1907. The proceedings were reported in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* on Monday 21 March 1927:

**LIFE SENTENCE NOT TO BE REDUCED
MOTORIST WHO WOUNDED A POLICEMAN**

The Court of Criminal Appeal decided to-day that penal servitude for was a sentence no more severe than was deserved by Edgar William Smith (29), for attempted murder by shooting of Constable Dainty, of the Nottingham County Police, who stopped him with a motor-car near Newark.

The case came before Justices Avory, Shearman, and Sankey by way of an application by Smith for leave appeal against his sentence and an appeal to be present in Court.

Sir Henry Curtis Bennett, K.C., for the appellant, submitted that a matter of the greatest importance in the case was whether or not Smith knew that he was being interrogated by a police-constable when Dainty, in civilian clothes, spoke to him.

Sir Henry called attention to the evidence of a witness, Litte, at the trial, and its importance in corroborating Smith's story that he did not know Dainty was a policeman.

Complaint made that Mr. Justice Branson did not point out, in his summing up to the jury, that this was a case in which there was no premeditation, nor that the appellant, a traveller, had carried the automatic pistol under a licence from the police for two years.

Sir Henry further submitted that a life sentence on a man of 29, with a previously good record, was excessive and ought not to be allowed to stand. He urged that the Judge ought to have had more evidence concerning the mental history of the appellant. Smith's mother was in an asylum as incurable, his father suffered from epilepsy, and his maternal grandfather died insane in an asylum.

Mr. Justice Avory said he doubted whether any of the arguments submitted before the Court had been omitted before the jury.

Dealing with the maximum penalty of life sentence under the statute, he said there was nothing in the statute holding that such sentence should be passed only persons previously convicted of some offence, and therefore effect could not be given to the argument that because accused person had not been convicted any other offence, maximum sentence was not appropriate.

Refusing leave to appeal against the conviction, Mr. Justice Avory said that "in all the circumstances, the Court came to the conclusion that this was a case that called for the extreme maximum sentence."

William Woodhouse

Wm Hy Woodhouse a schoolmaster at Shuttlewood and Previously at Wath on Dearne was sent to 3 years P-S by Mr Justice Branson for Perjury at Derby Assizes on Friday Feb 25th 1927. In the Court of Appeal on Mon April 1927 he had his sentence reduced from 3 years to 18 months by Mr Justice Avory.

These events were first reported in the *Derby Daily Telegraph* on Monday 28 March 1927:

**ASSIZE SEQUEL
DERBYSHIRE TREACHER TO APPEAL AGAINST SENTENCE.
CHARGE OF PERJURY**

Leave to appeal against the sentence only was given by the Court of Criminal Appeal, to-day, on the application of William Henry Woodhouse, who was sentenced, at Derby Assizes, on a charge of perjury to three years' penal servitude.

The Court was composed of Justices Avory, Shearman and Sankey, and the application was for leave to appeal against the conviction and sentence, and to call further evidence.

Mr. Saunders, for the appellant, said the grounds of the appeal were misdirection in law and inadequate statement of the defence to the jury. Woodhouse had been 25 years a headmaster under the Derby County Council, and was also member of the Bolsover U.D.C. and of the local water board. A man named Ashley was his assistant master at Chesterfield. On January 15 both were fined 22 shillings each, Ashley for trespass in search of game, and Woodhouse for aiding and abetting. Both told the same story, viz., that a gun was found in a wood close to where Ashley was seen by the keeper, but that they never saw it until it was produced by the police. Summons alleging perjury were issued against both men.

Counsel said there was no evidence against Woodhouse, but he was overwhelmed by the evidence against Ashley, and both were sent for trial, where, after Ashley had been sentenced, that sentence was reduced, and he

was bound over, the suggestion being that he was under the influence of Woodhouse. The only charge of perjury against him was that he never saw the gun found the wood until the police produced it.

Mr. Saunders submitted that material evidence about the gun that was available was not given by the prosecution.

Mr. Justice Shearman said in his opinion the case for the defence was properly put to the jury by Mr. Justice Branson, the judge at the trial.

Mr. Justice Avory said they would give the appellant leave to appeal against the sentence only.

The appeal proceedings were reported in the *Sheffield Independent* on Tuesday 29 March 1927:

HEADMASTER GIVEN LEAVE TO APPEAL PERJURY CHARGE ECHO CONVICTION STANDS

APPLICATION by William Henry Woodhouse, a Derbyshire schoolmaster, for leave to appeal against a sentence of three years' penal servitude for perjury, was heard in the Court of Criminal Appeal yesterday, when Mr Justice Avory said the conviction would stand, but leave to appeal would be given far as the sentence was concerned.

Mr Sandlands, who appeared on behalf of Woodhouse explained that his client was the headmaster of Derbyshire County Council School, and had been a schoolmaster for 30 years.

A man named Ashley was his assistant master, and it appeared that before the Chesterfield justices both men were charged with trespassing in pursuit of game, and both were fined 30s. and costs.

Question of the Gun

In this case of perjury, the allegation was that both men denied having used or seen a certain gun that had been found by the Police.

When the police made inquiries four or five witnesses swore that Ashley had tried to borrow the gun and then to buy it and in the end the men were tried before Mr. Justice Branson at the Derby Assizes, when Ashley pleaded guilty and was bound over.

The allegation seemed to be that Woodhouse was the ringleader, and that Ashley committed the offence under duress by Woodhouse.

He (counsel) contended that the judge misdirected the jury. The Judge told the jury that evidence was given by a boy that Woodhouse was seen

riding pillion to Ashley on his motor-cycle carrying a gun, but the witness did not say that at all.

JUDGE'S COMMENT

Mr Sandlands said the explanation by Woodhouse is that he went off that day to view a well that had come up for discussion at a council meeting, and Ashley took him on his motor-cycle. It was nonsense to say that it was a poaching expedition in which the gun in question was to be used.

Mr Justice Avory: the only reasonable complaint seems to be that the Judge at the trial did not sum up for an acquittal, when he could do nothing of the sort.

So the conviction for perjury stood.⁵¹ We know, however, from Aaron's notes that the sentence was substantially reduced on appeal – from 3 years penal servitude to 18 months.

⁵¹ It seems to me that Woodhouse was treated very harshly by the criminal justice system, in that his basic offence was one of poaching (which resulted in a mere fine of only 22 shillings, but because he was convicted of perjury in relation to that matter, he was ultimately sentenced to 3 years penal servitude for the same offence (and his career was also presumably ruined).

1928

In 1928 Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin; Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic, Leon Trotsky was sent into exile by Joseph Stalin; Mickey Mouse first appeared on film; and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was banned.

Wentworth Agricultural Show held on Sat September 1928.

Peninstone [sic] Agricultural Show held on Thurs Aug 23rd 1928.

Thorpe Hesley Flower Show on Sat Aug 11 1928 and proved disappointing there was no beer or refreshment tent.

The Rt Hon the Earl of Effingham Deceaseds Estate Sale on Mon Nov 19th 1928 at the Assembly Rooms Rotherham the Auctioneers was Merryweather and Sons.

Bostock's Menegarie [sic] opened on Sat Dec 22nd 1928 at Edmund Rd Drill Hall Sheffield.

1929

The main events of 1929 included the Wall Street Crash and the beginning of the Great Depression; the First Oscar Awards; and the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. In the same year Aaron Allott's father died, and was described in the local paper as the oldest inhabitant in the village of Thorpe Hesley. Aaron reported:

Cyril Belfitt (17), rope boy, of Barnsley road, Thorpe Hesley, was killed yesterday, while working in the Barley Hall Colliery, Thorpe Hesley.

Mr Green Farmer of Hesley Hall Thorpe Hesley had their Farm Sale in Thursday Jan 31st 1929.

Mr Dunns Farm Sale at Rainsthorpe near Ecclesfield on Thursday Mar 21st 1929.

Newton Chambers Farm Sale at Hood Hill on Friday April 26th 1929.

Peninstone [sic] Agricultural Show held and opened on Thurs Aug 22rd 1929.

Scholes Flower Show and Sports held for the First time on Mon Aug 5th 1929.

Alec Watson Farmer of Dropping Well Farm Kimberworth had a sale on Thursday Aug 15th 1929. Merryweather was the Auctioneer.

Mrs Laura Beard of the Red Lion Thorpe Hesley was at Rotherham fined £2 on Thurs Jan 24th 1929 For serving a Boy under 14 Yrs with gills of Beer without seal on Christmas Day of 1928. Mr L H Brittan Defended.⁵²

Jesse Caldwell described as a Bookmaker of no fixed abode was charged an [sic] remanded at Barnsley on Thursday Feb 7th 1929 with stealing a Wallet containing £51 Pound notes from Robert Wragg of 158 Scholes Rotherham it was found out that he came from Goldthorpe. He was committed at Barnsley on Thurs Feb 14th 1929 to take his trial at Leeds on Wed Mar 6th 1929 and sent to 6 months imprisonment.

1930

In the great Depression of 1930-31 the global economy declined sharply and GDP in the UK shrank by 5%; Aaron's elder brother, the Reverend David, was involved in an altercation with the National Unemployed Workers (N.U.W.), who alleged that he was not sufficiently generous to the poor, and staged a demonstration near his home. Aaron noted:

**Miss Elliott's Farm Sale at the Hall Thorpe Common on Wed Mar 12th 1930
Mr Corbett was Auctioneer.**

Sydney Wigfield Red House Farm Sale Nr Scholes Coppice on Thursday Mar 20th 1930 Shearman – Johnson was Auctioneers.

