

	History:	
	Topic:	Petty Theft – Anna Race – 1909
	Date of Record:	December 2021
	Author:	Nicholas Newman
	Notes:	The story of Anna Race who became a petty thief.

Petty Theft - Anna Race – 1909

Family Background

Anna (born Emma) Race (1862-1951) was born and lived her life in the area of Hargrave around Grove Farm. She was the daughter of George Race (1829-1905) from Hargrave and Frances Ashfield (1830-1912) born in Ousden. She had one sister recorded as Epsibeth (Hezibah) (1856-1921)

In her 20's she was employed as a tailoress either as a homemaker or at one of the factories probably in Chevington or Barrow. She had a son Horace Race (1885-1918) although a father is not recorded. At the time leading up to her offence she was living with her aged mother who was then in her late 70's and her son Horace who was a farm labourer. He was to die tragically in the Great War serving his country (see later).

The victim of the crime was Frederick William Pask (1873-1949). He was born in Hargrave and his parents were Nathan Pask (1846-1907) a Bootmaker and his wife Susanna (1850-1887) (Phillips) both of Hargrave, who lived on The Green. His first recorded employment in 1891 was as Grocers Assistant to his father who was a Shoemaker and Grocer, having moved to Rickingham Superior.

His father then moved to live with his brother in Icklingham, and by 1901 Frederick had returned to Hargrave and was employed as a grocer's assistant to Hewson Wray (1838-1917) Methodist Preacher from Lincolnshire who was also Grocer, Draper and Sub Postmaster in the centre of the village. In the 1911 Census Frederick was working as a carrier of goods and people between the village and Bury St Edmunds. He had married Ellen Maud Phillips (1873-1931) in 1904, and they had three children, Kathleen Susannah Pask (1911-2000) Alec W Pask (1916-1960) and Laura Irene Pask (1919-2006).

By 1921, Frederick had become Grocer and Sub Postmaster in Hargrave, and following his death 1949 the shop and Post Office was taken over and run for many years by his daughter Laura Irene known as Nene and her husband Frank Morley (1917-2013).

Housebreaking

Moving to the crime which was recorded as housebreaking, but resembled more like petty theft. No evidence was presented that Anna had actually physically broken in to Frederick's, more that being a frequent visitor she had walked in unseen and with Frederick leaving his money within easy sight, she had been tempted to steal.

No doubt as a single mother making a living and feeding her son was a struggle for Anna, whereas Frederick seemed to be making a reasonable living if the stated contents of the cash box are to be believed. However theft was no excuse and she had indeed admitted to this being her third uninvited entry although no previous thefts were apparently reported.

Ultimately she pleaded guilty and was perhaps fortunate to receive the option of a £2 fine, although the default was a more than reasonable 14 days in gaol. The fine was paid, and there is no record of any further offences, although no doubt it was a while before she regained either trust or standing in the community. She lived the rest of her life at her home in Hargrave reaching 89 years of age.

The following account was published in the Evening Star and Daily Herald on the 31st March 1909.

FEMALE HOUSEBREAKER

HARGRAVE WOMAN CONVICTED

At Thingoe Sessions today (Wednesday) before Lieut. Colonel H. Trafford Rawson (chairman), Lieut. Colonel F. d'Arej Newsome, and R. Burrell Esq., in the Shirehall, Anna Race (40), Hargrave, was charged that she did feloniously break and enter a dwelling-house and steal a cash box, two bank books, and 15s. in money at Hargrave on 27th March.

Fredk. William Pask, carrier and general dealer, at Hargrave, said that he was in the house at 7.30 on Saturday evening. The cash box was on the corner of the table in the big room. He last saw it about 7.30 that evening. His wife left the room where he was sitting between 8.30 and 9. She made a statement to him. He saw the back door wide open. It was shut about 7.30 he was certain.

He sent for the police who arrived at 2 a.m. on Sunday morning, being out on duty when he first sent for him. There were marks made in the mud outside the house of a woman's shoe, some where about the size (produced). The cash box produced was similar to the one he lost. Any person could go to the back door and enter it without being seen from where he was. He knew defendant who often came to his house, and was very familiar with the house. Her house was about 100 yards away.

- Prosecutor's wife, Ellen Maud Pask, said that on Saturday afternoon last there was 10s. in silver in the cash box and some coppers, including several farthings. Two bank-books and a green purse were also in the cash-box. She last saw the cash-box at a little after seven o'clock on Saturday evening, when it was in the front room. It was locked with the key in the lock. After she noticed the back door wide open she missed the cash-box.

- Police-constable Frost, stationed at Chevington, said that on Sunday morning, in response to information from Mr. Pask, he went to his house at Hargrave, and inspected the yard, all round the premises. He could trace fresh footprints for about 15 yards along the road. They led from the back door on to the road. The boots (produced) belonged to the defendant, who had handed them to him between ten and eleven o'clock. They were the ones defendant said he wore on Sunday night. They corresponded with the footprints in the yard.

He was granted a search warrant to search the defendant's house, and on Tuesday carried it in to effect, accompanied by P.c. Cole. Witness said to the defendant "There has been a robbery at Mr Pask's on Saturday evening, and you are suspected of stealing a cash-box, some money, and other contents." He read the warrant to her and cautioned her.

Defendant said, "I am sure I do not know anything about it, sir. I hope the right one will be found out."

Soon after the search commenced defendant said, "I have got the money." Witness said "Where is it?" defendant replied "Upstairs." P.c. Frost went upstairs with him, and defendant handed him the handkerchief produced containing nine shillings in silver and 3s. 2 ¾ d. in copper. He then asked her where the cash-box was, and defendant said "In the pond." On witness saying they should search until

they found it, she said, "Oh that is in the oven next door, which was an unoccupied house which defendant had the use of.

Witness went with her, and defendant went to the oven and handed him the cash-box in pieces covered with straw and paper. On asking about the bank books and purse defendant said she had burnt them. She admitted to breaking in to Mr. Pask's house twice previously.

- Defendant elected to be dealt with summarily, and pleaded guilty. She had nothing to say.

- The magistrates convicted, and fined defendant £2, in default 14 days'.

- The money was paid.

FOOTNOTE

Horace Race (1885-1918)

Private Horace Race was serving in the 9th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (London Regiment) when he met his death. His regimental number was GS/65674 the GS denoting General Service. He had previously served in the 10th battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. He was born at Hargrave and enlisted in the army at a recruitment meeting in Wickhambrook. He was the only son and sole support of his mother Anna Race of Hargrave. He died of wounds received in action in the First Battle of Arras, France on 28th March 1918 aged 32 years. He is remembered at the war cemetery at St Hilaire and on the war memorial in Hargrave Church.

Nicholas Newman
December 2021