

# *Langham Tithes in Kind*

## *A Strange and Violent Tumult*

*The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury 1<sup>st</sup> September 1837*

On Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> ult., the village of Langham, in Rutland, was the scene of a strange and violent tumult, proceeding from the attempt of the Vicar (the Rev. Heneage Finch) to enforce the impost of tithe by distraint. The property seized for sale consisted of hay : for the two lots first offered by the auctioneer (Mr. Royce) not any bidding could be obtained, although a crowd of several hundred persons had assembled for the third lot a bidding was made by Mr. John Stimson, a butcher, of Oakham ; and instantly a scene commenced which beggars description, and can be likened to nothing but a row at an Irish wake.

The bidding was scarcely out of the butcher's mouth, when a horrible babel of exclamations was vented, and the unfortunate knight of the cleaver was hustled, at first by a number of women, and then by a host of men, who beat his hat over his eyes, and literally tore his clothes from his back, trampling upon their victim and beating him nest severely: and it was only through the energetic interference of W. Baker Esq., of Cottesmore, who happened to be at Langham, that the poor fellow escaped with his life.

Any further attempt to proceed with the auction would have been in the highest degree inexpedient Mr. Stimson having, as he believed, identified six men and six or eight women as the more active persons in the assault upon him, applied for summonses against them, and they appeared at a magistrates' meeting at Oakham on Monday last, on which occasion the Castle was crowded with auditors. The magistrates on the bench were, Geo. Finch, Esq., Muxlow Wingfield Esq., and Chas Hay Frewin Esq., some of whom repeatedly expressed their concern for what had occurred, and Mr. Wingfield pronounced the riot to have been the most disgraceful scene which had ever been witnessed in the county of Rutland.

It was stated by Mr. Baker, who was in attendance on the occasion, that the parishioners of Langham had held a meeting and endeavoured to effect an arrangement for the tithe under the new Commutation Act; but although they had made a handsome offer (£400), the terms had not been accepted by the Rev. Incumbent. A warm altercation arose between Mr. Baker, and Mr. Hall, attorney, of Uppingham, (who appeared to support the information against the rioters), on the subject of the tithes, which had long been a source of discord, and for one year had been taken in kind.

Mr. Baker stated that upon the occasion of a complaint before the magistrates at Empingham some time ago, the tithes of Langham had been sworn to be the property of Mr. Webster, a lessee; and yet Mr. Hall now stated them to belong to the Rev. Mr. Finch: there was a discrepancy in this, which ought to be explained: and upon another occasion, as Mr. Hall well knew, he (Mr. Baker) was charged with tithes for three years and a half, although he produced from his pocket a receipt for payment for the whole period. The course of proceedings, Mr. Baker thought, had been vexatious and irregular, calculated to excite the disorder which had arisen.

The magistrates declined giving any advice to the Churchwardens as to the way in which they should act in the prosecutions of the offenders in this case; and those officers (Wm. Sherard Esq. and Mr. Henry Rudkin) expressed their regret for the situation in which they found themselves, and which they would certainly have avoided had they been allowed.

In the end, the summonses were dismissed against all the parties but one, a labourer named Healey, who was bound to appear at the assizes in a bond for £20, with two respectable sureties (Mr. Darman and Mr. Hubbard) in £20 each.

It is said that a large number of summonses (as many as 40 or 50) were issued after the riot, although only a comparatively small number were served. The ill disposition which the affair has occasioned is the more to be regretted inasmuch as dissent has for some time been gaining ground in Oakham, where the preaching of Mr. Tiptaft and Mr. Phillipot is followed with avidity. The Rev. Heneage Finch holds the valuable preferment of Oakham cum Barleythorpe, cum Brooke, cum Egleton, cum Langham.

One of the magistrates (the Rev. T. K. Bonney, Archdeacon of Leicester), has lately retired from the bench for Rutland, greatly to the regret of the whole county; and his withdrawal is supposed to have arisen from disgust with proceedings which sometimes he could not prevent.

The distress for tithes which it was attempted to execute on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup>, was granted against five cottagers of Langham, viz., Edward Prideaux, Paul Lowth, John Almond, John Shaw, and Robert Hayes, and did not amount to £10 each.