⁵² See also 1923!

The first jumble Sale was held in Thorpe Hesley New School on Friday April 11th 1930.

Maltby Agricultural Show after been postponed for a week owing to the Flooded State of the Ground was held on Thursday July 31st 1930.

Lawrence Edwin Smith of Patmore Road, Firth Park was arrested at his home by P C Berry of Thorpe Hesley and Sergeant Booth on July 2nd 1930 for having broken into the Library at Scholes on July 2nd 1930 tried at Rotherham on Friday July 4th 1930 and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment. Frank Burkinshaw was caretaker at the time.

This incident was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* on Saturday 5 July 1930

**HIS "GRATITUDE"
MAN ARRESTED CALLS GAOL A "JOB"**

"Thank you. You have found me job where the Government has failed. I am much obliged," said Lawrence Edwin Smith, labourer, of 25, Patmore Road, Firth Park, Sheffield, when, yesterday, at Rotherham, he was sentenced to three months' hard labour for having been found on enclosed premises at a school that is being used as the Scholes branch of Rotherham Public Library. Francis S. Burkinshaw, caretaker of the schools, said he looked through the window on Wednesday afternoon and saw defendant at the cupboard in the school. Asked what he was doing, he said "I thought this was public library." He was told had no business there and was asked to accompany witness, but he ran away and jumped over the wall "like a monkey."

Smith had broken into the school by bursting the lock in the front door, the witness added. The padlock on the cupboard had also been broken, but nothing was missing. Chief-Inspector Pattison said Smith was a confirmed thief, and had lived a life of dishonesty since 1922. Among his previous convictions was one of breaking into a church, for which he got 12 months' hard labour.

There were other local crimes which caught Aaron's attention:

Phyllis Jenness of Thorpe Hesley But in service at Huddersfield was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment at Huddersfield on Friday July 11th for robbing Miss Alice Dyson another servant at the same place of a Gold Signet Ring and a Quantity of Crepe de Chine and 3s 6d the total value of

£2. The articles were traced and was [sic] found at the home of her mother and she was Phylis sent. to 3 months July 11th 1930.⁵³

Charles Ernest Beard 37 Lanlord [sic] of the Sportsman Ecclesfield⁵⁴ was Fined £5 for aiding and abetting and serving Drink after hours at Sheffield Court on Friday Aug 29th 1930 and 4 Ecclesfield men £1 each for consuming it. Joe Ralph Wilson. Charles Senior. John Hy Laurance and Amos Fisher.

Lastly, the potato case:

Percy Dobson of Scholes age 39 during a dispute at the Bay Horse Inn threw a Glass and injuring the Landlord Mr Herbert Gaunt he had to [have] his eye removed on Saturday Sep 20th 1930 he was arrested by P.C.Berry the same night he had a hearing at Rotherham on Mon Sep 22nd 1930 remanded until Oct 8th 1930 Bail allowed Tried at Rotherham on Oct 8th 1930 and put off for Quarter Sessions he was sentenced to 3 years Penal Servitude by the recorder Mr Sorry Dean at Rotherham Sessions on Thursday October 23rd 1930 for maliciously wounding Herbert Gaunt Landlord of the Bay Horse Inn Scholes causing Gaunt to lose an eye on Sep 20th 1930 in the Court of Criminal Appeal heard on Mon Nov 24th 1930 Mr Justice Acton said the sentence would be reduced to one of 12 months Hard Labour he was released from Prison on Aug 24th 1931.

The newspaper report of this last incident was as follows:

A dispute over a potato show on Saturday is alleged to have resulted in the loss of an eye by Herbert Gaunt... The Chief Constable said that at about 9.30pm Dobson and another man were in the Bay Horse when a heated conversation took place about a potato show. Dobson became very excited and losing control of himself, threw four glasses across the tap room. The licensee entered the room and Dobson, it was alleged, threw a pint pot at him, causing a wound over the left eye. On Saturday, Gaunt was taken to a Sheffield nursing home, and the eye was removed.⁵⁵

⁵³ See also entries under 1920 and 1922.

⁵⁴ One wonders if he was related to Mary Beard – see entries under 1923 and 1929.

⁵⁵ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, Tuesday 23 September 1930. See also *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* 24 October 1930 for Rotherham Sessions.

1931

The economic crisis triggered by the Wall Street Crash of 1929 came to a head in Britain, and the Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald formed a National Government, with the aim of balancing the Budget and restoring confidence. The Labour Party officially repudiated the new government, expelled MacDonald and made Arthur Henderson their new leader. There was a General Election on October 27 when Labour was reduced to 52 MPs. MacDonald won the largest landslide in British political history; locally, the coming of age of Lord Milton, eldest son of the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam, was celebrated in Wentworth Park, when there were 15,000 guests in attendance. However, as so often Aaron noted a variety of events, none of them political. Aaron noted:

Leonard J Saffhill age 19 committed in Feb 1931 from Sheffield charged with an indecent assault [sic] on Miss Portman the Daughter of Friend Portman of Thorpe Hesley Bar Thorpe Hesley in Hesley Park and Found Guilty at Wake Field Quarter Sessions on Tues April 14th 1931 and sentenced to 9 months imprisonment.⁵⁶

Cyril Bennetts Wortley Road Hesley Poultry Farm Sale on Thursday Jan 29th 1931 his Big Poultry House went for £21 the Auctioneer was Mr Pennington.

Wentworth Horticultural Society held their 13th annual show in the grounds of Earl Fitzwilliam on Mon Aug 3rd 1931.

The Grand Olympia Circus opened at Thorpe Hesley. Fixed and showed in a field in front of Hesley Hall on Wed Oct 7th 1931. Admission was 2s 4d, 1s 3d, 1s 6d.

Princess Mary visited Sheffield and opened the Chrysanthemum Show at the Cutler's Hall on Nov 12th 1931.

⁵⁶ I have not been able to find anything about this in the local newspapers. Perhaps there was an unwritten code, not to report such matters?

1932

In Germany, the Nazis received 37.3% of the popular vote and 230 seats in the Reichstag (out of a total of 608 seats) in the General Election of August 31st 1932; but in the second election of the year, on November 6th, their vote declined, to 33.1% of the popular vote and 196 seats in the Reichstag (out of a total of 584). Aaron noted:

Thorpe Hesley Workingmen's Club Sold at 11 a.m. on Wed April 27th 1932 and knocked down to Robert Ellis for £260.

Mrs Benjamin Kitchen of Victoria Vilas Thorpe St Thorpe Hesley sale of Household Furniture on Mon April 25th 1932 also two Houses Victoria Villas in Thorpe St belonging to the late Mr – Mrs Benjamin Kitchen was sold at the Masons Arms to Harry Hartley on Wed April 27th 1932 and knocked down at £650.

The 14th annual Horticultural Society Show held in the grounds of Wentworth Woodhouse the Yorkshire seat of the Earl and Countess Fitzwilliam on Mon Aug 1st 1932.

The 47th annual Agricultural Show was held at Oaks Park Norton Sheffield on Aug 1st 1932.

Maltby Agricultural Show was held on Mon Aug 1st 1932.

The Ecclesfield Beagle Puppy Show was held at Wortley Hall on Mon Aug 1 1932, when the Countess of Wharncliffe presented the prizes.

1933

In the United States, GDP declined to one half of what it had been before the Great Crash in 1929, and the unemployment rate reached 25%. F.D.Roosevelt became President for the first time. The great event locally was that Lord Peter Milton, son of the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam was married to Olive Dorothea "Obby" Plunket (d. 1975), the daughter of Benjamin Plunket, a Bishop of the Church of Ireland. Aaron noted a local sale:

Sale of the late Benjamin Matthews Furniture at Hesley Bar on Mon Jan 23rd 1933.

1934

Wentworth Poultry Show and Sheep Dog Trials held in Wentworth Park on Aug 6th 1934. Bank Holiday Monday.

The *Sheffield Independent* for Tuesday 7 August 1934 reported as follows:

The annual Wentworth Show was held at Wentworth Woodhouse, the country seat of Earl and Countess Fitzwilliam, yesterday. Attractions included sheep dog trials, and a brass band concert. The sheep dog trials attracted large entry, dogs taking part the single class, among which were international winners.

There followed lists of the winners of the various competitions: Horticultural (members), Horticultural (open), poultry, rabbits and sheepdog trials, etc.

1936

Aaron's Journal contains no entries relating to this year, which is perhaps surprising in view of the fact that this was the year when King Edward VIII abdicated; and when there was another fatality at the New Drift colliery in Thorpe Hesley: the *Sheffield Independent* for Monday 4 May 1936 reported:

MINER KILLED BY FALL OF ROCK THANKS FRIEND WHO HELPED

A fall of rock in the New Drift Colliery, Thorpe Hesley on Saturday killed George Goddard of Enoch Row, Ecclesfield, who, working with his companion, Arthur Meakin, also of Ecclesfield, was buried by rock. Meakin escaped injury. For over an hour, with other helpers, he worked to extricate the buried man from beneath the fallen rock. When extricated, Goddard was able to say; "Thanks, pal. I don't mind my legs being hurt, if I only get my breath all right." A warm handshake followed, and Goddard was taken to the ambulance room at the pit head.

On the way to hospital he died.

This is the fourth loss sustained by Goddard's family in colliery work.

1937

Jos Carnellys Sale at Mill Farm Thorpe Hesley on Thursday Mar 25th 1937.

