

'SWING RIOTS' - NEWICK IN 1830

In 1830 a labourer's revolt was spreading from Kent through the southern Counties. Agricultural labourers were suffering severely from low wages and became so desperate that they were setting fire to farmers hay ricks and barns, destroying new threshing machinery and threatening the land-owning gentry. The disturbances became known as the 'swing riots'. William Cobbett, national supporter of the agricultural labourers, had urged upon local farmers the necessity of cultivating good feeling with their workmen and that the interests of employees and employed should be seen as one and the same.

In Newick, upwards of 100 labourer's angrily visited the houses of the gentry, including a visit to the Slaters at Newick Park. When the mob walked back to the village the magistrate Mr Frankland at Newick Lodge, near the church, warned of the illegality of their proceedings, stating that negotiation could not take place under such intimidation. The newspaper extract below provided a detailed report:

the d in rent ing fore arm me, y to the als, rely and the lge was con- ctly .H. s of nen ling d a eer. and six	band of music, and dispersed without the occurrence of the least unpleasant circumstance. Newick, Nov. 24.—The peasantry of Newick, in imitation of the neighbouring parishes, assembled together at an early hour this morning, and proceeded, (upwards of one hundred in number) to the residences of most of the Farmers, demanding constant employment, with an advance of wages. They passed into their service every labourer they met with on their way, intending ultimately to assemble together on the Green, in front of the Public House; but from the very judicious and timely arrangements entered into by our worthy magistrate, F. W. Frankland, esq. to prevent the possibility of any infraction of the peace, they deemed it advisable to abandon that part of their intentions.—Arriving at Newick Park they were met by Mr. Smith (Mr. Slater's agent), who advised them to disperse in a peaceable manner, at the same time informing them he was about to make arrangements to ensure employment to all the labourers under Mr. Slater's tenantry, who might be out of work the ensuing winter, this praiseworthy conduct on the part of Mr. Smith was productive of the happiest effects; the mob soon began to disperse, but considerable numbers proceeded onwards to the village, where they were met by Mr. Frankland, supported by five or six special constables (up-	pre- to H. On large near Saxt with china obse farm On tract whet the l heard H. other Hall the E liam pipe all th will No ously any these pred ance
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of men their oting chor, I was lined were 7 6 5 6 6 4 2 2 38 r at ed by pent and isco- s to- ed in cogs, hour	wards of thirty having been previously sworn in, by Mr. Frankland, for the preservation of the peace and the protection of property), the worthy Magistrate remonstrated with them in the most decided and able manner, on the illegality of their proceedings, and requested to be informed of their intentions;—an increase of wages was stated to be their object—when they were immediately informed that no concession could be made to them under the influence of intimidation,—that congregating together in such numbers necessarily excited both terror and alarm in the minds of the timid;—and, under such circumstances, it was utterly impossible that any conference could be held with a body of men thus illegally assembled—at the same time he was willing to hear their complaints, if properly represented, and to afford them every assistance in his power to adjust any differences existing between them and their employers; and for that purpose he proposed that three of the most intelligent of their body should be deputed by themselves, to meet the resident gentry and farmers on a future occasion, when the result of their deliberations should be made known to them.—The men cheerfully acceded to this proposal, and each returned to his habitation in the most peaceful and quiet manner. The firmness, moderation, zeal and activity displayed by our respected Magistrate on this occasion, is beyond all praise, and deserving of the highest commendation. [We	were l ments. On were who l magis trial f At Lady died o On Purc cent, t Brigh On B.D., al Cur On Lodge Esq. l On Brook latterl At l aged Council
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Extract from the *Sussex Weekly Advertiser* newspaper 29th November 1830

Reverend Thomas Baden Powell then called the local farmers together and urged them to pay higher wages to the labourers, promising to take off 25% from their tithe payments if the farmers paid the higher wages. The local newspaper suggested that this example should be followed by all clergyman. So, agreement was delicately achieved on what the labourer's wages should be.

This is a fine illustration of Newick taking a realistic approach to a problem and by delicate negotiations ending up with mutual agreement.