

November 1913 ...

Police Constable Arthur Gray was a man who liked to be in uniform. He was brought up in Police accommodation on account of his father being a Police Constable just down the road in Icklingham and Arthur had worn the uniform of the Royal Field Artillery before coming to Brandon as a Police Constable. Life had gone full circle for him because his wife was now living in Police accommodation in Brandon.

It was during one of his routine foot patrols around the town on one November evening in 1913 that Ted Hunt approached him in the High Street. Ted wanted to make a complaint that he had been assaulted and Arthur could see Ted's lip was bleeding heavily. Arthur had to get to the bottom of it. He was aware that for some time a bunch of Brandon lads were making a nuisance of themselves and throwing stones at front doors along Thetford Road and tonight Ted had gone out after them and "boxed the ears" of one of the lads, Donald Elmer, and thought that might put an end to it. How wrong he was. The lad's father went after Ted and landed a punch straight on his chin and now Arthur had to sort this all out. He decided to take it before the Brandon Police Court. The lad's father told the Court he had punched Ted in self-defence after Ted had beaten his boy and then gone after him. The court agreed and threw the case out. Ted did get justice of sorts because the supposed leader of the stone throwers, a 14-year-old called Jack Edison, was arrested and hauled before the same court. Jack's father got fined and promised the court his son would no longer be a nuisance. I'm not sure if he boxed his son's ears but the stone throwing stopped.

Arthur also got to play detective in November after a Santon Downham farmer complained that poachers were taking rabbits off his land. Arthur and the farmer hid themselves along the Santon Downham to Thetford road and surprised three local lads walking back to Brandon. The lads, brothers William and Harry Docking, along with Walter Talbot, had been repairing the road near Santon Downham and such was their surprise at the Constable jumping out at them that they had no time to offer an explanation to why they were in possession of five dead rabbits. Arthur summoned the men to appear in front of the Police Court where they were fined 6 shillings each.

Arthur was re-called to the Artillery when war broke out and I'm glad to say he made it through the fighting, although he did get a nasty 27th birthday present from the Hun, a gunshot wound to the back of his leg!