This entry demonstrates, perhaps, that Aaron's focus was becoming narrower as he grew older. He might have noted the coronation of George VI, and the treat given to the children of Thorpe Hesley as a result, reported in the *Sheffield Independent* on Tuesday 12 January 1937:

CORONATION TREAT

The Rev. W. A. Cleghorn, vicar of Thorpe Hraley, presided at a meeting of the Mechanic's Institute, Thorpe Hesley, last night, when it was decided to give a Coronation treat to children, aged people and unemployed.

In different times, and in a different mood, Aaron might also have been expected to remark on the following, reported in the remarkable reputation which Thorpe Hesley had earned for putting on a good 'tea'. In an open letter addressed to children everywhere, published in the *Sheffield Independent* on Tuesday 30 August 1938:

THORPE HESLEY

A REMINDER to our Thorpe Hesley district members that there will a meeting of the Thorpe Hesley Cheer Up Club, tonight in the Hope School room, Thorpe Hesley, at 7.30.

1939

This year saw the outbreak of Second World War, so far as Britain was concerned, when Hitler invaded Poland Aaron noted only two events:

Harry Bowman's Thorpe Field Farm Thorpe Hesley his sale was on Thursday Mar 16th 1939 Auctioneers Spearman and Johnson

Hospital Garden Fete in a Field lent by Mr Hy Bennett at Scholes Lane Thorpe Common on Sat July 8th 1939.

Further particulars of this sale were printed by the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on Saturday 4 March 1939; and by the *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald* on Friday 10 March 1939:

SHEARMAN AND JOHNSTON

**THORPE FIELD FARM, THORPE HESLEY,
ROTHERHAM.**

THURSDAY, MARCH 16th. 1939.

SHEARMAN & JOHNSTON, instructed by Mr. Henry Bowman, will SELL by AUCTION, as above, his Valuable LIVE and DEAD FARMING STOCK, viz:—3 HORSES, 47 BEASTS, 175 SHEEP, 7 PIGS, POULTRY. AGRICULTURAL CARRIAGES, IMPLEMENTS, and MACHINERY. Catalogues the Auctioneers, Rotherham and Doncaster.

1945

1945 saw the end of the Second World War, both in Europe and in the Pacific. In the UK, the Labour Party was returned to power for the first time since 1929, but this time with a record majority of almost 200 seats in the House of Commons. The new Labour Government proceeded to enact a radical programme, which included the nationalisation of coal, the railways and steel, and the introduction of the National Health Service. Aaron noted:

Mrs Eva Walker 58 of Thorpe Hesley sentenced to 18 months imprisonment along with another Woman who received 3 years at Leeds Assizes on April 19th 1945. Mrs Walker was released From Strangeways Prison Manchester on Wed April 17th 1946 and reached home at Thorpe Hesley on Wed April 17th 1946.

1950

1950 was the year in which the Korean War began, and in which US President Truman gave orders for the construction of the Hydrogen or 'H' bomb, the 'A' bomb having been used twice, in Japan, in 1945. Aaron noted the following:

Thorpe Hesley Agricultural Show and Horticultural Show held in a Field by permission of Mr H. Wostenholme of Thorpe Field Farm on Sat May 27th 1950.⁵⁷

Wickersley Agricultural Show held on May 30th Tues 1950 most of the 20,000 who attended got ready with overcoats and Macs but rain held off.⁵⁸

These two shows were reported in the local Press. The Thorpe show was affected by rain but even so, the numbers were 'up'.

More Show Entries, But Rain Kept Crowd Away

RAIN affected the attendance at Thorpe Hesley and District Agricultural and Horticultural Society's sixth annual show on Saturday. But entries were up, being nearly 100 more than last year. Mr. K. Weldon, of Hood Hill Farm, won the championship cup in the cattle section, and the Byron Heselwood cup for the best tradesman's turnout was won by Mr. Fred Dixon. Metcalfe and Vickers, Ltd., Bradford, won the K. Weldon challenge cup for the best heavy horse in the show. The John Day challenge cup for open jumping was won by T. Makin on Snowdrop. Mr. W. Stocks, of Sheffield, was the commentator.⁵⁹

The article reproduced here, from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* which appeared on the Monday following the show, also featured a photograph of Tony Rebori of Tankersley, with his prize-winning foal (see illustrations below)..

The Wickersley show, held on the Tuesday following that held in Thorpe was an altogether bigger affair; and although the rain was again expected to pose a problem, it did not stop around 20,000 people attending.

Took Macs, But Rain Held Off For 20,000 RECORD WICKERSLEY ENTRIES

⁵⁷ This show is referred to previously in the Journal, the previous entry giving more precise details of the venue.

⁵⁸ This is where Aaron inserts an entry relating to 'the worst rainfall ever', which fell on Penistone in 1927. See above.

⁵⁹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* - Monday 29 May 1950.

Flower Shows, Fraudsters & Horrible Murders

A "HEAD of the Times" at Wickersley Agricultural Show yesterday was that of Coun. Leslie J. Tarbit who usually appears at shows in the area sporting a straw boater. Yesterday however, saw him arrive for duties in a felt hat, but he said of his boater, 'I am not going to risk it'. Most of the 20,000 who attended proceedings wore overcoats, mackintoshes and headscarves, but the rain kept off. There were record entries in the hackney horses, cattle, pigs and riding classes, bringing the total entry, including dogs, to 1,267.

Earlier in the Journal, Aaron had already recorded a third show held in 1950, in what is now North Yorkshire.

Great Yorkshire Show held at Malton on Tuesday July 11, 12th 13th 1950.

The Great Yorkshire Show naturally received more extensive publicity in the local newspapers than the local equivalents. The following is a typical example of the adverts placed for it, throughout Yorkshire.⁶⁰

GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW MALTON: July 11th, 12th, 13th, 1950 Special Attractions

MUSICAL and ACTIVITY RIDES by the MOUNTED SECTION of the METROPOLITAN POLICE will be given on each day of the Show.

THE BAND of the METROPOLITAN CENTRAL POLICE (Conductor. Mr. R. Barsotti, A.R.C.M. Director of Music) will play at intervals during each day of the Show.

JUMPING COMPETITIONS, FLOWER SHOW, EXHIBITS of Live Stock. Implements. Hives. Honey, Wool. Forestry. Poultry. Pigeons. Rural Industries. Horse Shoeing and Welding Competitions.

PRICES OF ADMISSION: First Day 15/-; Second Day 10/- (after 2 p.m. 5/-); Third Day 2s 6d. Children under 15 years half price.

Grand Stand Reserved Seats: First and Second Days 10/-. Third Day 5/-

F. M. BALDWIN, Secretary, Yorkshire Agricultural Society. Cliftonfield. Shipton Road York. Tel. 3102.

⁶⁰*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Monday 10 July 1950.

POSTSCRIPT, 2017

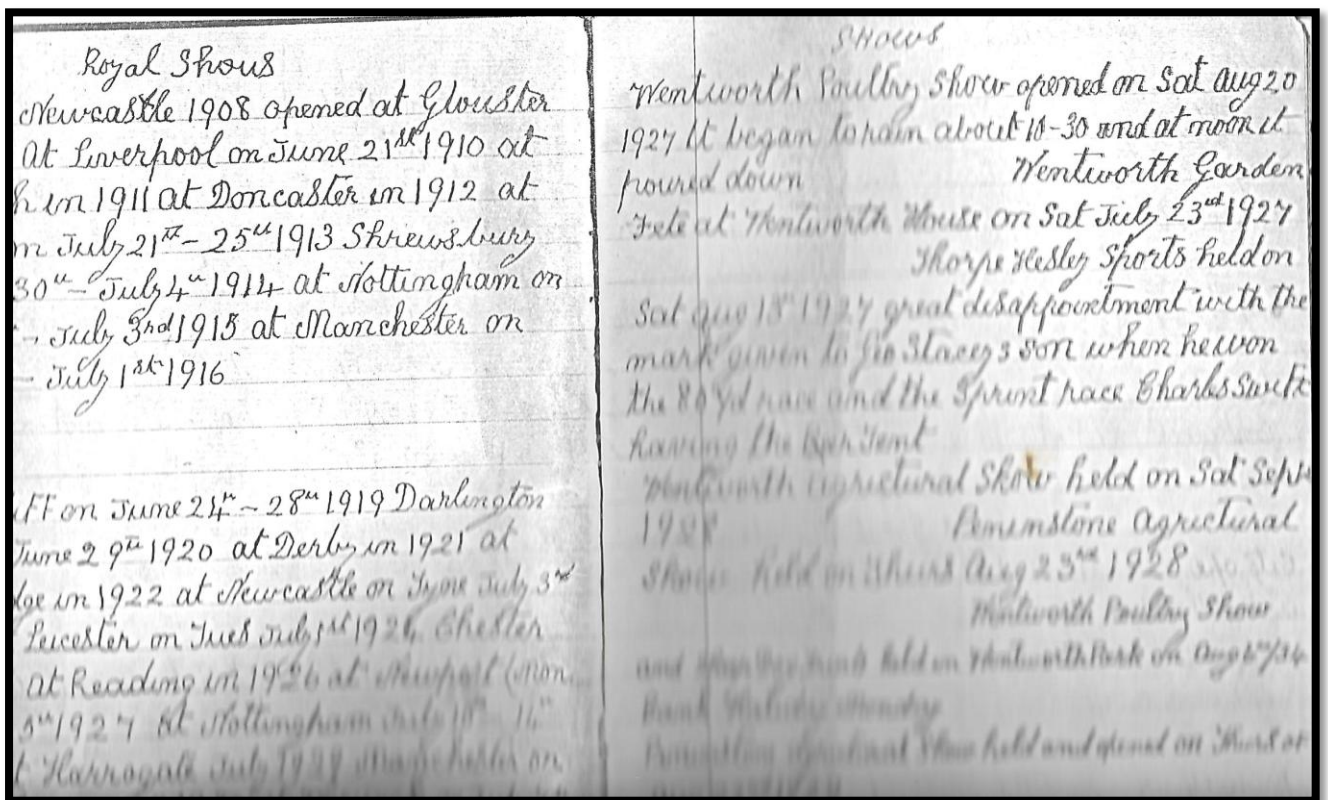
Aaron Allott would still recognise the village where he spent most of his life. The main roads in Thorpe Hesley, especially Thorpe Street, Brooke Hill, Wortley Road and Hesley Lane have a distinctive shape and make a distinctive pattern, which they have retained for centuries and still maintain; but the population has expanded greatly since his day, as a result of the construction of the adjoining M1 motorway and of many hundreds of new houses. Meanwhile, the mines, which provided employment for many hundreds and provided the background for the stories related above under the years 1902, 1911 and 1923, closed in the 1970s. At the same time, many of the 13 pubs which once slaked the thirst of the workers have also closed, along with all three Methodist chapels and the Mechanics' Institute in Thorpe Street (see the year 1888 for the opening). On the other hand, the Travellers Inn (1898), the Horse and Tiger (1925), the Red Lion Inn (1929) and the Ball Inn (rebuilt in 1911) still remain.

