

# DEATH BY PUBLIC HANGING OF A LOCAL MAN FOR HORSE STEALING



BY SAMUEL T STEWART – APRIL 2020

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

An article entitled “The First Burial at St. George’s by Lesley Hale (©)

“Crime and Murder in Victorian Leicestershire” by Michael Tanner © Michael Tanner

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Various newspaper articles (see inside)

Convict Records of Australia – <https://convictrecords.com.au>

General information on Victorian Crime and Punishment

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# THE TRIAL OF JOHN AND JOSEPH VARNHAM OF COLEORTON FOR HORSE STEALING

**Leicester Journal – April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1829**

**Leicestershire Lent Assizes**

**CROWN BAR - Before Lord Chief Justice Sir W. B. Best**

## **JOHN VARNHAM**

**John Varnham 19**, pleaded guilty to an indictment charging him with stealing a “Black Galloway” from a close near Huntingdon on the evening of Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of September last.

The Lord Chief Justice in addressing **Varnham** told him he had better retract his plea as horse stealing had become so prevalent in this Country that an example must be made. **Guilty – Death.**

## **JOSEPH VARNHAM**

**Joseph Varnham**, 21, brother to the preceding prisoner who had pleaded guilty, was indicted for stealing a “Dun Gelding” from a field in the parish of Tetsworth, in the County of Oxford, belonging to Mr. Thomas Green.

**The Prosecutor examined** – I had a Dun Gelding which I missed out of my father’s field on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1828; it was safe in the close before; I afterwards saw the same gelding at the “Rose and Crown” (now “*The George Inn*”) in Coleorton on the 9<sup>th</sup> October following; I took it home on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Thomas Shaw examined** – I am a Blacksmith; I know the prosecutor Mr. Green; I saw him take a horse away from the Rose and Crown on the 12<sup>th</sup> October; I remember the prisoner coming to my house with a dun gelding some time ago to have a shoe put on; I remember the horse well, and it was the same one that Mr. Green afterwards rode away.

**John Harket examined** – I am a horse dealer residing at Swannington in this County; I recollect the prisoner coming to my house last February 12 months, and bringing a Dun Horse with him; he asked me if I would buy it, stating as a price twenty three pounds, and that he had brought it at Chipping Norton; I afterwards saw the prisoner and the horse at Ashby, when the prisoner was committed; I am quite sure it is the same horse; I did not see anybody but the prisoner’s father about it after he was committed; I do not know a man by the name of Smith.

**John Potter examined** – My father keeps a public house at Swannington; I remember the prisoner offering for sale the horse to the last witness but one; I believe it was in February 1828; I afterwards saw the same horse in the possession of Mr. William Kirby.

**Mr. William Kirby examined** – I live at Coleorton in this County, and remember the prisoner coming to me sometime in February of last year; there was a person named John Smith and **John Varnham** with him at the time; Smith offered the horse for sale at nine pounds; Smith and the prisoner brought the horse to him; I gave the money into Smith’s hands.

**William Briggs examined** – I was present when the horse was sold to Mr. Kirby; the prisoner told him that he need not fear as the horse was alright, and belonged to a man named Smith; the father of the prisoner said to Mr. Kirby that his son and Mr. Kirby were in partnership; the prisoner's father lives in Thringstone Parish; Smith himself repeatedly said that the prisoner and he were in partnership.

