



NUMBER 42

FEBRUARY 2019

FULCRUM is the newsletter of ISASC(E), the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors (Europe). It is published in February, May, August and November. Contributions should be sent to the Editor, John Knights.

The Bradford Horror

Our good friend Diana Crawforth-Hitchins has been busy rummaging through the Bradford Advertiser from 1875. Her efforts have gleaned a wonderful collection of stories relating to prosecutions of traders in the town for possession and use and use of unjust weights and scales.

In addition to accounts of court proceedings against a myriad of grocers, fishmongers and the like, there are letters to the editor from some of these traders expressing their indignation at being dragged before the bar of justice and being treated like common criminals. I suspect that at this time, the merchant classes of Bradford were not prosecuted very often and rarely saw the inside of a magistrate's court unless they were sat upon the bench dispensing justice to the miscreant lower orders.

It has to be said that the Inspector, one Gillett had really gone for it on this occasion having issue 400 summonses to some 200 traders alleging various offences for possession of 'short' weights and unjust scales. This is an unimaginable number of allegations and, on the face of it, indicates a horrendous state of corruption amongst the shopkeepers of Bradford in the late 19th century.

In 1875 Inspector Gillett had been in post for some two and a half years in the employ of the Bradford Corporation whose Markets and Fairs Committee had taken over the duty of weights and measures inspection within the town. Prior to this the administration of these functions had been the duty of the Bradford Court Leet, an ancient manorial institution which had held authority in these areas but which had been superseded. This was a time of transition and two years previously, in 1873, the same inspector had been involved in a number of prosecutions for possession of incorrect weights, measures and scales. When these matters reached the court the authority of the Bradford Corporation was questioned by the defence. It was alleged that Inspector Gillett, who had taken exception to the weights and measures, actually had no power and that the items in question were satisfactory having been approved by an inspector appointed by the Court Leet. The defence argued that authority regarding weights and measures still lay with the Court Leet rather than the Markets and Fairs Committee. The Town Clerk of the town, which had been awarded Borough status in the 1840s, made an apparently, sarcastic speech to the court, stating that he rather hoped the defence's case would succeed. He stated that the assumption of the new duties, resulting from the lease of the market from the local manor, was costing the people of Bradford a large sum of money, suggesting success by the defence could be financially advantageous. At this time Inspector Gillett would have been in post for some 6 months and the inference is that his appointment coincided with the assumption by the

Corporation of duties relating to the market and, more generally weights and measures enforcement within the Borough. The Court Leet appeared to still operate or at least exist at this time and, indeed still retained their own inspector, a Mr G Lewis. It would therefore appear that some kind of 'turf war' was going on between the ancient manorial institutions and the more recently constituted Corporation. The defence argued that despite the fact that the manor had sold the market rights to the Corporation the ancient court still held the rights to weights and measures enforcement. It also seems that the relationship between the traders of the town and the said Mr Lewis was a touch on the cosy side and that the new regime and new inspector were not altogether to the taste of the Bradford merchants. In the event the Court found in favour of the Corporation and the charges were upheld.



Two years later the relationship between the new inspector and the traders of the town had gone from bad to worse as 200 were hauled before the bar of justice. The evidence presented shows a fairly motley set of informations with little evidence of any proper testing or significant error. On this occasion the court dismissed a number of the allegations as being not material but did convict in other instances which resulted in fiscal penalties with costs, unwelcome publicity and indignant missives to the local paper. Subsequently a motion was put before the Corporation demanding the removal of the troublesome official. The Corporation was apparently conflicted by this matter. They were clearly uncomfortable with the number of cases brought before the court at one time and the derisory reception of some of the more trivial

informations. The whole exercise may have been a strategy designed to reinforce the Borough's authority in the area of trade enforcement but that is perhaps a little too conspiratorial for 19th century Bradford. In any case they restated full confidence in Mr Gillett and he was still in office some 2 years later when there were further reports of weights and measures prosecutions in the Bradford Court.

Extremely Odd

We've recently had a lot in Fulcrum about single pan balances and so I was pleasantly surprised when I encountered a rather strange representation of what appears to be something similar.

We were out on a Heritage weekend in our area and I got to poke my nose round the door of a nearby historic home that is not normally accessible to the lower orders. It is a

venerable pile with much associated history but I was drawn to a banner hanging on the wall (above).

It's a somewhat crude affair bearing the words 'BUD OF HOPE JUVENILE CLUB' 'GOOD INTENT LODGE'.