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## *Extraordinary Proceedings*

*The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1837*

Tithes in Kind in Rutland - We are again called upon to notice the extraordinary proceedings instituted by the Rev. Heneage Finch, Vicar of Oakham with its Chapelries, who some time back refused a composition in lieu of small tithes, and gave his parishioners notice to set it out in kind. Many have been the points disputed : one was that he insisted upon taking the tithes of milk night and morning of the same day, and that in the winter season, and positively on the sabbath-day. Also he insisted upon the milk's being delivered at the porch of the mother church : this was refused. He then ordered it to be delivered at the parish church porch ; and on a Sunday it was no uncommon thing to see the porch filled with all sorts of vessels of milk, standing there during divine service till the tithing-man came for it. But we will abstain for the present from detailing the abominations of bygone days, and confine ourselves to what is now passing. In the last week, several distress warrants, were handed to the constables of Langham, for tithes said to be in arrear and due to the Vicar. The officers declared to the Magistrates their inability to execute them without a considerable constabulary force, so great was the disgust of the whole neighbourhood at these proceedings upon disputed claims. The Bench agreed to send 50 Special Constables, headed by their Chief - for what? - why it was apparently to disinter the Dead! We will not deceive our readers, but merely State the facts, leaving it for the public to decide whether they are creditable, and sincerely hoping that they will not be repeated.

(Abstract.)

“To the Constables of Langham, &c.”

“Whereas complaint in writing of Heneage Finch, Vicar of the Parish Church of Oakham with the Chapelry of Langham, in the county, &c. Wm. Edgson, of Langham, in the said county, yeoman, hath been duly summoned to appear before us, two of her Majesty's justices, &c. We have duly examined into the truth and justice of the said complaint, and order him the said Wm. Edgson to pay to the said Heneage Finch the sum of £5. 4s. 2d., being the value of the said tithes &c., and expenses 7s. 2d., &c. &c.; together with your reasonable charges of distraining. &c.; and if the said distress be not paid by him in six days next after such distress made, that then you do make public sale of his goods, &c. Given under our hands and seals, at Empingham, 4<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1837. “H. Atlay, Wm. Belgrave.”

A similar warrant against John Riley, for £6. 2s., and expenses 7s. 2d.; - same date as above, and signed “J. M. Wingfield, H. Atlay.”

A similar warrant against Thomas Smith, for £7. 4s., and expenses 7s.; - signed “Chas. Hay Frewin, Wm. Belgrave.”

A similar warrant against Edward Hubbard, for £4. 5s. 4d., and expenses 7s. 2d.; - signed “J. M. Wingfield, Chas. Hay Frewin.”

A similar warrant against John Smith, for £6. 8s 6d., and expenses 7s. 2d.; - signed “Chas. Hay Frewin, Wm. Belgrave.”

A similar warrant against William Bryan, for £2. 16s., and expenses 7s. 2d.; - signed “H. Atlay, Wm. Belgrave.”

The Chief and his Petit Constables, the Churchwardens, and the Overseers, declared their inability, for conscience' sake, to attempt to execute warrants against the dead! and some of the parties had been dead for years, some for months, and some for weeks, and are gone, it is hoped, to a place of rest, though certainly without the spiritual help and comfort of the Rev. Heneage Finch, their appointed guide.

Now what can be said of the truth and justice of the complaint made in writing ?

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## *The Settlement with Heneage Finch*

*The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury 9<sup>th</sup> April 1841*

We are happy to hear that the notorious tithe-in-kind cases of Langham, Brooke, and Flitteris Park, are about to be placed upon a fair footing between the fleecer and the fleeced, by a compulsory award issued by the Tithe Commissioners on the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. Numerous and various have been the attempts at exaction recorded from time to time in our columns.

The Rev. Heneage Finch, Vicar of Oakham cum Barleythorpe cum Gunthorpe cum Langham 'cum Brooke. cum Egleton, and a Magistrate for the county of Rutland, is at length compelled to yield to the iron hand of the law, and reduce his tithes upon Flitteris Park 20 per cent.; and, instead of obtaining from Langham and Brooke what he called a reasonable sum (£700 per annum clear of deduction), he must receive only £520, and that sum subject to rates.

The decision is that a large portion of the lands are free of tithes, and the glebe lands in Langham wholly so consequently the oppressive suits in the Exchequer which were commenced in Dec. 1830, against poor old widow Harris, widow Hubbard, and five other persons (occupiers of the glebe), for tithes, were unjust; and it is much to be regretted that the Magistrates of Rutland should have been so misled as to call upon certain persons of property to give security for the costs in the suits, to be recovered if they were decided against these poor, aged, and industrious persons, and that they should have issued distress-Warrants against the property of parties who never were legally debtors to the Rev. Heneage Finch.

***At a future day we may, in justice to injured individuals, resume this subject.***