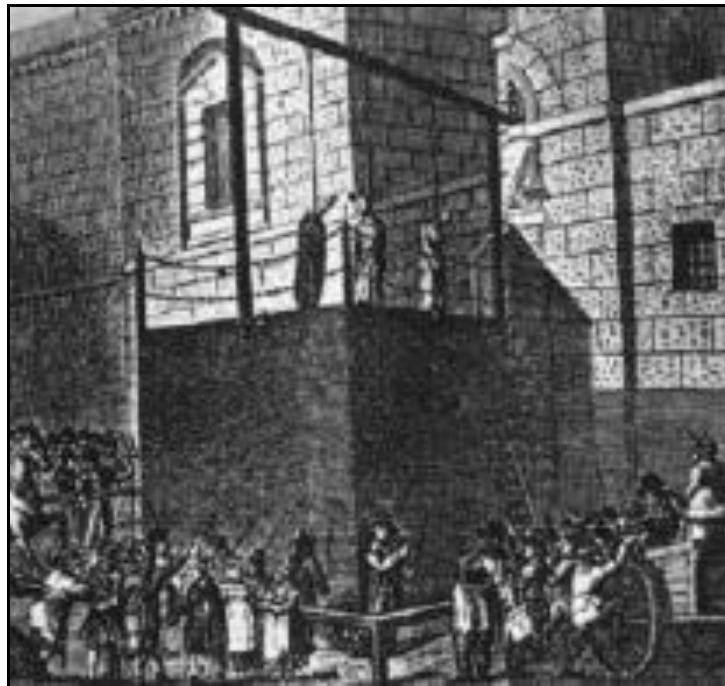
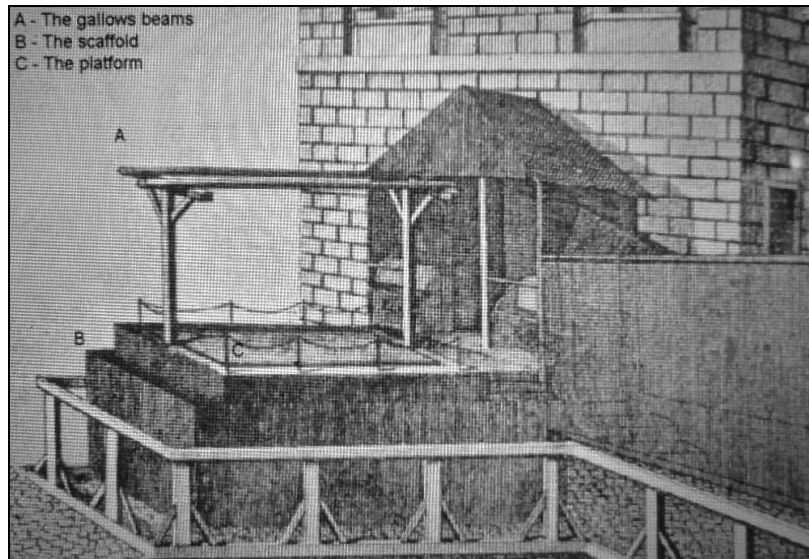
**Mr. Cox** stated that the prisoner came to his house at Thringstone either in January or February last; that he had not room for his horses, but he supplied them with some corn.

The prisoner in his defence said that Smith sold the horse and took the money, and that he told him he brought it of a man belonging to Chipping Norton. **Guilty – Death**

### **From Wikipedia**

The dun horse gene is a dilution gene that affects both red and black pigments in the coat color of a horse. The dun gene lightens most of the body while leaving the mane, tail, legs, and primitive markings the shade of the undiluted base coat color. A dun horse always has a dark dorsal stripe down the middle of its back, usually has a darker face and legs, and may have transverse striping across the shoulders or horizontal striping on the back of the forelegs. Body color depends on the underlying coat color genetics.