The old patriarchal society, which provided employment for household servants and farm workers in and around the local big houses, and furnished the backdrop for several of the stories related above, has also disappeared. Wentworth Woodhouse and its vast Park both remain; but they are no longer the seat of power of a great aristocratic house. .

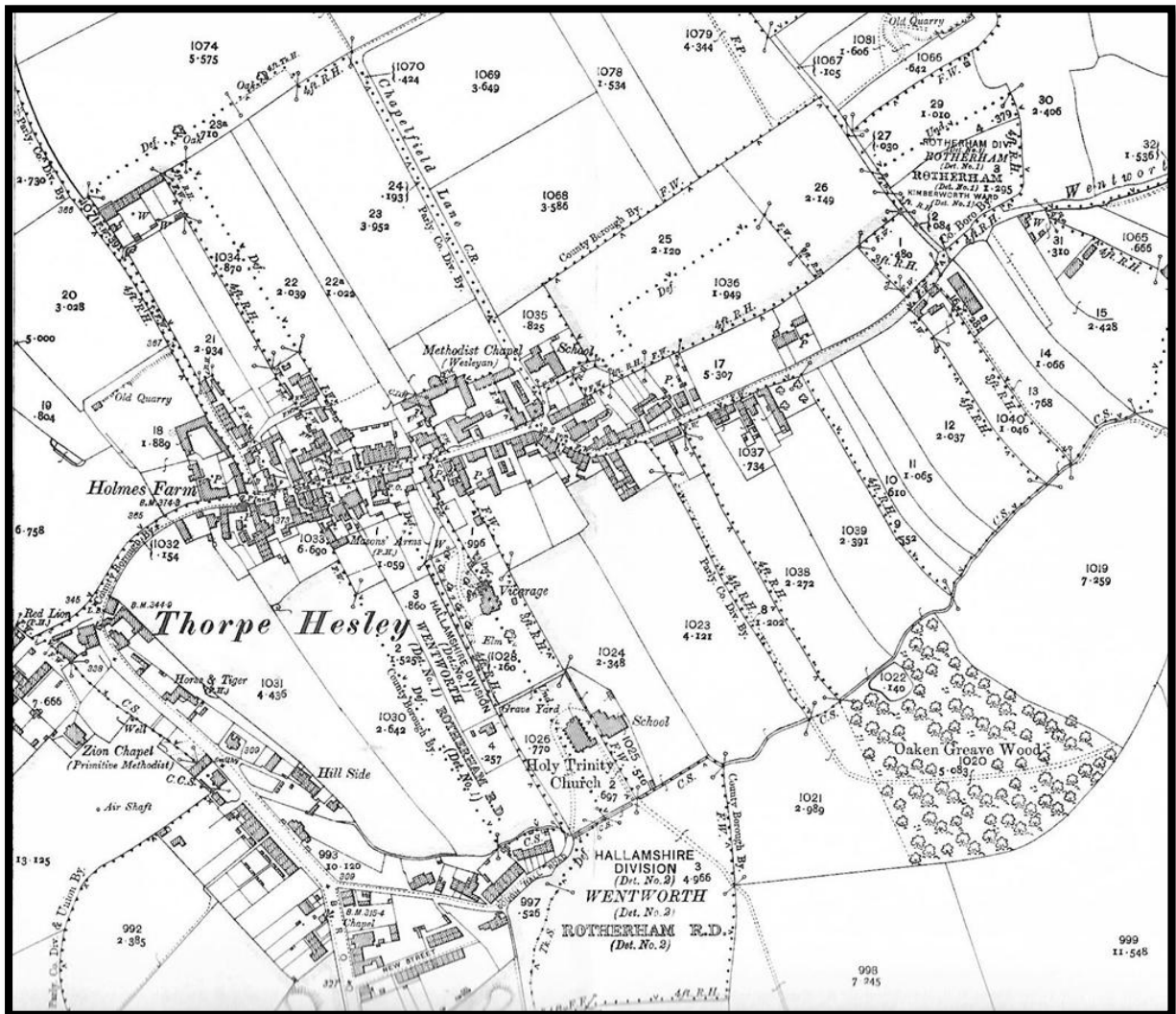
The transformation took place quite suddenly. In the 1930s, the Fitzwilliam estate seemed to reach an apogee of wealth and success; but it was badly affected by the liability for no less than three sets of estate duty, in 1943, 1948 and 1952, on the deaths of the 7th, 8th and 9th Earls. From 1949 the House was used by Lady Mabel College of Physical Education, and from 1979 by Sheffield Polytechnic. Later, it was purchased as a private residence by the businessman Wensley Grosvenor Haydon-Baillie (b. 1953), and then by the retired architect Clifford Newbold (1926–2015). More recently it was given £7.6 million by the Government, and a Preservation Trust was formed to acquire it for the nation. However, the Earldom became extinct in 1979, the Fitzwilliam family now lives elsewhere, and the contents were dispersed long ago.

Thorpe Hesley
October 2017

ILLUSTRATIONS

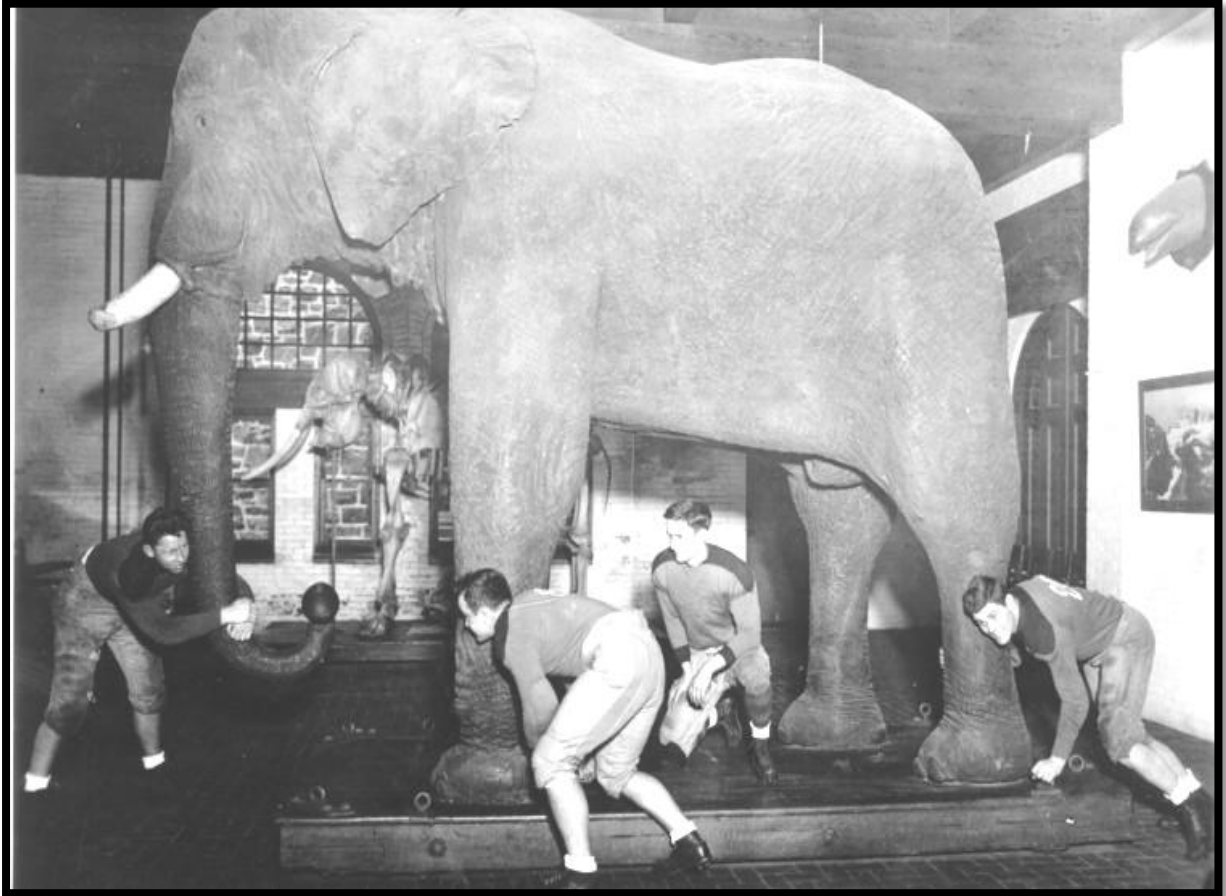


The first pages of the Journal



Thorpe Hesley and Scholes in 1901

1887



The Mounted Hide of Barnum's Jumbo

1888



The Mechanics' Institute (2017)

