

July 1915

It was about four years ago when Frederick Mobbs came from Newmarket and settled in Brandon. Since then everyone has got to know him and he is one of the most respected individuals you might care to meet. However, you would do well not to get on the wrong side of him. You see, Inspector Mobbs, as he is better known, ensures that law and order is obeyed in the town. This month someone had the tenacity to question his scruples.

It all started at about 9pm, one Saturday, when a soldier fainted in the Paget Hall. The hall, on the High Street heading toward the bridge, has been packed lately due to the many soldiers billeted in the town. Was the soldier overcome by heat? Or was it the drink? Ultimately it is irrelevant to this story, but it did attract a large crowd to gather at the entrance to the hall. This crowd then congregated out onto the High Street.

There was no immediate concern for the crowd's safety, therefore they were shocked to see an automobile come over the bridge and head straight for them. Amongst the crowd was Inspector Mobbs, who was on duty and ensuring the crowd did not get out of hand. Out of concern for the crowd's safety he stepped into the road and attempted to flag down the driver. The driver did not seem to notice Mobbs and the vehicle carried on regardless, barely missing Mobbs and the crowd. One of the men in the crowd remonstrated with the police inspector, "Do you allow people to drive in the street like that, Mobbs? He will be killing somebody one day!" Inspector Mobbs was livid, although he had caught a glimpse of the man at the wheel. Mobbs knew everyone in this town and he was intent on catching up with him.

Later that night Frank Edwards answered a knock to the door of his Thetford Road home. There stood Inspector Mobbs. Edwards was informed that a complaint had been made at the way he had driven his car and that he had failed to stop after nearly hitting the crowd. Edwards replied abruptly, "Why should I stop? There was no accident." This was far from what Mobbs wanted to hear. He informed Edwards that he would have to appear before the local magistrates to answer his case.

At the hearing, Edwards rubbished the fact he had been driving at speed. He reckoned he had gone over the bridge at a walking pace and it was not possible for any car to get up to speed from the bridge to the hall. Nor had he seen Mobbs stand in the road to flag him down. Edwards then suggested there was a vendetta going on because he had heard Mobbs was out for revenge. The inspector retaliated, "I DENY THAT! I do not do police duty like that."

It was Edwards' word against Inspector Mobbs. Mobbs had two trump cards though. Firstly police constable O'Brien confirmed everything in Mobbs' statement. Edwards stood in court, incandescent with rage, and restated his claim that the police were out to get him. "The long and short of it, it is nothing, only a bit of spite." He told the magistrates.

The other trump card was the magistrates. They had had enough of Frank's almost disrespectful attitude to the law. The law and those who enforce it demand respect. They ended the proceedings, found Edwards guilty and fined him £1.