

## Bouncing Cheque!

[I believe the following account has incorrectly been reported as being the “Royal Arms” when it in fact refers to the “Powell Arms.” Paul Skelton. ] [There has never been an inn called the Royal Arms in Birchington]

From the Dover Express and East Kent News, Friday 16 October, 1885. 1d.

**QUARTER SESSIONS** – The Recorder in the course of his remarks to the Grand Jury said that he was pleased to tell them there was only one case for their consideration, the charge against a man for obtaining £30 by false pretensions. The case was a very simple one. It appeared that the man went to Mr. Milgate, landlord of the “Royal Arms” Birchington, in the Liberties of Dover, and asked him to cash a cheque for £30. Mr. Milgate gave him £5 sown at once, and on the following day advanced the £25.

The prisoner then made some excuse and left the place. The prosecutor sent the cheque to the bank and it was returned with the words “no account” marked on it. Formerly the prisoner had an account with the London and City Bank, Victoria Street.

The account was closed in April of last year, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July £200 was put into the bank, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Oct. last, prisoner owed the bank 4s. 1d on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Oct. That sum was entered in the pass book, and the account was closed. Prisoner represented that he had money at the bank for the purpose of meeting the cheque when it was presented.

The simple question was whether this man had obtained the money by false pretensions.

That was the only case for their consideration that day, and that was from the Liberties. There had only been four cases of larceny that the Magistrates had had to deal with since the last sessions. They had no jurisdiction over cases where money had been obtained by false pretences and therefore it was sent to the Quarter Sessions.

The Grand Jury then retired and the following were sworn on the Petty Jury:- W. Davis, J. Cochrane, T. Day, W.H. Davis, A.J. Emery, H. Adams, F. Crosoer, C.H. Datlin, G. Curling, A. Dunn, E.C. Chittenden, D. Allen, and T. Chancey.

Frederick Rehbam, a family tutor, and a man who appeared to have been engaged in noblemen’s families, was placed at the

bar charged with obtaining £30 by false pretences. The Grand Jury found a true bill in this case.

Mr. Forbes Moss, instructed by Mr. W. Hills, solicitor, of Margate, appeared to defend the prisoner, and Mr. A.J. Matthews, instructed by Mr. S. W. Churchley, solicitor, of Margate, appeared for the prosecution.

Mr. Edward Milgate, landlord of the "Royal Arms" Birchington, said he had known the prisoner for two years. About two years ago prisoner had a dinner at his house. Prisoner also called on the 5<sup>th</sup> August about eleven o'clock, and said he had another child and wanted another christening in the church and then a dinner like the previous one two years since. Witness said he would see about it. Prisoner did not sleep at prosecutor's house, but was recommended to some lodgings at Birchington.

Prisoner then said that he wanted some money and asked prosecutor if he would change a cheque for £30. The prosecutor being intimate with the prisoner handed him £5, all he could spare on that day, and on the following morning prisoner was handed the remaining £25 in gold in exchange for the cheque which was drawn from the Westminster Branch of the London and County Bank.

Prosecutor put in the cheque the same day at a Margate Bank, and it was returned on the 10<sup>th</sup> marked "no account." On the 18<sup>th</sup> August prosecutor received a letter from the prisoner Hammersmith, the purport of which was that he went to the post office after obtaining the money from prosecutor and there found a letter from his nurse stating that their child, which he had spoken about, was very ill and would he and his wife return home immediately. He would not make any more arrangements yet about the dinner.

Prisoner further added in the letter that to his greatest consternation he had that day found the amount which should have been paid into the bank to his credit had not been paid. He had spent some of the money he had received from prosecutor and therefore would not be able to remit him all the money at present, but it should have his early attention. The prosecutor then consulted his solicitor, and a warrant was issued for the prisoner's apprehension.

In his cross-examination prosecutor said he had not known the prisoner for more than two years. He was not at all satisfied with the prisoner. The money he had changed for the cheque, he had obtained by hard work. He knew nothing of the child's illness

beyond what the letter had said. He did not know that the child had since died until he heard it in court.

Hannah Milgate, wife of the prosecutor, and who was present with him when the prisoner was at the house, corroborated.

George James Green, Chief Clerk at the Westminster branch of the London and County Bank, said he knew the prisoner, as having had an account with them. He produced a copy of a portion of his account taken from July 19<sup>th</sup> 1884, when £200 was paid in. No other money had been paid in since that date. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1884, there was only £13 15s 11d. There was then a cheque later for £13. 15s, leaving a balance of 11d. Five shillings per quarter is charged by the bank for keeping the accounts. The quarter payments were due of the 29<sup>th</sup> September and left a balance against the prisoner of 4s 1d, which he now owed the bank. No other accounts had been paid in since by the prisoner and the account was closed. The cheque produced was presented at the bank and marked "no account" and returned to the prosecutor.

Police sergeant A. Holland, of the Kent County Constabulary, gave evidence to apprehending the prisoner, who in answer to the charge said "All right, I have a clear answer."

Mr. Forbes Mosse then addressed the Jury, after which, by the learned Recorder's permission, the prisoner gave a somewhat lengthy speech to the Jury, saying that he intended paying the money to prosecutor. He was in a high position, and, engaged as he was, it was sometimes difficult to get the money due from gentlemen in whose services he had been engaged. He had been private secretary to a nobleman when in town, and handed in a list of names of persons of rank in whose services he had been. The reason he came to Margate was to look out for a house where his family might live for a time. Since this affair he had sold all his furniture at London.

After the learned Recorder had summed up, the Jury consulted together in a box for a few minutes and returned a verdict of "Guilty."

The Recorder said that he quite agreed with the verdict of the Jury, but taking into consideration the prisoner had been in custody since the 15<sup>th</sup> August last he would only pass sentence of two calendar months' imprisonment, the lowest he could pass.