1891



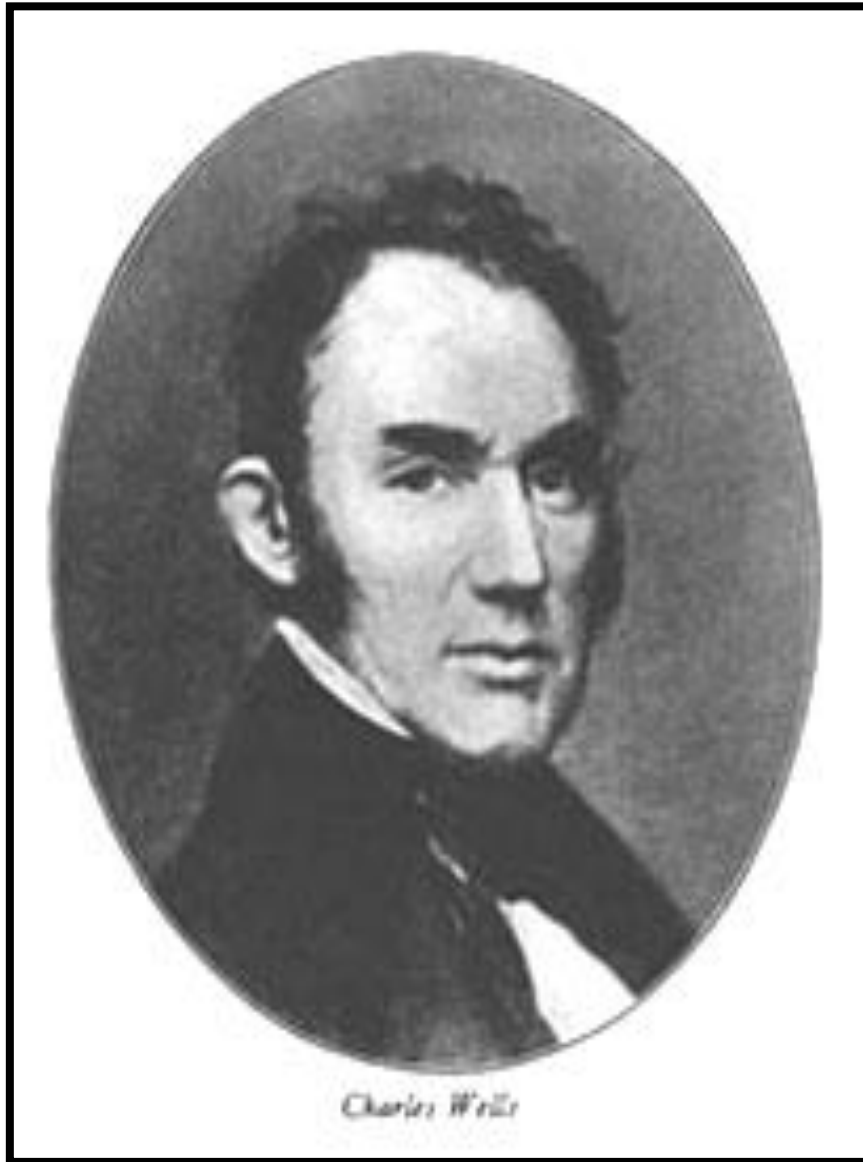
Paul Eagle Star

1891



**Brook Hill, Thorpe Hesley
(High Green Archive)**

1893



The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo

1895



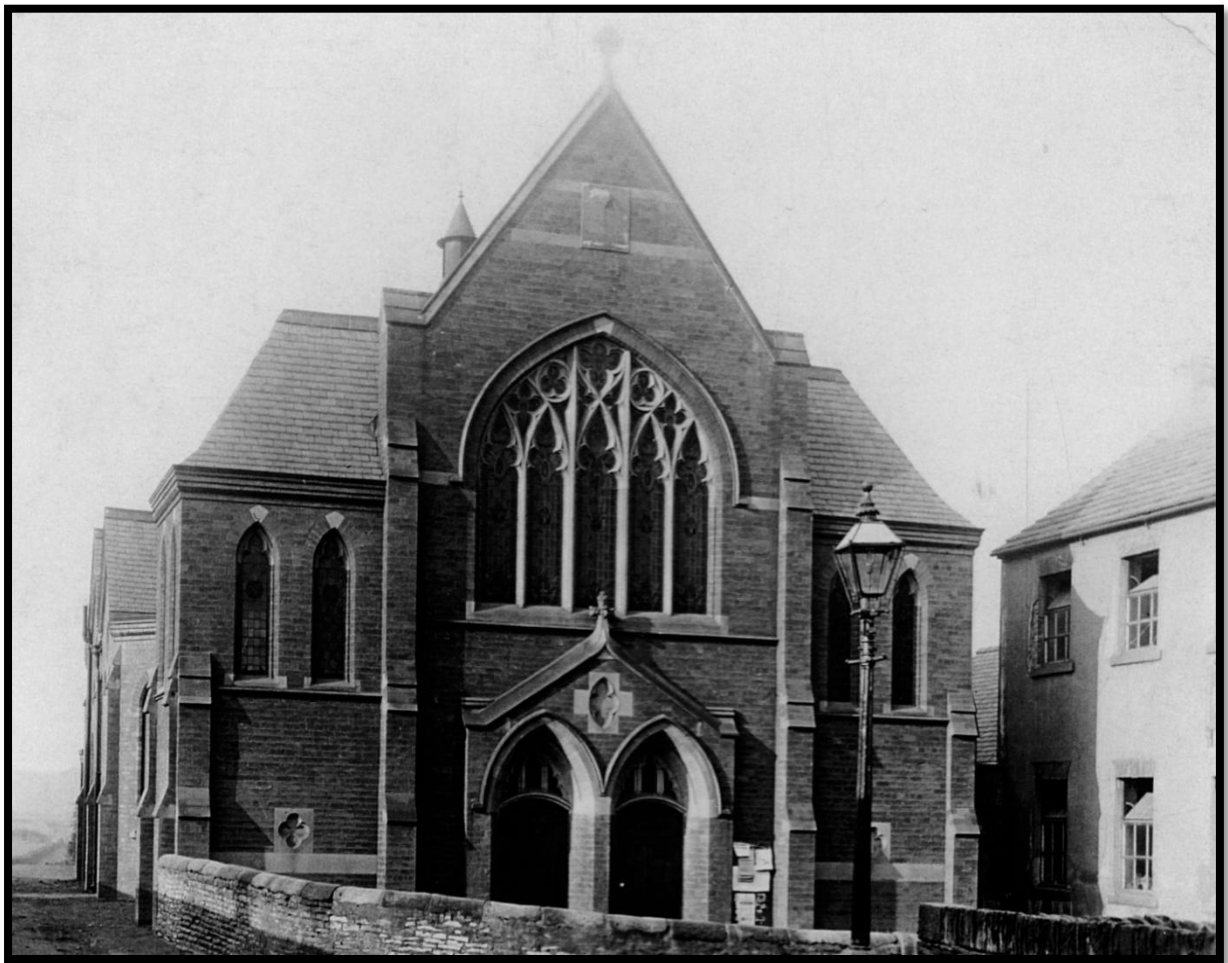
Jabez Balfour

1898



Knur and spell