I had absolutely no idea what it was all about but it did occur to me that good intentions are not always to be regarded as admirable, given where they are said to



lead. Despite all that I felt required to photograph the banner because it had a scale on it! Having recorded the wretched thing I began to consider the technicalities of what was depicted. At first sight it looked like the central figure was holding some kind of steelyard with a fixed pan on one arm and a counterbalancing poise on the other. Further scrutiny somewhat changed this view however. It was apparent that the two arms of the scale were in fact of equal length and the poise was placed at an equal distance from the centre as the scale pan. Furthermore it was apparent that the scale pan on the left was empty so the counterpoise was only sufficient to balance the pan itself. It had to be concluded therefore that the balance was actually incapable of performing any actual weighing. It was, in effect a 'non scale'! Surreally of course it could be used to determine negative values.

In the pre-welfare State era in Britain the prospect of destitution and poverty was very real to a large proportion of the population. A degree of grudging assistance was available through the Poor Law system but this was a grim prospect, usually involving degradation within the workhouse. To avoid this there was a rise in 'Friendly Societies' and other similarly constituted organisations in the 19th century whereby people banded together to offer mutual support. These organisations worked through local community groups known variously as Courts, Lodges, Tents etc depending on the Society. The largest groups were the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Independent Order of Rechabites and the Oddfellows. There were a number of other societies although The Loyal Order of Water Buffaloes apparently only exists in the Flintstones. These organisations appealed to the artisan classes in both the newly industrialised urban communities and rural villages. The Freemasons of course was and still is a far flung, ancient fraternal organisation appealing perhaps to those who are, or aspire to be pillars of the establishment.

In another TV programme, The Simpsons, we find the Stonecutters, a shady society which is clearly, in no way whatsoever, based on the Freemasons. In addition to concealing the existence of Martians and the lost continent of Atlantis the Stonecutters are dedicated to suppressing the Metric System.

All these societies practised a degree of ritual involving formal gatherings, ceremonies, regalia and banners much in the manner of early Trade Unions.

The banner on the wall would seem to be associated with one of these societies and it is suggested that the Bud of Hope Juvenile Club was some kind of youth wing of the Oddfellows. The Good Intent Lodge was presumably the local group.

Maybe the very oddity of the scale is symbolic! It could be a subtle representation of the values and principles that underlie the Bud of Hope Juvenile Club! Perhaps it

symbolizes a non- judgemental attitude and a generosity of spirit! In this world view, no one is weighed in the balance and found wanting because the balance is incapable of actually weighing anything or anybody! In reality these organisations tended to have been less generous of spirit than this. There was a degree of moral imperative within their rules, sometimes involving compulsory temperance. More likely the artist just couldn't be bothered to paint the other pan.

The Wages of Bin

I was outside my house one day, putting out the recycling, when I heard jolly whistling coming from the corner of the street. I looked over and saw a little red pick-up truck, parked on the grass verge, out of which emerged the musical man. With a sense of great purpose he approached the array of litter bins on the side of the road and flipped up the lid of the red one. Still whistling, he proceeded to extract



the inner liner which he tossed into the back of his truck and after fitting a new liner he closed the lid, hopped back in his vehicle and, still whistling, drove off to his next site. I was gratified to see someone so happy in his work especially when I considered that the red bin was the one that contained the dog pooh.

Despite the fact that the red dog pooh bin stands so close by, our street is still a particular hot spot for un-garnered dog faeces. On a bad day indeed, a trip to the shops involves a degree of terpsichorean agility, known as 'The South Street Shuffle' to avoid the little parcels of joy that pebbledash the pavement. We never actually see the offending pooches nor their moronic minds just the evidence of their passing. Those dog owners who do clear up their animals' doings speak darkly of the 'nightwalkers' as being responsible for the situation.

Given the local concern on this subject I was interested when I came across an initiative that is occurring in Mexico City. Here, where you might imagine that they have other things to worry about, attempts are being made to encourage dog owners to pop their poop, or even their dog's poop, into the proper receptacle. The receptacle (above), one of a number placed in parks in the city, is slightly more technically advanced than the red bin on the corner of my street and is designed to give the user some reward for their deposit. The reward in this case is free wifi and the time that is given depends upon the weight of the 'offering'. A scale is therefore incorporated into the bin and weighs each donation, hopefully contained in a bag, as it plops in the bin. The technology then cranks up the wifi for a proportional period of time. All tech users within the vicinity

can benefit from the service so dog walkers could become quite popular in the parks of Mexico City and dog droppings a valuable commodity. The sophistication of the device does not stretch to distinguishing the nature of the material being placed in the bin so unscrupulous types could drop in other stuff and thus gain unwarranted wifi. The bins therefore have to be monitored by security people to ensure no one is taking the piss with the pooh. I hope they are happy in their work!

More Schenck

In edition 40 I mentioned the German scale company of Schenck who were advertising in a British Engineering magazine in the 1900's. I said that I was unfamiliar with this business despite the fact that they appeared to be a substantial manufacturer of weighing equipment of all kinds, devices of great sophistication compared with some of the native offerings. I invited clarification from anybody who might be better informed on this matter than I.

Our good friend Thomas Allgeier fount of knowledge on all matters of Teutonic metrology subsequently contacted me with some observations on the subject.

