

stating that the lad had a widowed mother and that he intended to join the Royal Air Force and a conviction would ruin his chances of that. The magistrate seemed to take a cynical view of his intention to join up, but reprimanded the youth rather than putting him in custody and fined him five shillings.

It wasn't just petty thieves that P.C. Gibson had to deal with. Then, as now, there were motoring offences to follow up. He had to give evidence at the trial of a fifty year old dentist from Accrington, who was summoned for driving under the influence of alcohol and in a manner dangerous to the public and for driving without due care and attention. The dentist pleaded not guilty.

In his evidence in court, P.C. Gibson stated that at 5.50pm on Sunday, August 16th, in Goose Lane, Chipping, he saw a yellow motor car with both nearside wheels in the ditch. At 7.10pm, he saw the defendant at Ribchester Police Station and asked if he was the driver of the car in the ditch at Chipping, to which the defendant replied, "Did you see me driving?" The defendant, reported P.C. Gibson, was staggering about the office, smelled strongly of drink and spoke in a thick manner.

There were two reliable witnesses - Mr T. Hardman, farmer of Daub Hall Farm, Chipping and Mr T. Brennand, garage proprietor, of the Post Office, Chipping - who confirmed that the defendant was clearly under the influence of drink. Whilst at Ribchester Police Station, the defendant was examined by Dr. Patchett, who saw that the dentist was rowdy and had a swaying gait, but he could walk along a straight line fairly well and successfully stood still and, with his eyes closed, could touch his nose.

The dentist stated on oath, that he had practiced his profession for 25 years and had never been in trouble before. On the date in question he had been to a patient's house in Blackburn and had had two glasses of beer. He had had two further glasses of beer at a hotel where he was asked if he would take the four barmaids out for a run. He called for them at 2.30pm, first having two sandwiches and one more glass of beer. He added that they had made several stops at beauty spots but had had no more drink at all.

One of the barmaids corroborated the dentist's evidence. Another barmaid and two

customers at the Blackburn pub confirmed that the dentist had been "perfectly sober" when he set out with the barmaids on the country run and that he had had no further drink. She claimed it was the accident to the car which made the defendant "rather excited". The defence lawyer reminded the court that there had been no previous convictions and a conviction would be "very serious" to his client. The magistrates concluded that "there was doubt in the case" and recommended that the charge should be dismissed.

Sometimes P.C. Gibson had the use of a van in which to pursue any wanted felons and he used every means possible to catch them. Such an occasion was when three Wigan men stole four young turkeys from Mr Henry Rich of Leagram Mill Farm. Apparently, at 11.35 am, the three men had called to sell coal but, after leaving, were seen to throw coal at young turkeys foraging in the hedge. Shortly after, Mr Rich's son realized that four of the turkeys were missing and he and his father pursued the men on bicycles. P.C. Gibson also pursued the men by "motor van", phoning colleagues at Longridge police station to detain the men there. In court, the defendants admitted taking the birds but stated that they had not the faintest idea they were turkeys. They believed that they were merely "wild birds"! They were each fined a £1 and ordered to pay the value of the turkeys - £3.

Apart from dealing with infringements of the law, P.C. Gibson also rendered first aid at accidents, such as that which befell a young Irish harvester, Michael Madden, 21, who lost control of his bicycle on one of the steep Chipping roads and was flung into the road and lost consciousness. After receiving attention from the policeman, Mr Madden was transferred to Preston Infirmary.

A particularly sad duty the constable sometimes had to undertake, whilst he was stationed in the Walton-le-Dale area, was searching for missing children, who were subsequently found to have drowned in the River Ribble. The newspaper reports suggest that he was a humane man, whether dealing with members of the public or with some of the petty criminals with whom he necessarily came into contact.

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