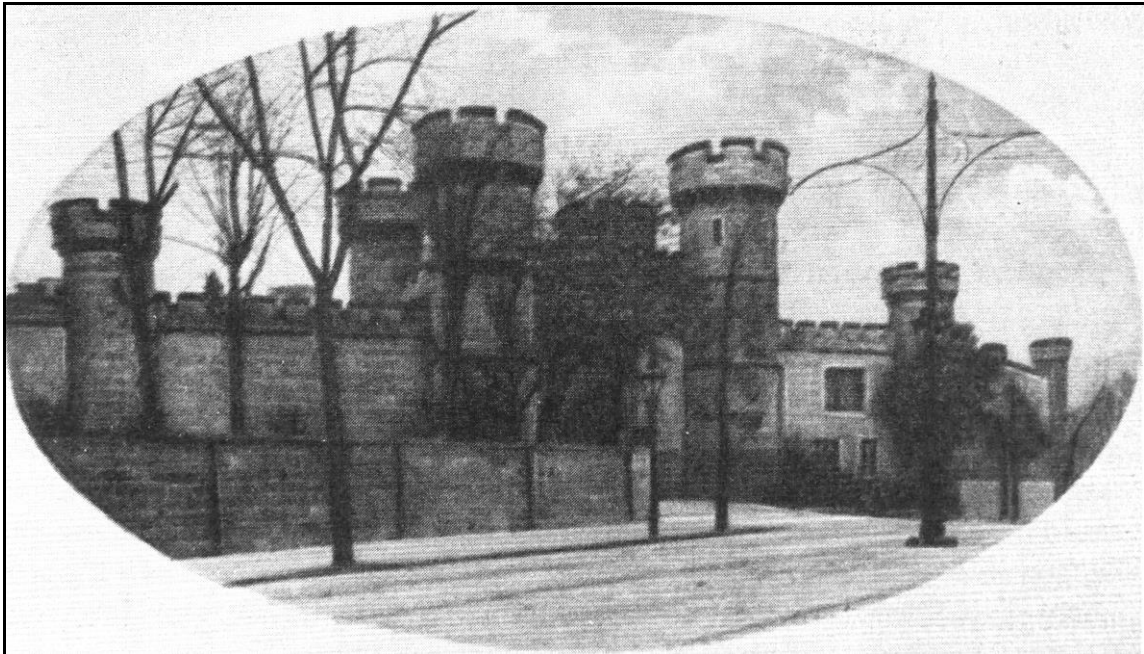
**DEATH BY PUBLIC HANGING OF JOSEPH VARNHAM  
OF COLEORTON OUTSIDE LEICESTER GAOL  
-A SELECTION OF NEWSPAPER REPORTS-**



**Cambridge Chronicle and Journal – May 1<sup>st</sup> 1829**  
**Execution – Varnham,**

Hinton and Forrester, convicted of horse stealing underwent the extreme penalty of the law on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> ult., at the “new drop” in front of Leicester County Gaol (*this refers to the current jail which stands adjacent to Welford Road, Leicester today*). The concourse of spectators were immense – not far short of 20,000 were present. The demeanor of the unhappy men, from the time of their being found guilty, up to the last moment they ceased to exist, was highly praiseworthy: They expressed the justice of their sentence, and wished to die at peace with mankind. On entering the yard to have their irons knocked off, they all walked with a firm step. About half past ten they were pinioned by the executioner. Shortly after that they were brought out on the scaffold – Henry Hinton first, **Joseph Varnham** next, and Charles Forrester last. They were placed under the fateful beam, when the executioner drew the cap over their faces, and after a few minutes in prayer, the fatal bolt was drawn, and they were cut off from the land of the living. Hinton seemed to die without a struggle; **Varnham** once appeared as if he were in the last agonies, clasped his hands together, gave a heave and was still; Forrester seemed to die very easy. The bodies after hanging the usual time, were cut down, placed in coffins, and delivered over to their respective friends. **Varnham’s body was taken that same day to be buried at Coleorton, his native place.**

Forrester’s father who resides in Northamptonshire, was in town, but did not witness the execution of his son, whom he had seen or heard nothing of for several years until he was condemned.