1899



**The 'new' Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Thorpe Street
(High Green Archive)**

1901



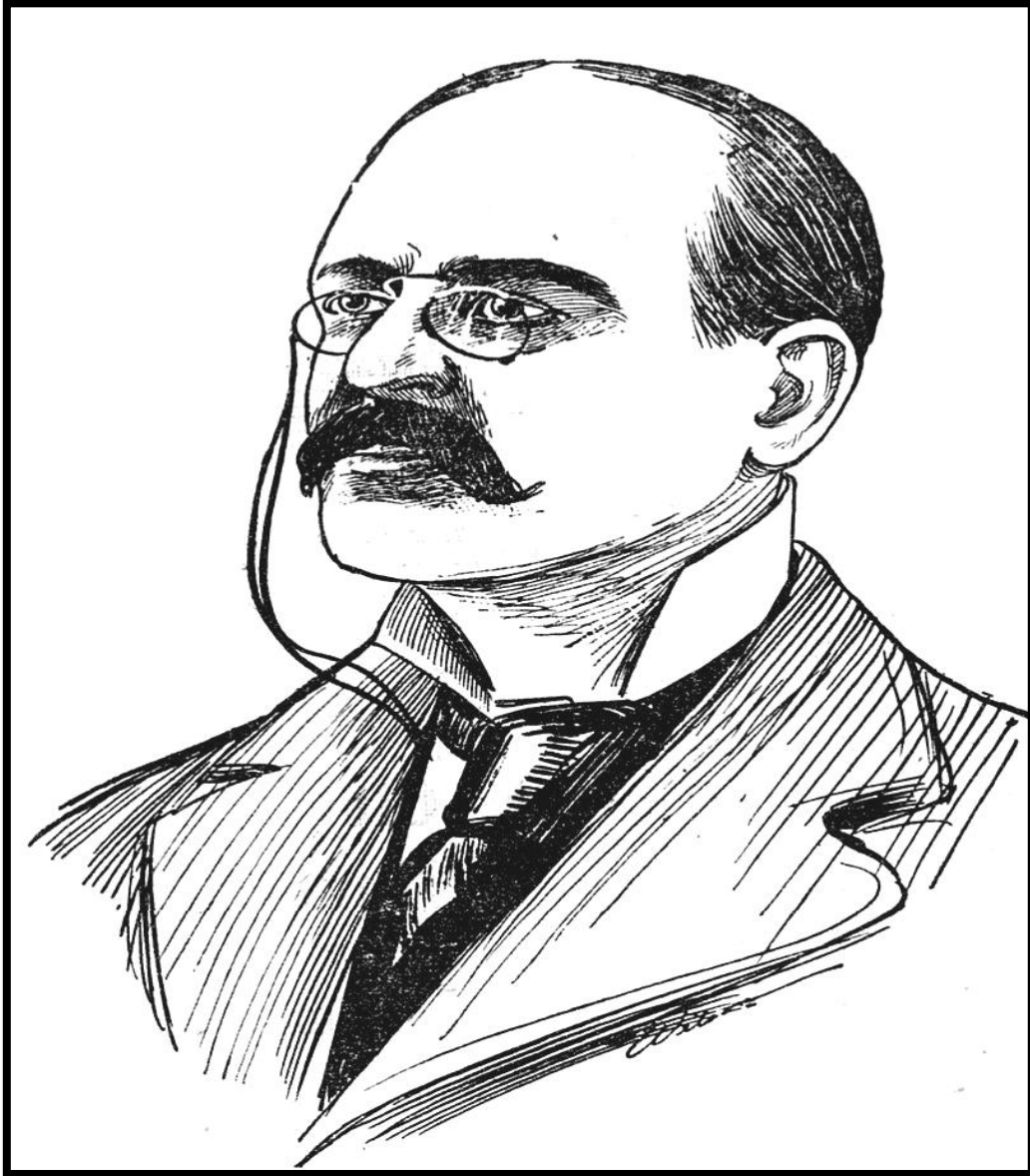
Swami Laura Horos

1902



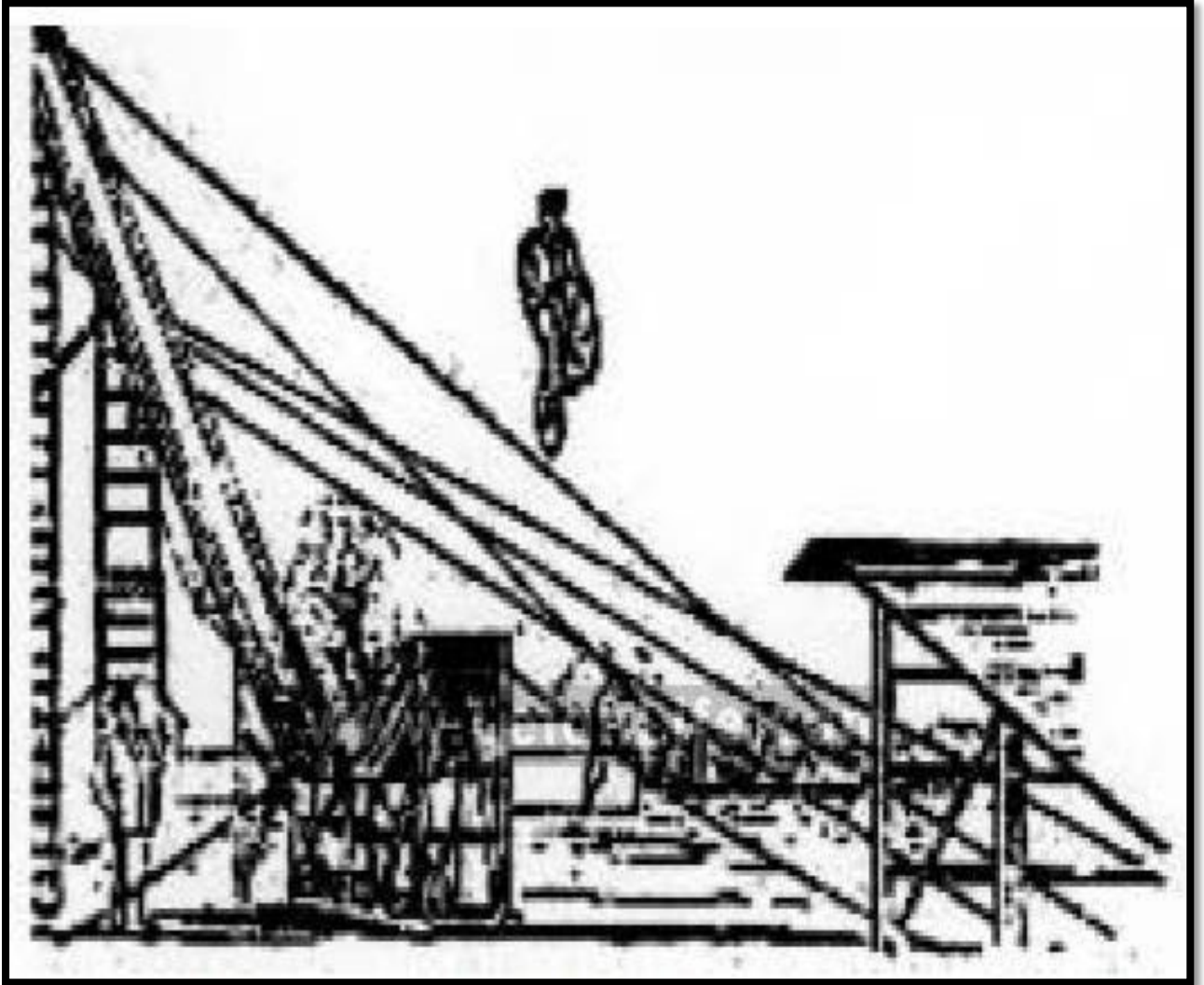
**Elsecar Reservoir
(High Green Archive)**

