

## THE HAGGARD FILE

### LOCAL BIGAMY CHARGE

#### A BATH ENGINEER ARRESTED FOR BEING IN ARREARS WITH HIS WIFE'S MAINTENANCE ORDER CHARGED WITH BIGAMOUSLY MARRYING A BUTLEIGH WOMAN REMANDED FOR A WEEK

A case of considerable local interest came before the magistrates at the Bath City Police Court on Monday— Messrs. J. E. Henshaw, (in the chair), F. Young, H. T. Hatt, J. H. Colmer, and P. Browning— in which **Percy Lister Haggard**, aged 26, an engineer, of Olive House, Chegeelrow, Essex, and member of a well-known Bath family was charged, with disobeying an order of the justices made on March 24, 1909, to pay his wife, **Gertrude Haggard**, the weekly sum of 30s., and being in arrears to the amount of £94 16s. 6d.

*Mr. A. E. Withy* appeared for the applicant, and *Mr. E. B. Titley* for the respondent.

*Mr. Withy*, in opening the case, said that since the order was made not a halfpenny had been paid under it.

*Mr. Titley* said he understood that there was some £20 which was in the respondent's hands, and he was quite willing to give authority that this should be handed over to the applicant. He would do everything he could to assist her in getting this money, which he had in connection with some motor transactions, handed over to her. One thing which struck him was that if the magistrates allowed the case to stand over until next Monday, liberating the respondent on his own recognisances, he had every hope to get at any rate an appreciable portion of the rest of the money, and would undertake to hand it to the wife's solicitor. It was absolutely impossible for a man in custody to make such arrangements if the magistrates did not take this course.

*The Clerk* (Mr. E. Newton Fuller): What explanation has he for not paying the money ?

*Mr. Titley* replied that the respondent had been very unfortunate. On the top of financial difficulties he was taken ill, and on his return from America, where he was for some time, he tried very hard to get work, but was not able for a long time. Then he was lent some money, and started a small business in Oxford, and it was at this time that a summons was before the Court. The business was practically a failure, and he had to give it up. The magisterial proceedings were unfortunate for him, for he was out of work for a long time. He received some £80 for the reversion of his business, and afterwards took a small office in Birmingham, but this did not seem to be a success. Subsequently he engaged in certain motor transactions, and the £20 found on him was what he received on this account. He said he might be able to get money; at any rate he had a chance which he would not have in prison.

*The Clerk*: He understands the way to America.

*Mr. Titley*: Then he would be punished far worse than your worships would punish him. If he goes to America he goes as an exile probably for the rest of his life.

The Chairman intimated that it was always the practice of the Court in these cases to consult the applicant, and if possible adopt the course which was agreeable to her.

*Mr. Withy*: I have, only one observation to make, and that is since the order was made we have had great difficulty — in fact, we have been unable — to find the defendant's whereabouts until one day last week, when quite accidentally we obtained information which led to his discovery. If Mr. Titley has an authority signed by the defendant authorising the police to hand over to his wife the £20 found on him then I am willing to agree to any course the magistrates think, desirable.

*Mr. Titley*: I will get him to sign the authority at once.

The case was put back for a short time while this was being done, and then Mr. Titley made formal application for the adjournment of the case to the following Monday, the defendant to be liberated on his own recognisances. A receipt for £15 on William Whiteley's, Ltd. in the defendant's possession would also be handed over to the applicant, with authority for her to receive it.

The magistrates granted the application, bail being allowed in the sum of £50.

#### **THE CHARGE OF BIGAMY.**

Later Haggard was put into the dock again, and charged on a warrant for that he on May 4 last, at Holy Trinity Church, Paddington married **Mary Coles Maidment**, formerly of Butleigh, near Glastonbury, his wife. **Gertrude Geraldine Haggard**, whom he married on August 20, 1904, being then alive.

Both the ladies were in the Court. Mr. A. E. Withy appeared to prosecute, and said that he proposed only to take evidence of arrest, and ask for a remand in custody for seven days in order that arrangements might be made to get witnesses, etc. The prisoner was married to his wife, **Gertrude Geraldine Haggard**, on August 20, 1904, and she was alive, and in court; while the magistrates were now acquainted with the facts of what had happened

in connection with that marriage and the nonpayment of a maintenance order. On May 4 last, at Holy Trinity Church, Paddington, the accused was married by special license, and it was on that charge of bigamy that the prisoner was before them now.

D.I. Burge said that that morning about 11.40 he saw the prisoner outside the Guildhall, and told him he had a warrant for his arrest, and cautioned him and read it, but the accused made no reply. Witness took the prisoner to the Central Station, and there charged him again, but still he made no reply.

Mr. E. B. Titley, who defended in the previous case, said he was instructed by the prisoner's relatives, and as he had had no instructions respecting that particular charge he would have to communicate with them before taking any part in the proceedings.

The accused, who did not wish to say anything, was remanded for a week.