**The new County Gaol, Welford Rd, Leicester – built 1828**

## Leicester Chronicle 25th April 1829

### Execution of the Horse Stealers. –

John Hinton, aged 25: **Joseph Varnham**, aged 24: and Charles Forrester, aged 21, underwent the extreme penalty of the law in front of the new County Gaol, on Monday last. Being the ringleaders in an attempt to break prison several months ago, they were heavily ironed to within an hour or two of their execution, when their chains were taken off. Eleven o'clock having arrived, Hinton made an appearance on the scaffold, and presented a care worn, wretched appearance. He was followed by **Varnham**, who was placed beside him, but who did not seem to feel so acutely the awfulness of his situation as Hinton. Forrester then came forth and was placed beside **Varnham**. He appeared resigned, and, with his unfortunate fellow sufferers, seemed to be supplicating divine mercy, but what he said was not heard immediately below the scaffold. The executioner then having suspended the unhappy men to the fateful beam, Hinton turned towards his companions, and they took leave of each other. Hinton then closing his eyes awaited his fate with great firmness and composure, not once opening them, nor appearing to betray the least agitation of mind or body. The conduct of **Varnham** and Forrester, although not indecorous, was more indifferent, particularly that of **Varnham**, who looked about him, instead of directing his attention to a higher object. The executioner having pulled the caps over the culprits' faces, retired to complete his duty, when a short but painful suspense took place, owing to some difficulty in removing the bolt which causes the platform on which they stood to fall. At length, it gave way, and they were launched in to eternity. Hinton, with the exception of the motion given to his body on first falling, did not move for several minutes, when he slightly lifted up his legs. **Varnham** who was a short but strong muscular man, appeared very much convulsed for about five minutes, as did Forrester, whose feet shook for a considerable time after the motion in other parts of his frame had ceased. The bodies having hung the usual time, were cut down and placed in shells brought to the scaffold for that purpose. **Varnham's** was removed by his friends to Coleorton, and that of Forrester should have been conveyed to Northamptonshire, but owing to some mistake, Hinton's was taken in its stead, and would probably have been interred by Forrester's friends, had not some communication been received respecting Hinton's clothes, when the error was discovered, and a constable was dispatched with Forrester's body to his father's house, the day following. Great exertions were made by the father of this young man, who is a farmer, to save him. Mr. Bond, the attorney who conducted his defence, was sent by him to London last week, to obtain a commutation of his sentence, but in vain, the present system of horse stealing having been carried to such a very great extent, as to require the utmost power of the law to repress it. Forrester's father was in Leicester during the time, and the effect which the communication received from Mr. Bond, by the mail, on Monday morning announcing his unsuccessful exertions in his favour, may be more easily conceived than described. We understand that the afflicted parent, had not seen his son, nor known anything respecting him, for two or three years before his apprehension for horse-stealing. – **John Varnham**, who received sentence of death at the same time, and who, it is supposed, will be transported for life, has made most important disclosures respecting the gangs of horse-stealers now prowling about the country. We are informed that he has given information respecting more than fifty horses which have been stolen in different parts of the Kingdom, and, it is said, will implicate some horse dealers, who will stand as fair a chance of being sent out of the country, as John Pilkington, at present awaiting an order to convey him to Botany Bay, for buying the horse and cart, for stealing which Hinton suffered on Monday. On no former occasion, except when the Luddites were executed, were so many persons assembled to witness an execution, as we saw this day. This circumstance may perhaps be attributed to the day being a holyday (Easter Monday) and partly to this being the first instance where such an exhibition has taken place at the new gaol. About one half of the assemblage were females, with whom were a great number of children, but, though the crowd was dense, not the slightest incident occurred.

## Leicester Herald 22.04.1829

### Varnham Hanging

The above three individuals convicted of the above offences, underwent the extreme penalty of the law on Monday last, at the new drop in front of our county gaol. It being the first execution that has taken place, since the new County Gaol has been erected, together with it being Easter Monday, the concourse of spectators was immense; not far short of twenty thousand spectators were present. The demeanor of the unhappy men from the time of their being found guilty up to the last moment they ceased to exist, was highly praiseworthy; they expressed the justness of their sentence, and wished to die in peace with mankind. On Sunday night, **Varnham** took leave of his wife and brother, the latter still under sentence of death; the parting from his wife to whom he had only been married to for two years was very affecting.

"She was a mourner at his bier,  
God grant her patience at the last hour,  
God grant her but a single tear,  
To ease the tortures that o'erpow'r!"

The condemned sermon was preached on Monday morning by the Rev. Robert Burnaby, to whom the culprits seemed to pay particular attention. **Young Varnham** sobbed aloud when the Rev. Divine alluded to him, as not yet being out of danger. On Monday morning the sacrament was administered to them. On entering the yard to have their irons knocked off, they all walked with a firm step. **Varnham** on changing his prison dress, said since he had been in prison "he had become weak as a cat". At about half past ten they were pinioned by the executioner; Hinton sighed heavily but said nothing. Shortly after that they were brought out on the scaffold, **Varnham** first, Hinton next and Forrester last. They were placed under the fateful beam, when the executioner drew the cap over their faces, and after a few minutes in prayer the fatal bolt was drawn, and they were cut off from the land of the living. Hinton seemed to die without a struggle. **Varnham** once appeared as if he was in the last agonies clasped his hands together, gave a heave, and all was still. Forrester seemed to die very easy. The bodies after hanging the usual time were cut down, placed in coffins, and delivered to their respective friends. **Varnham's** body was taken the same day to be buried at Coleorton, his native place. Forrester's father who resides in Northamptonshire, was in the town, but we understand, did not witness the execution of his son, whom he had seen or heard nothing of for several years, until he was condemned to die for horse stealing.