1904



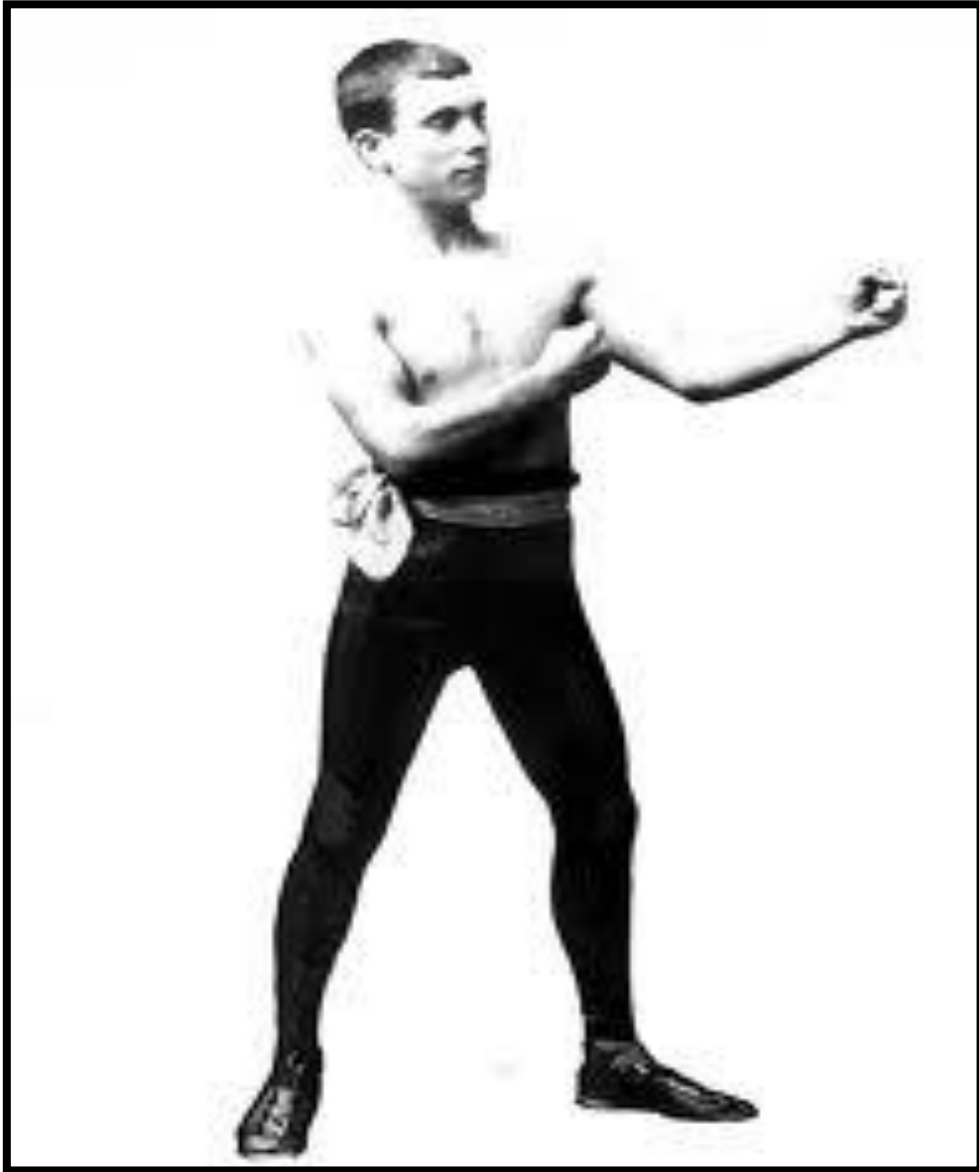
Whitaker Wright

1904



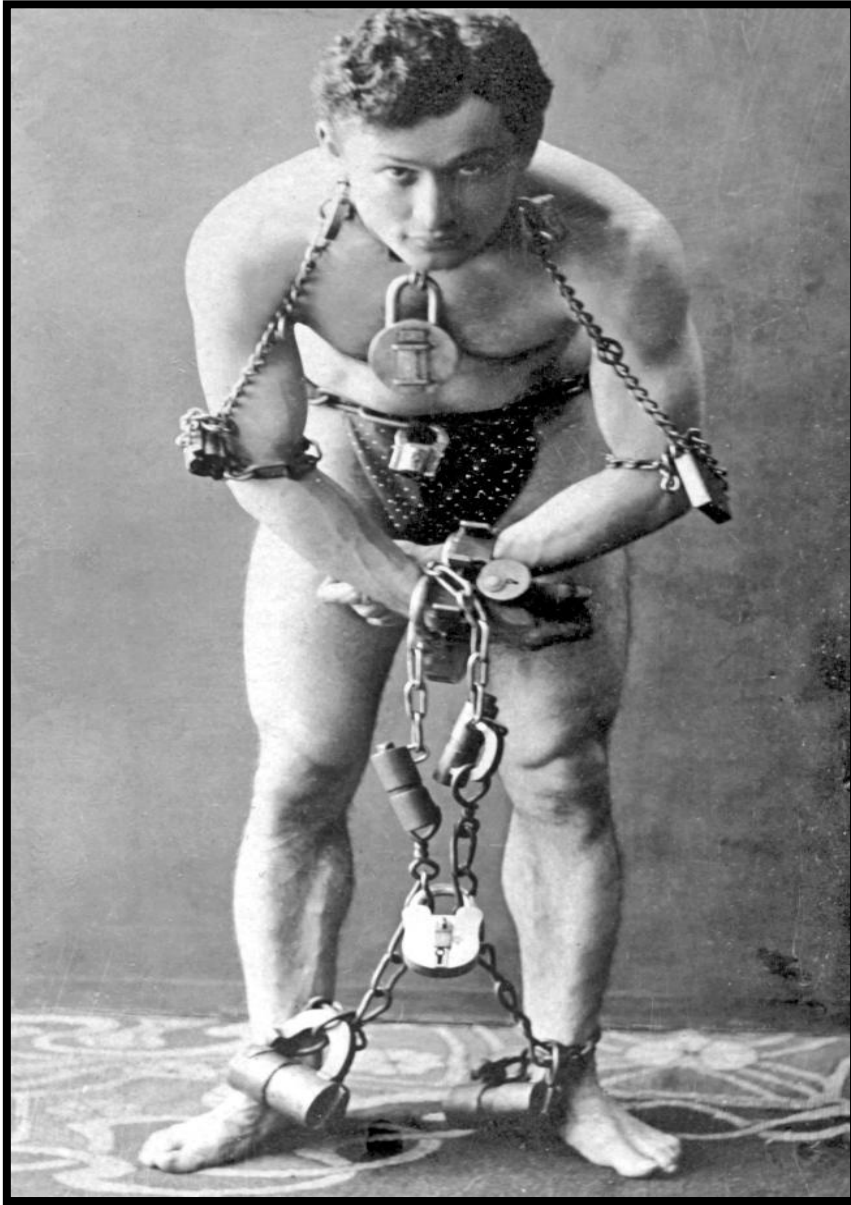
Carter the Cowboy Cyclist

1907



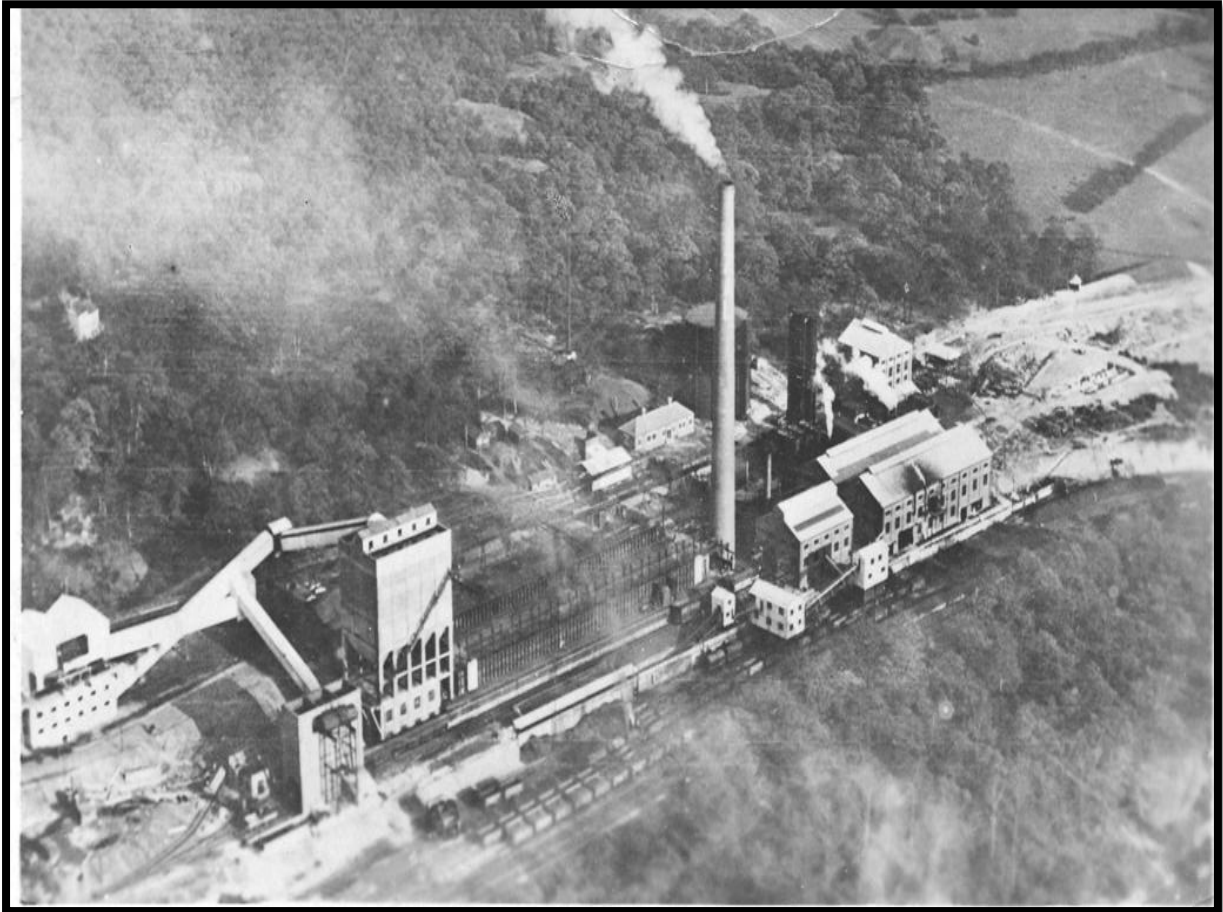
Pedlar Palmer (1876-1949)

1909



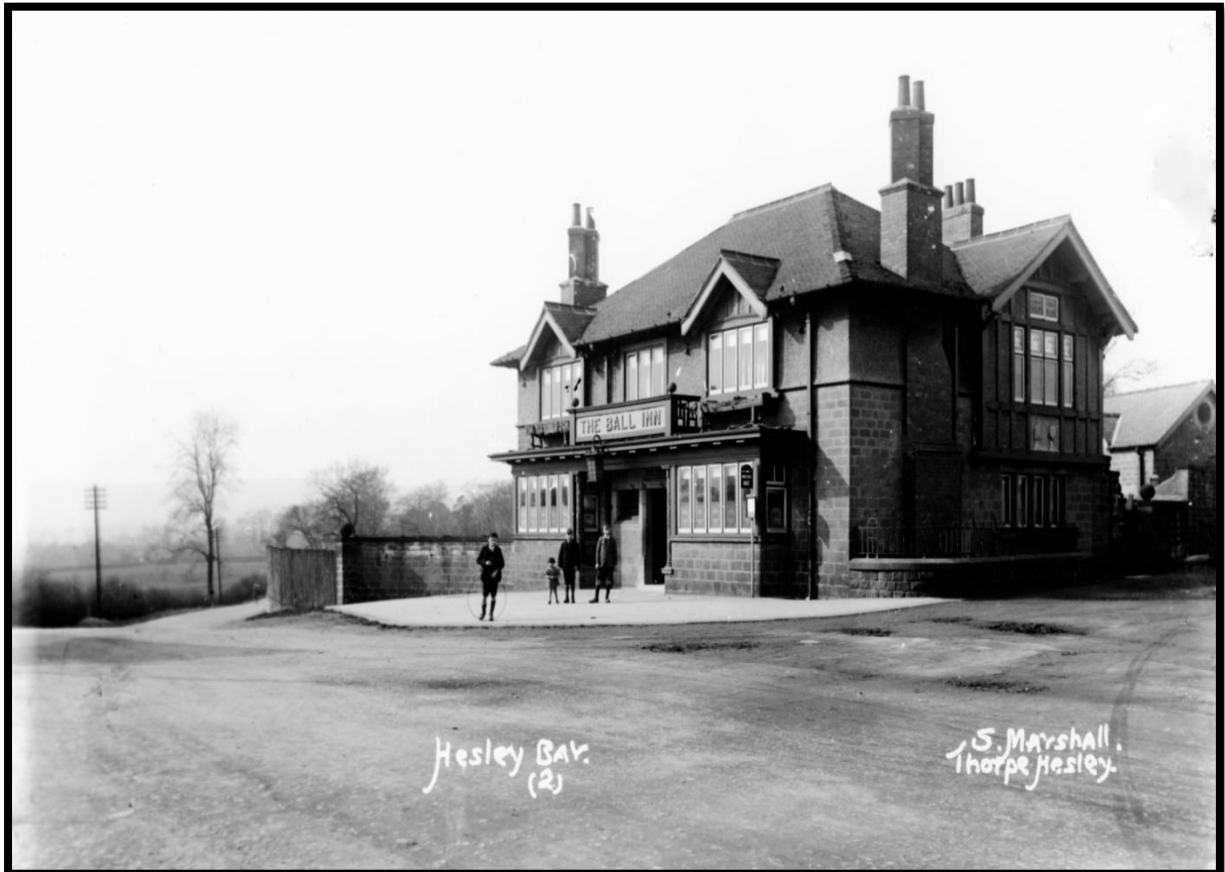
Harry Houdini (1874-1926)