Schenck were in Germany what Avery was in Britain, being by far the largest and most established weighing manufacturer around. They grew from a machine / engineering business to one of the largest players in the field, their success being largely based on the quality and advanced design of their products. Like Avery, they made much more than just weighing machines. They were, for example a leading light in material testing devices similar to those made by Avery Denison in the UK and there was a time when every wheel balancer in every garage seemed to be a Schenck product. Their machines outlasted everybody else's, but also cost more than everybody else's. Due to poor management in the 70's and 80's things turned sour and they suffered a fate not dissimilar to that of Avery. The name still exists but the company has been broken up and parts have been sold off or closed. The business may be extant but is a shadow of its former self. Some say the influx of Far Eastern products caused their decline but they were, in reality on the skids long before that.

It appears that Avery dominated the UK market, and apart from the smaller, more portable devices few foreign weighing machines found their way into the country at the time we're talking about. Schenck's products, in particular, would have had a hard time competing with Avery. Their scales were comparatively expensive to start with and the additional costs of shipping a weighbridge abroad would have made the exercise decidedly uneconomic. A similar situation would have existed in Germany. The Avery name was known in Germany but again their presence would have been only represented by the occasional counter machine. Their industrial machines, such as weighbridges would not have featured to any extent in Germany. Schenck and to some extent other native producers would have had a fairly tight hold on the domestic market and were able to keep out foreign competition. In both Britain and Germany, pattern approval had to be obtained for scales and the effort and cost of getting the necessary certificates would have been a major impediment to a foreign competitor who could only hope for modest sales, even if allowed into the market. This situation persisted throughout the mechanical era and it was not until equipment became electronic, smaller, lighter and cheaper that the market in scales became international and eventually, dominated by foreign competition. In this altered situation both businesses found it hard to compete and suffered their sad declines.

This may explain why the name Schenck is little known in Britain despite the fact that they clearly produced innovative and well made products. In the last article it was pointed out that the advertisement from 1909 showed the German Company was marketing its wares in the UK, with a London address to encourage British businesses to deal with them. They claim that their products are accepted by weights and measures inspectors 'all over the world' (Right). This would suggest the machines in question were properly approved and legal. Having looked at the early approvals from this time I have found no evidence that any Schenck machines had ever been submitted for approval.

During my time examining and testing weighing and measuring devices in the

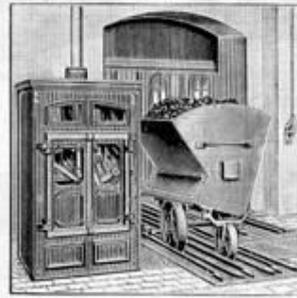
UK, it has to be said that although I encountered the occasional Molenschot or Schember the vast majority of weighbridges and industrial weighing devices were from UK manufacturers or makers with a UK presence. Furthermore the vast majority of such machines were from Avery or one of their subsidiaries. The name of Schenck never featured in any work that I undertook and I am unaware of any UK approvals granted to this manufacturer.

It could well be that the effects of the world wars would have influenced the trading relations between the UK and Germany in the first half of the 20th century and restricted any cross border trade between the two countries.

This did not however appear to prevent the desire for German cars within the UK which have long been popular.

AUTOMATIC WEIGHING MACHINES

| A SPECIALITY |



THE "SCHENCK" AUTOMATIC WEIGHING MACHINE

illustrated above is warranted to Weigh, Register, Sum Up, and Print the Number of Trucks Weighed, and Total Weight passed over the machine

ABSOLUTELY AUTOMATICALLY

and without any attendance or starting by hand or power whatsoever. We have made a Special Study of Automatic Weighing Machines for over 25 years, and have supplied thousands of them to all parts of the World. They are the most reliable machines for preventing irregularities in weighing or frauds, and attain an accuracy of about 1 per cent. of the margin between minimum and maximum net loads of trolley or skiff.

We can arrange them to weigh a trolley within 5 seconds, and they are passed by Inspectors of Weights all over the World.

The CARL SCHENCK CO. (Darmstadt)

42 & 44, MOOR LANE, LONDON, E.C.

AGENT: E. C. KOOP.

D24

WHAT IS AN AUTOMATIC WEIGHER?



A Weigher that requires starting neither by power nor by hand, and registers automatically without any assistance.

THE SCHENCK

does it. Hundreds of Machines in use in Collieries, Cement Works, Gold Mines, Power Stations, Chemical Works, Sugar Refineries, &c.

MAY WE QUOTE YOU

for these Machines, Weighbridges, Platform Machines, Suspended Weighers, Automatic Hopper Machines, Testing Machines of every description?

The CARL SCHENCK CO. (Darmstadt)

42 & 44, MOOR LANE, LONDON, E.C.

AGENT: E. C. KOOP.

D244