From an early hour the population of the surrounding district came pouring into Leicester; as early as eight o'clock in the morning upwards of one thousand people were assembled round the scaffold, and their number kept increasing, when as we have above stated it amounted to near 20,000 persons; half the concourse consisted of women. We add a short account of the offences for which they suffered.

**Joseph Varnham** had already received sentence of transportation at Salisbury for a similar crime. The offence for which he suffered was for stealing a horse, the property of Mr. Thomas Green in the parish of Tetsworth, Oxfordshire. The following is a brief outline of the trial:-

The prosecutor stated that he missed his horse out of his father's field on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1828; on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October following, he again saw it in the possession of Mr. Kirby, at the "Rose and Crown", Coleorton. A horse dealer of Swannington stated that he remembered the prisoner bringing a dun horse to his house, and asking him to purchase it for twenty three pounds. Mr. William Kirby stated that he lived at Coleorton. and remembered the prisoner and a man named Smith offering the horse for sale at nine pounds, which he bought; he paid the money into the hands of a man named Smith who had since absconded. Several other witnesses proved seeing the horse in the possession of the prisoner **Varnham**. In his defense he said that Smith sold the horse and took the money, and Smith told him that he brought it of a man belonging to Chipping Norton. The culprit formerly followed the occupation of a travelling potter. His father died on the Friday preceding his execution, at Coleorton.

Forrester though young was an old offender, and if he had escaped from the indictment he had been found guilty upon, there was another awaiting to be proceeded with. He was found



guilty of stealing a mare out of a close at Warrington in the County of Lancaster. Mr. Davis, the proprietor of the mare, stated in the trial that he missed his mare on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, and that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October following, he saw her in the company of a constable at Loughborough. A butcher residing at Castle Donington remembered seeing the prisoner at that place with two mares in his possession; he asked the price of them when the prisoner told him they were sold. The mares were afterwards given into the hands of James Newbold, a constable, who stated that the prosecutor Davis identified one of them as his property. Forrester in his defense said that the horses were given to him by a man at Braunstone, in Northamptonshire to take into Lincolnshire.

Hinton was also a daring offender, who had been pursuing a dishonest course of life since he left the employment of the person at whose instance he was at length brought to justice. He was indicted for stealing a horse and cart in August 1826, the property of John Brett, butcher of Clare-court, Drury lane, London. – On the trial, Edwin Dawes, an accomplice, stated that he met the accomplice on the corner of Duke-street, Lincoln's-inn- fields, with a horse and cart in his possession, that he immediately got into it, when they started off on a journey and arrived at Loughborough the next day. The prisoner had before told him that he was going to take the horse and cart to Lane end, in Staffordshire, and that he was to take bad money for it, but of whom he did not know. The prisoner afterwards sold the horse and cart to a man named Pilkington, of Loughborough, for twelve pounds. - Mr. Brett said the prisoner was formerly in his employ, and left his services two months before he missed his horse and cart, which was in August 1826. He found his stable broken open and his horse and cart gone. The cart cost him £24 a few months before; the harness was worth £3 and the horse £20.- Benjamin Taylor, a police officer, of Loughborough, apprehended Hinton on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August last, and took him before the Rev. Mr. Dudley at Sibley. – Mrs. White of Needless Inn, Nr. Loughborough, recollected Hinton and another man coming to her house on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August last between 10 and 11 o'clock. Soon afterwards Hinton went towards Loughborough. – James Brown, officer, of Worship-street police-office, London produced a letter which he had found in Hinton's lodgings in London. This was on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1828. It was an invitation for Hinton to bring down a horse and cart. – Hinton said he was innocent, and put in a written defence, stating that he was on the road to Liverpool and was overtaken by a man with a horse and cart who wished him to travel with him.