1911



Smithy Wood Colliery

1911



**The Ball Inn (built on site of previous Ball Inn)
(High Green Archive)**

1913



Viscount Milton (aged 3) in 1913

1925



**The Horse & Tiger
(High Green Archive)**

1915



Hesley Hall Farm, Thorpe Hesley (2017)

1921



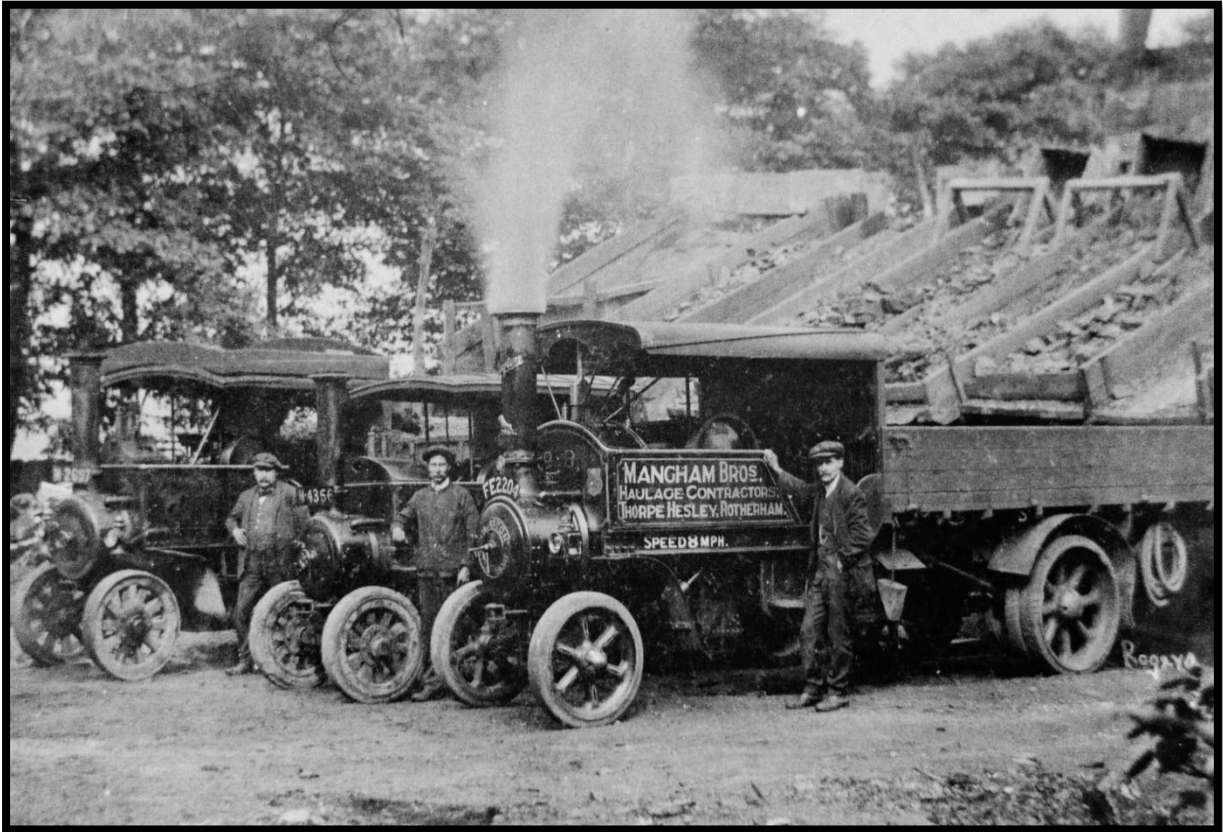
**The Red Lion & Hesley Lane
(High Green Archive)**

1923



**From Bostock and Wombwell's Menagerie in
Gargrave, 1912
(By Tom Airton, original photograph loaned by Mrs
Dorothy Hudson).**

1923



**Bert & Leonard Mangham's Steam-Powered Coal
Lorries, Scholes
(High Green Archive)**

1924



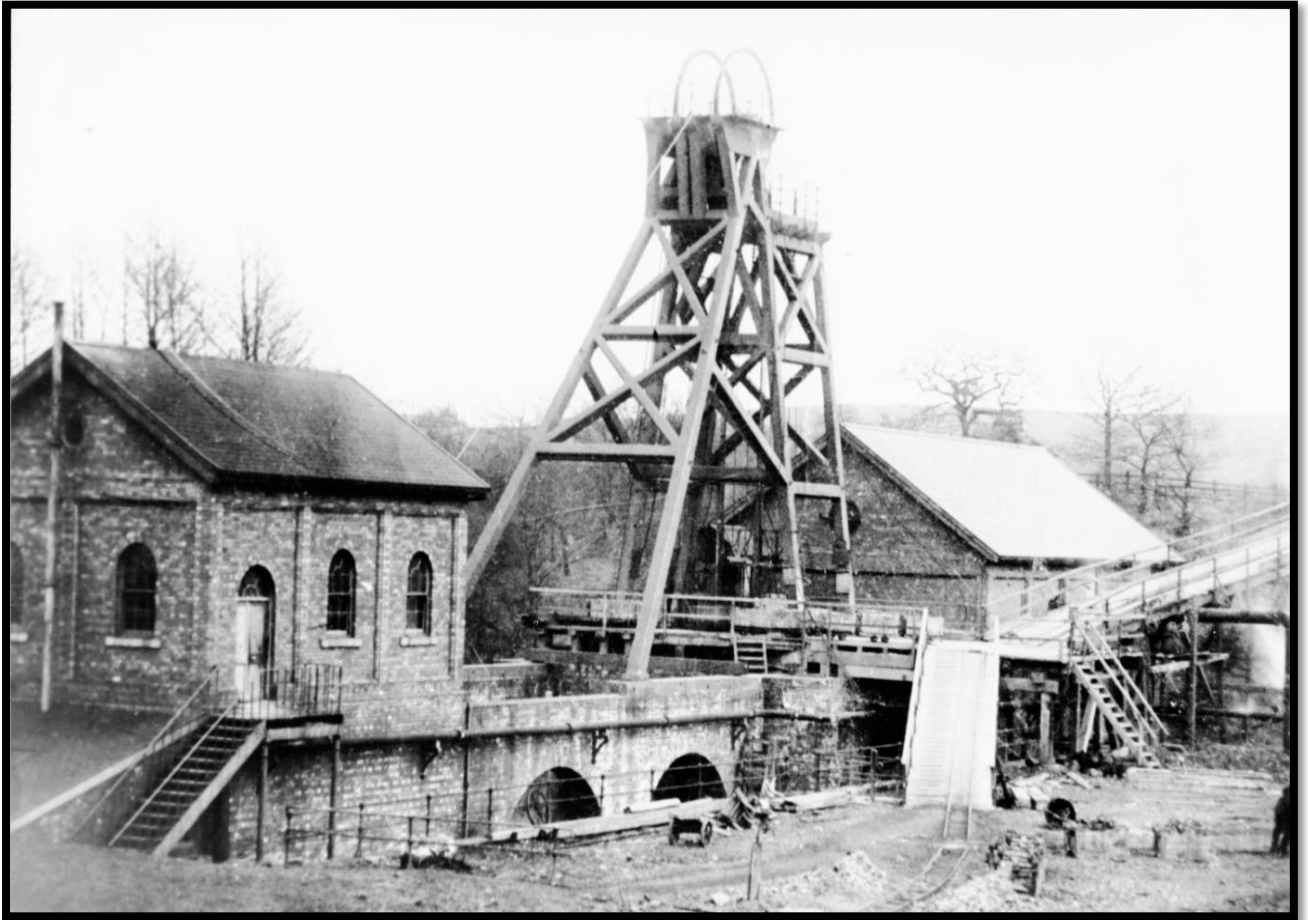
**Barley Hall Farm and Hall
(High Green Archive)**

1930



The Bay Horse at Scholes

1936



**Thorpe Pit, Wentworth Road
(High Green Archive)**