

Local Super Cop! P.C. Gilbert Gibson

Chipping Local History Society recently received a collection of newspaper articles about one of the village's former policemen, P.C. Gilbert Gibson, whose career began in the 1930s. He served in the Lancashire Constabulary for 27 years at Ribchester, Chipping, Walton-le-Dale, Longridge and Grimsargh, receiving several commendations from the Magistrates and the Chief Constable in recognition of his 'meritorious services'.

His usual mode of transport was a bicycle and on it, he attended all kinds of emergencies. He also used it to pursue many miscreants, such as those who stole a green bicycle from Mr John Woods of Bonds Farm, a case reported in the local newspaper on December 6th, 1935.

Tipped off by a witness, Mr William Woods, P.C. Gibson caught up with a motor lorry carrying scrap iron, heading for Hesketh Lane and saw the bicycle on it. He followed the lorry but lost sight of it eventually. Undeterred, he went on to Blackburn with Inspector Moffat, where the stolen property was discovered in the cellar of the driver of the lorry, Harry Dugdale. In court, Dugdale claimed that he had not known that the bike was on his lorry and, on the advice of his brother, had hidden it in the cellar till he could return it to Hesketh Lane and that he had been just about to do that, when the Inspector and P.C. Gibson called at his home!

On another occasion, he apprehended two youths – a seventeen year old from Salford and a sixteen year old from Manchester – for stealing a car and breaking and entering a shop in Great Eccleston. The pair had stolen 15 tins of cocoa, quarter pound packets of tea, tins of tongue, fruit salad, plum puddings and swiss rolls, chocolates and other goods to the value of £2-1s. P.C. Gibson searched the surrounding area and, finding an abandoned car, pursued them a further three miles and arrested them!

Whilst on duty at Bare (near Morecambe), the sharp policeman spotted a break-in occurring and, struggling to arrest

members of a gang of four, blew his police whistle for assistance. With the help of colleagues, he apprehended the thieves who had on them 25 packets of cigarettes, tobacco and tea, as well as other articles to the value of £1-14s-3½d. The *Lancaster Advertiser* which ran the story at the end of July 1923, concluded that P.C. Gibson deserved "not only commendation but reward"!



P.C. Gibson with his daughter Jennie

As the result of his dedication to duty, P.C. Gibson often had to appear in court. Sometimes the perpetrator of a crime was dealt with leniently, as in the case of a 19 year old farm labourer arrested for shooting and killing a Muscovy duck belonging to Mr Cecil Whittaker of the Higher Hodder Bridge Hotel, who did not press the charge. The teenager claimed that he thought the duck was a wild on, apologized and showed contrition; his guardian pleaded for leniency,