## THE TRANSPORTATION OF JOHN VARNHAM

### PLEASE REFER TO THE TRIAL DETAILS ON PAGE 3

**John Varnham** could be considered more fortunate than his brother. In return for providing information on horse stealing gangs, leading to the arrest of five other horse stealers, his death sentence was commuted to transportation for life to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). Joseph was shown no mercy since he had been convicted of a further horse stealing offence.

**John Varnham** was transferred from Leicester County Gaol to the prison hulks at Gosport and departed from there on the ship "The Thames" on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1829, arriving in Tasmania on 21<sup>st</sup> November that year. John Varnham was married twice whilst in Tasmania and died there at Beaconsfield in 1844 of 'Stricture'. Further information is recorded in the following website- (<https://ConvictRecords.com.au>).

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Transportation was an alternative punishment to hanging. Convicted criminals were transported to the colonies to serve their prison sentences. It had the advantages of removing the criminal from society and being quite cheap - the state only had to pay the cost of the journey.

In 1787, transportation started to the first penal colonies in Australia (Tasmania). Over the years, about 160,000 people were sent there: men, women and children, sometimes as young as nine years old.

### Sentencing to Departure - Prison Hulks & Convict Gaols



The sentence of transportation was usually carried out in three parts. Prisoners started their sentence in the local gaol, followed by a period in a convict gaol or on the prison hulks before finally being transported.

### After Sentencing

Prisoners arrived at the convict facility with their 'caption papers' (Which stated the offence, the date of conviction and length of sentence). In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, most prisoners awaiting transportation were sent to the '**hulks**' in London before being assigned to a convict ship and

leaving England.

### **The Hulks**

The hulks were old navy ships, anchored along the banks of the Thames and at ports such as Portsmouth and Plymouth. As the prison population increased, it was decided to use them as gaols. Parliament authorised their use for a two year period in 1776; **they continued to house prisoners for 82 years!**

The conditions on the ships were terrible, especially in the early days, and far worse than in the prisons. The standards of hygiene were so poor that outbreaks of disease spread quickly. Typhoid and cholera were common and there was a high death rate amongst the prisoners.

In the day time the Convicts were put to hard labour on the docks or dredging the Thames. At night the prisoners were chained to their bunks to prevent them escaping ashore. Convicts could be punished for crimes on board by being placed in heavy irons or flogging.

Even though conditions slowly improved, they were still worse than in the prisons. In later years some prisoners carried out their whole sentences on the hulks in England, instead of being transported.

## FROM AN ARTICLE BY LESLIE HALE

In an article written by Leslie Hale, which recently appeared on "Face Book", she records the following:-

The brothers **Joseph** and **John Varnham** were sons of William and Hannah Varnham of Coleorton. Joseph became a travelling potter like his father, whilst his brother John worked as an under groom. Joseph was short but strong and muscular and in this resembled his younger brother who was only 5' 2". John had grey eyes and a long Roman nose, but he was swarthy with a low forehead and dark brown hair. It seems that he had suffered from smallpox in his childhood as he was slightly pock marked. As a travelling potter it would not cause remark that Joseph should be frequently away from home, and as a groom, John would be an expert in the management of horses. The fact that their address is variously given as Coleorton and Thringstone seems to indicate that they lived in *Rotten Row* which was an island in the Township of Thringstone, but within the bounds of Coleorton Parish and would have been served by St. George's Church, Swannington.

Apparently, **Joseph Varnham** was buried in the graveyard of St. Georges Churchyard, Swannington and appears as the first burial No.22, in the register.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

In Michael Tanner's excellent book "Crime and Murder in Victorian Leicestershire", he records the following:-

*Lord Justice Best stated at the trial - 'Horse stealing is so prevalent in this county that an example must be made'. It certainly was! Heavily manacled on account of an abortive escape attempt, they were hung on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1829 before the new County Gaol in Welford Road on a scaffold "so situated that everyone might have an opportunity of witnessing its appalling effect".*

*Seven men tried to break out of the County Jail in 1828 included Hinton, Forrester and **Varnham**. For attempting to escape, they were put in irons, kept in close confinement for a month and restricted to bread and water. However, such deterrents would never extinguish the desire of many to seek the outside world.*