### **A BUTLEIGH SENSATION.**

The above police-court proceedings are the sequel to what has been quite a sensation in the quiet little village of Butleigh and the surrounding district. The defendant **Haggard** arrived at Butleigh in January last, when he was accompanied by a young girl, **Miss Annie Baulch**, the daughter of **Mr. W. Baulch**, carter to Mr. R. Neville Grenville. The two passed as man and wife, and everything that was done tended to place them in that light towards each other in the eyes of all with whom they came in contact. As there was not room, at the cottage, of the parents to accommodate the two, sleeping-apartments were obtained at the adjoining farmhouse occupied by the late **Mr. J. Maidment** and his sister, **Miss Mary Maidment**, while meals were partaken of at the residence of the girl's parents, who, it can be added, were under the impression that the two were married. During his stay, Haggard made the acquaintance of several people in the locality, by whom he was regarded as a gentleman of means, and also made arrangements to give a series of "illusion" shows and conjuring in the district in aid of the funds of Butleigh Hospital; indeed one of these entertainments was actually held at Baltonsborough. In the various details of the entertainments he was arranging he was assisted by Miss Maidment, with whom he had become friendly on account of partly residing at her brother's farm. Save the entertainment at Baltonsborough, the others to be held at Butleigh and elsewhere were cancelled on account of the death of Mr. John Maidment which occurred at Easter; and incidentally it may be added that when Haggard went away he owed bills for various items in connection with the arranging of these Shows.

At the death of Mr. Maidment, the man Haggard, so it is alleged, owing to the confidence he had inspired in Miss Maidment assisted in settling the affairs of her late brother and herself. The lady, when all was settled, besides a sum of ready money, had about one thousand pounds, which however, remains in the hands of trustees and is invested on her behalf.

Although Haggard had the girl with him who was openly acknowledged to be his wife, and who right up to the time of Mr. Maidment's death had been occupying the sleeping apartments with him at the farm, the next phase of the story proved to be of a most sensational and unexpected character as Haggard, having left the village, was shortly afterwards followed by Miss Maidment. and subsequently the news was received that the two had met in London and were married.

It is a most extraordinary development, owing to the presence of the supposed wife at Butleigh. Haggard is described as a gentlemanly fellow well-educated and of good address, and it is evident that some strong persuasive force must have been used by him to have brought about the denouement alluded to. Since that time various wild rumours have been circulated in the village and neighbourhood - rumours which, when they came to be sifted, were found not to contain a particle of truth; yet at the same time it is fairly safe to say that owing to the inquiries set on foot by these stories the result has been the appearance of Haggard at the Bath police-court, and the preferring of the charge of bigamy against him.

With regard to his relations with **Miss Baulch**, what may eventuate cannot yet be said, but the probabilities are that they may lead to another charge against the defendant. Miss Baulch is a good looking girl of about twenty years of age, and from what can be gathered of her story she first made the acquaintance of Haggard at a temperance hotel at Paddington, where she was employed in July of last year. Attracted by the girl's appearance, Haggard paid court to her and eventually proposed marriage. Realizing the difference in their social position the girl at first refused, but later on, owing to his persistent appeals, she consented, and after staying for a short time at the house of a friend one day accompanied Haggard to an office at Nesdon, which she took to be a registry-office, where she alleges they went through a form of marriage. Later on the pair went to Guildford, where Haggard opened an hotel, but, although the business flourished in some respects, he got into financial difficulties, and the hotel had to be given up. Later on the two came to Butleigh, where the events above related subsequently took place. A sad feature of the case is that the girl is shortly expecting to become a mother. From inquiries that have been made, it is stated that no record can be found of the existence of a registry-office at Nesdon nor at Somerset House of the marriage having taken place, and, granting the truth of the girl's story, she would appear to be the victim of deception on the part of the man.

The man Haggard, from what can be gathered, is said to have travelled considerably and to have had Colonial experience. It is also said that he was at one time in the Army and later on managed a theatre in New York. He is known to be a capable engineer. Miss Baulch was formerly in service at Butleigh Rectory, and afterwards left to go into service with Mrs. Maitland, sister of Mr. R. Neville Grenville.

The Characters in this story;

**1) Percy Lester Haggard** born 12 August 1883 (Sep Q 1a/291 Fulham) in 7, Moor Park Rd., Fulham, Middlesex, son of Frederick Yeates Haggard (b.1858) and Kate Julia (née Rennie).

In **1891** Percy lived with his parents and grandparents (John and Eliza) at 13, Moore Park Road Fulham - and he had three sisters; Edith (b. 1885), Kate (b. 1887) and Ethel (b. 1889). By **1901** the rest of the family had moved to Onega Lodge, Upper Bristol Road, Walcot, Bath where another child, Gordon (b. 1898) had been added but **Percy** was absent from the census - possibly already in America? His father, a Map Moulder, had by then retired.

Percy married **Gertrude Geraldine Lee** on 20 August 1904 (Sep Q 2c/511 Basingstoke).

Percy next went through a fake Registry Office wedding at **Neasden** with;

**2) Annie Baulch** born 14 July 1890, Christened 29 September 1890, Butleigh. The daughter of William Baulch (b. 1858 Upton) and Rhoda Ellen (née Richards).

