

LFA Forgery of Loughborough Football Secretary 1897

FORGERY BY A FOOTBALL CLUB SECRETARY

George Harry Newton (21) clerk, Loughborough, was indicted for forging a receipt for the payment of £1 15s., with intent to defraud, and to a second indictment charging him with forging a receipt for 9s. 6d., with intent to defraud, he pleaded guilty. In the first case he denied the intention to defraud. — Mr. Magee, who appeared to prosecute, explained that prisoner had acted as secretary to a football club at Loughborough, and part of his duty was to hire brakes to convey the team when they had matches to play out of town. A charge of 1s. each person was made, and the deficiency was made good out of the club funds. Prisoner had forged a receipt for 30s. due to the owner of the brake, but by pleading that he had no intent to defraud, Newton probably meant that he intended to pay the money at some future time. — Newton intimated that he desired to be tried by the jury, and the plea was taken as one of not guilty. — Evidence in support of the charge was given by Thomas Webster, printer's apprentice, Loughborough, present secretary and treasurer of the Loughborough Emmanuel Football Club. Last October the team went to Hathern, and 10s. was collected from the members. In the following week they went to Bardon, and on each occasion witness, as treasurer, paid prisoner a sum of money from the club funds to make up the charge for the brake, which each week was 17s. 6d. At a subsequent meeting of the club Newton produced a bill from Messrs. John Moss and Son for £1 15s., purporting to have been receipted by "P. Moss." but at an inquiry into certain alleged irregularities prisoner admitted to witness that he had written the name himself. — Percy John Moss was called to prove that he did not sign the receipt produced. — 'Prisoner said he was guilty of the forgery, but he had no intention to defraud, as he had arranged with Mr. John Moss to pay the money back again. He had been out of work for 18 months, with a spell of illness, and he was really driven to take the money. — His Lordship, in his summing up, remarked that it was a very sad case, as prisoner was a young man, and so far as it was known, of good character. What he had said did not exonerate him, for he undoubtedly did forge the receipt and put the money into his own pocket. — The jury found him guilty, with a recommendation to mercy. — His Lordship said he was very sorry to see the prisoner in this position, because it really seemed that he had borne a good character. But although the jury had recommended him to mercy, it would be very wrong of him (the Judge) to pass over these offences with a merely nominal penalty, because prisoner had been placed in a position of trust, which he had betrayed. He would be sentenced to six calendar months' hard labour on each indictment, the sentences to run concurrently.

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It is interesting to compare George Newton's sentence with that of Frederick Bateman who also appeared before Judge Justice Charles on Thursday 18 February 1897 at Leicester Town Hall:

DISGUSTING OFFENCE AT WANLIP.
Frederick Bateman (18), currier, was indicted for committing an act of gross indecency with Horace Grain, a boy, four years of age, at Wanlip, on the 30th November.—Mr. Everard prosecuted.—On the evidence of Harry Measures and Thomas Stone prisoner was found guilty, and his Lordship sentenced him to three months, with hard labour. Prisoner had already been two months in prison awaiting his trial.

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