*BETWEEN 1800 AND 1901, 41 MALES AND 2 FEMALES WERE EXECUTED IN LEICESTERSHIRE. AMONGST THE PLACES THE HANGINGS TOOK PLACE WERE – RED HILL, BIRSTALL, ASHBY ROAD, DANE HILLS, INFIRMARY SQUARE, WELFORD ROAD AND HIGHCROSS ST.*

*BETWEEN 1800 & 1899 – 3,365 MALES AND 172 FEMALES WERE HANGED IN THE UK.*

*In 1819, a total of 220 offences carried the death penalty. In 1832, the death penalty had been abolished for cattle, horse and sheep stealing, and in 1833 house breaking had been removed from the list.*

*In 1834 Gibbeting was abolished and in 1836 forgery had been removed followed by the number of capital offences in 1837 being reduced to 14. In 1841, the death sentence was abolished for rape and by 1861 the number of capital offences now stood at four with the death sentence for those under the age of sixteen being removed in 1908.....*

*At the Leicestershire Lent Assizes in 1829, the year **Joseph Varnham** was hanged, fifteen men were sentenced to death of whom only three were executed, those being – Henry Hinton, Charles Forrester and **Joseph Varnham**. In the previous two years there were no executions. From 1800 to 1825 there were 24 men and one woman executed. However, eight of these took place in 1817, six of these being luddites.*

*The last public hanging to take place outside Leicester Gaol was on July 25<sup>th</sup> 1856. A young man from Melton Mowbray named William Brown and nicknamed "Peppermint Billy", after his father's trade of making mints, had committed a double murder. His hanging attracted a crowd of 25,000, with 150 of Goodyer's policemen in attendance. At the Leicestershire Quarter Sessions of 1843, Peppermint Billy had been given a sentence of ten years transportation for stealing some silver spoons from a house at Newtown Linford. He arrived back in England having served his sentence in Tasmania sometime in May, 1856. Within less than three weeks of arriving back he had committed two grotesque murders of Edward Woodcock, a seventy year old Toll Gate keeper and his ten year old Grandson James.*

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Public hangings were a source of popular entertainment until 1868 when an act of Parliament ordered that all executions should in future take place behind public walls.

Men and women were hung for the most trivial offences, and hung in batches after almost every assize court. There is a record of five or six poachers being hung outside Gloucester Gaol at the same time.

The earlier reference to the executioner pinioning the men, entailed, tying their hands in front of them with a cord and often a second cord passed around the body and arms at the elbow. This was done to allow them to pray at the gallows.

The “new drop” referred to in the description of **Joseph Varnham’s** execution, was introduced by the County Gaols in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and soon became universal, as executions were moved from their previous sites on the outskirts of towns to the actual prison. The gallows were big enough to accommodate two or three prisoners side by side and were erected for each execution. The platform was between 3 and 5 feet high and shielded by either wooden boards or black cloth drapes to conceal the legs and lower bodies of the prisoners in their final struggles. At this time, the trapdoors were released from underneath by withdrawing bolts.

Hanging, using little or no drop, was effectively universal up to 1872. The prisoner would be suspended by a variety of means, from the back of a cart or a ladder, - or later by some form of trapdoor mechanism which was used in the hanging of **Varnham**. When the person was dragged off the tail of a cart, they usually got a few inches of actual drop, and it was not unusual for the relatives and friends of prisoners to hang on their legs to shorten their suffering (see the illustration on the front cover). With the introduction of the “new drop” gallows, the condemned fell 12 to 18 inches and this was found to give a slightly quicker death than the cart method. However, death was still typically by strangulation, and the prisoner could still struggle for several minutes in agony after the drop fell. After the “new drop” was introduced, the hangman sometimes had to pull down on the prisoners legs.

During the early Victorian years the courts were extremely inconsistent in their sentencing, the dominant feature though was the severity of the sentences even for what we would see today as quite minor offences. Below are a number of newspaper reports from the locality showing that from c.1831 the severity of the sentences for minor crimes started to reduce.

#### **Leicester Journal – March 25<sup>th</sup> 1831**

##### **Leicester Lent Assizes on Monday afternoon at 3 o’clock.**

Sir George Howland Willoughby Beaumont, 8<sup>th</sup> Bart, was foreman of the grand jury which consisted of 22 men.