In **1891** Annie had lived with her parents and two sisters (Mary and Elizabeth) in four rooms at 77, *Butleigh Hill* (known as Hoods cottages), though on census night her oldest sister Mary was visiting her grandparents. James Baulch (b. 1835 Upton) and Angelina (b. 1842 Butleigh, née Wilcox). In **1901** the family still lived on Butleigh Hill but Annie, aged only 12, was a servant in *Water Lane* at the house of George Turner, butcher. From the Court Case we learn that she subsequently worked at Butleigh Vicarage with the Rev. G. Berkeley then in London for William James Maitland and his wife Agnes (sister of Robert Neville Grenville) before finding employment in the temperance hotel in Paddington where she met Percy Haggard. Annie's sister **Elizabeth** had worked in 1901 for the Maitlands at 18, Lennox Gardens, Chelsea [he was Deputy Governor of the Indian Railways] and no doubt this connection had helped Annie get her job there.

Annie's daughter **Irene Mabel** was born 3 August 1910 (Sep Q 5c/381 Wells) and she was Christened 24th August.

It was before the birth of his daughter that **Percy Haggard** absconded with **Mary C. Maidment**, and went through the illegal marriage on 4 May 1910. On leaving prison he must have acquired a divorce because he married her again in 1912 (Jun Q 3a/341 Brentford).

In 1911 **Percy Lester Haggard** appears as an inmate at HM Prison, Corn Hill, Shepton Mallet. **Mary Maidment** appears in 1911 as a pupil midwife boarding at 224, Lee High Road, Lee, Lewisham. **Annie Baulch** was cook at 34, Harcourt Terrace, Kensington and her daughter **Irene Mabel** lived with her parents in Butleigh.

### 3) John and Mary Maidment

The Maidments lived at *Lower Hill Farm*, Butleigh Hill and **Joseph Maidment** and his wife **Fanny** had lived there in **1891** with their three children, Levi (b. 1870 Lottisham), **Mary Coles** (b. 1876 Lottisham) and **John Geare Grimstead Maidment** (b. 1878 Lottisham). Joseph died in 1898 and his wife Fanny in 1909 and Levi must have died too (not traced). In **1901** therefore the farm was run by **Fanny** and her two young children. After Fanny's death in June 1909 **John** also died, aged just 31 - he was buried 29 March 1910 (Mar Q5c/325 Wells) leaving **Mary** as sole heir. It was in this period before John Maidment's death that Percy Haggard and Annie rented rooms with them, as man and wife. **Haggard** bigamously married **Mary** on 4 May 1910 (Jun Q 1a/105 Paddington).

**4) Gertrude Geraldine Lee** b. 1880 (Mar Q 5c/638 Bath) [Gertrude Eliza] d.o. John James and Emily Eugenie Lee.

On the **1911 census** Haggard's first wife **Gertrude Haggard** is found visiting her widowed sister in law **Alice Lee** at 2, Adelaide Place, Bath together with her daughter **Dorris Eugene Haggard** b. 1906 (Sep Q 5c/489 Bath). Gertrude's father was **John James Lee** (b. 1846 Yeovil) a Cardboard Box maker and mother **Emily Eugenie** b. 1847 Stoke under Ham. The company founded by her father, **J.J. Lee** packaging still survives.

A further account of the marriages and bigamy case is the following, from 'The Times, Monday November 7th 1910 page 4, Issue 39423, Col. A.

The Assizes. Western Circuit.

**A SHAM MARRIAGE.**

At Taunton on Saturday, before Mr. Justice Bankes, Percy Lester HAGGARD, 26, engineer, pleaded " Guilty " to having on May 4 feloniously married Mary Coles MAIDMENT at Holy Trinity Church, Paddington, his wife, Gertrude Geraldine, to whom he was married on August 20, 1904, being then alive. He pleaded "Not Guilty" to having during the months of January, February, March, and April committed an offence with Annie BAULCH at Glastonbury under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885.

It appeared from the statement of Mr. B.R. VACHELL, for the prosecution, that the prisoner at the time of the alleged offence was a married man living in London away from his wife. The girl came from Butleigh, Somerset, and in 1908 went as mother's help and waitress at the Phoenix Temperance Hotel, Paddington. Here she became acquainted with the prisoner, who proposed marriage to her, and she eventually consented. He said he wished the marriage to be a quiet one, and on September 2 they met at Victoria Station and went to a house at Neasden, which was fitted up as a registry office, where they went through a form of the marriage service. The wedding ring was placed on her finger and a register, which she was told was her marriage certificate, was signed.

The parties subsequently lived together. The marriage, however, proved to be a bogus one. In March the prosecutrix went on a visit to her grandmother at Shapwick, and when she returned the prisoner disappeared, leaving a message to the effect that he had gone to London and would meet her again at Bristol. In the meantime the prisoner had married Miss MAIDMENT, of Butleigh, who had followed him to London. The jury found the prisoner Guilty. He was sentenced to a month's hard labour for bigamy and 18 month's hard labour for the offence against Annie BAULCH, the sentences to run concurrently.