

CRIMES AND MAYHEM

BIDEFORD WEEKLY GAZETTE (July 10th 1900).

“For stealing a missionary box containing about 1s 6d, the property of William Bright of Weare Giffard, on June 9th, Earnest Tucker, aged 13 years, was fined 2s 6d and ordered to receive six strokes with the birch. For stealing two ducklings on June 7th, the property of Thomas Fry, Tucker was similarly dealt with.”

From the BIDEFORD AND NORTH DEVON GAZETTE.(November 24th 1914)

‘BEGGING AT WEARE GIFFARD 21 DAYS, AND DESERVED IT’.

At Torrington on Monday John Watts, a tramp of no fixed abode, was charged by P.C. Perryman with begging at Weare Giffard that morning.

Mrs Beatrice Cook stated that she saw the defendant receive food at a neighbour’s house, and on leaving throw it into the gutter. He then came to her house and asked for food. She refused, and called his attention to the Vagrancy Act posted on a disused door close by. He then became abusive, but presently went towards the village. She felt nervous about sending her child to school, so locked her door and took the child. She saw the prisoner, and he again used abusive language, whereupon she informed the Police - P.C. Perryman stated that he arrested the prisoner outside the Post Office. He denied begging and also denied using abusive language. Upon being confronted with Mrs Cook he admitted that he asked her for something to eat. In answer to the Bench the prisoner said he believed that he was born in Ireland

but could not give any account as to where he last worked. The Bench reminded him of the way-ticket system, by which food could be had now, and remarked that women and children living in lonely places must be protected. He would go to prison for 21 days’ hard labour.

THE BIDEFORD WEEKLY GAZETTE (March 28th 1871).

A fire, which resulted in the destruction of the roof of a small house, occupied by a labourer named Easton, and a lincay adjoining, broke out at about 7am. On Sunday morning. Assistance having been procured, the furniture was speedily removed and in a short time the fire was extinguished. The loss is not very great.

THE BIDEFORD WEEKLY GAZETTE.

FATAL ACCIDENT (July 21st 1891)

On Monday 6th July, Edward Watkins, 13 years old, was picking strawberries in a garden belonging to Mr. Fry. Wishing to go into another bed of strawberries he ran down the slope and fell over the hedge into the road adjoining, a fall of about nine feet. He was found on his hands and knees unconscious. He was taken to Rose Cottage where he lodged. It was found that no bones were broken and therefore no medical aid was summoned until the following Wednesday when he appeared worse. He died on Tuesday evening last from inflammation of the brain.

STRANGE CUSTOMS

During our research we came across a Weare Giffard custom which we think will not be actively revived! In the "Transactions of the Devonshire Association" magazine, Vol. 88 of 1956, P 253 the following is an account of what our children would have undertaken come 'shrove-tide'.

"LENTEN SHERDS"

"Potsherd used to be left on the doorsteps on Shrove Tuesday. Local children would sing a ditty at the doors and demand the customary 'crock' (a special little cake made for the occasion).

If this was not forthcoming, the boys would threaten, and then throw the sherds at the door. This was discouraged in later times, and the 'crocks' were replaced by a gift of halfpennies."

NORTH DEVON JOURNAL (December 10th 1867)

"The North Devon Photographic Co., Weare Giffard beg to announce that no more orders for photographs can be received until January 1st 1868.

The manager having more orders at the present time than can be properly tended to".

Editors Note:

It is interesting to note that this was in the very early days of photography; that it was obviously extremely popular as can be seen from the order book; and that the title suggests that the mysterious photographer must have been way ahead of the game in referring to his company as "The North Devon Photographic Co."..... Were there others or was this Weare Giffard entrepreneur the first in North Devon? Comments from the Bideford Weekly Gazette, 6th March 1860:-

"Melancholy Death. On Saturday a young man named Carter in the employ of a farmer of Ashreigney, went to Wear Gifford dock to fetch some lime. On his return in passing through half penny gate at Weare Bridge his hat blew off and fell in to the river; in his endeavour to regain it he drowned, nor was the body discovered until Sunday afternoon, when it was conveyed to the "Hunters' Inn" Monkleigh parish, where an inquest was held yesterday and a verdict returned in accordance with the above facts."

Marred by Tragedy... George V's Silver Jubilee 6th May 1935.

Taken from 'Devon Within Living Memory' by the Devon Federation of Women's Institutes.

'We celebrated the Silver Jubilee with a bonfire on the field which is now the park at Weare Giffard, with food, sports etc. The entire village was gathered there in the afternoon. At five o'clock Mr. Powell the farmer at Weare Barton was coming to light the bonfire.

He did not arrive so two men went to see what was the matter. They found a bull running up and down the farm lane by the Church. Mr. Powell's body was lying on the ground; he had been gored right through the body three times. The bull would not let them get near the body, so they let out the cows to distract him and this made matters worse! By this time it was dark. Police and firemen arrived and eventually hosed the bull into a field and the body was taken up. Next day the bull was shot!'