This was a Nisi Prius Court before the Honourable Sir John Vaughan, Knt.

William Lakin, 22, charged with stealing a tea kettle, and various articles, the property of John Gadsby of Coleorton, on the 14<sup>th</sup> February.

**Sentence -Transported for life!!**

#### **Leicester Chronicle – January 19<sup>th</sup> 1828**

##### **County Sessions**

William Williamson and William Roberts, for stealing two couple of fowls, the property of William Preston of Coleorton, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, **were found guilty, and sentenced to be imprisoned six months to hard labour, and to be once privately whipped.** – The fowl is seemed to have been stolen by the prisoners with an idea that they had the right to take them because the parish officers would not find them work.

#### **Stamford Mercury – August 1<sup>st</sup> 1834**

##### **Leicester Assizes –**

Joseph Kirby, aged 40, for stealing a mare from Coleorton, was sentenced to be **transported for life.**

#### **Northampton Mercury – October 18<sup>th</sup> 1834**

##### **Leicester Quarter Sessions**

Mary Powdrell, George Perry, and Thomas Harris, for stealing cheese, knives, forks &c., from the house of Ann Stinson, at Coleorton, to be imprisoned – **the former 11 weeks and a week**

solitary confinement, and the two latter each three weeks and a weeks solitary confinement.

**Leicester Mercury - July 9<sup>th</sup> 1842**

**County Sessions, Thursday June 30<sup>th</sup> before W. Heyrick Esq.**

George Morris (alias Wallis), who was charged with stealing on the 25<sup>th</sup> December last, at Coleorton, one waistcoat, a pair of stockings, a handkerchief, and other articles, the property of John Ensor. – **Six months imprisonment to hard labour.**

**Leicester Chronicle – March 5<sup>th</sup> 1853**

**Ashby de la Zouch petty Sessions, Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup> – before Rev. J. M. Eschalaz and W. W. Abney, and Geo. Moore Esqrs.**

Mary Robinson, a singular looking and diminutive young woman, of Griffydam, charged Joseph Bird of Thringstone, with indecently assaulting, kicking and striking her, on the high road near the former place, at nine o'clock on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. Her statement was corroborated by a female named Amelia Shaw, living near the place, who heard the complainant scream and call for help. Complainant admitted having a former acquaintance with the accused by whom she had a "little one". He made a lame attempt to prove that he was in another place at the time, but without success; **he was therefore convicted, and ordered to pay a fine of 25s., including expenses, half of which was paid down, and a fortnight allowed for the remainder.**

**Leicester Chronicle – May 13<sup>th</sup> 1854**

**Ashby Petty Sessions, May 6<sup>th</sup>**

William Hurst of Peggs Green was charged with assaulting Edward Boat, on the 29<sup>th</sup> April, by throwing him down and striking him several times while on the ground. Defendant admitted that he was upon the "spree" and gave complainant a slap on the face. **Fined 1s. and 13s. 6d. expenses, or one month's imprisonment.**

**Leicester Chronicle – May 27<sup>th</sup> 1854**

**Ashby de la Zouch Petty Sessions, May 20<sup>th</sup> – Before George Moore, Esq., and the Rev. J. M. Echalaz**

**Sheep Worrying. – Joseph Sharpe v. James Lord.** – This case had been twice adjourned at the request of the defendant's attorney, Mr. Brown, for further evidence. It will be remembered that the defendant was charged with wilful damage by sheep worrying, and also under Martin's Act for cruelty. Several witnesses were sworn, who denied the truth of the charges against Lord; one of them, John Massey was asked by Mr. Sharpe, jun., son of the prosecutor, whether there was not a club at Griffydam, the members of which had agreed to deny upon oath any accusation made against a brother member? An enquiry, which was of course answered in the negative. Mr. Echalaz, one of the Magistrates, made some pointed remarks on the cross-swearing of the witnesses for the defence. The magistrates having retired to deliberate, shortly returned into court, **and convicted the defendant, ordering him to be fined 2s. 6d. and £1 4s. expenses; in default, one months imprisonment with hard labour, at the same time the Bench suggested that the owner of the dog, a young man named Platts of Griffydam, should be sued in the County Court for the value of the sheep that had been worried.**