Salop Assizes 1949

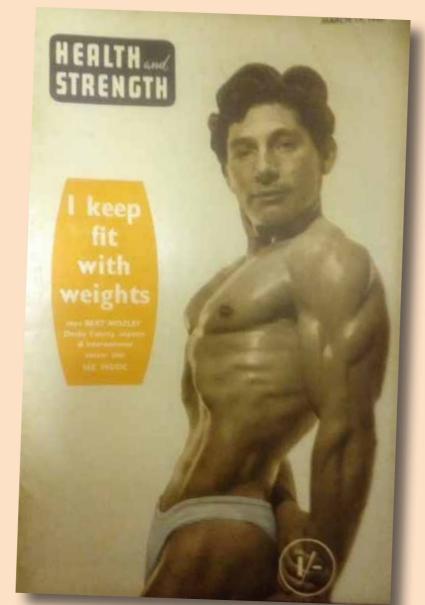
In the Spring of 1949, a Shrewsbury man, Geoffrey, sought assistance from the police, after his friend, Percy, was assaulted. What followed was not what they expected.

Their call for help led, instead, to the arrest of many gay men from the town; suspected of '*gross indecency*'. By mid-Summer, Geoffrey and another man, William, had been sent to prison; for terms of two years and 18 months.

Their offence was that they were homosexuals.

Full details were reported in the local paper, together with their addresses and work details; a clerk, a photographer, a railwayman, a nurse...

The Judge, Mr Justice Hilberry, at Salop Assizes, described Geoffrey as "a *real danger*" and noted he and William "had *discovered* others *addicted* to the same *practices* through a magazine '*Health and Strength*"



Along with thousands of men across the UK and the Commonwealth, Geoffrey & William's lives (and the lives of their friends and families) were wrecked.

The *real danger* was section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885: its gross indecency' provision not repealed until 2004.

Hill Tragedy Verdict MAN'S BODY FOUND ON CAER CARADOC

UALL	t.
Entry in Diary	Read at Inquest
"I should explain in this carbins young man kept a very fundary; much of it contains matter which is entirely private to his poetry which he wrote is by means without merit and obvious he had literary ibility, said Mr. A. Slater (Coroner for Ludlow a south Shropshire) held at Ludlow on Friday. He was recording a verdet Suicide of 23 year out Anthur Brookes, a native of Brishlying at 85. King Street, Shick bury, who was found dead at the of Caradoc Hill Church Stretton. Police Constable of Arking Street of the described how he went to the tothe Caradoc and found Brook were	Laboratory. Birmingham, said that the boy had died from what was popularly known as "a diabetic popularly known as "a diabetic coma," following upon an overdose of a morphine alkaloid in all probability apomorphine, plus phenobarottone and aspirins. The Coroner said that Brookes wrote in a diary. For the first time I took a significant amount of phoeby, and referred to death in its most conductive form. Albert Materies, a radio electrical material in the manufacture of certain medical in the m
bottles of insulin, and there was	rmic Claired Martin Brookes, of 43, It
needle. On the product at Both	at Savern way, bi shrewsbury nearly + to
the entrance of the had appare	ently year, and when he ast saw him on ca
been in the same	diabetes since he was 18 when he
Frederick Hector Bennett,	tound he was a sime the Navy. It !
Brewery Cottage, Chester	niday I turned his mis was con- 1 is
Shrewsbury, said on the Brobefore he disappeared Mr Bro	DOKES I down his missing and as it
asked if he would that he had some	work such he was inclined with A
to finish and could not come.	Int the obvious anderstand it is
DISCOVERY ON HILL	his level. The third work enichy to
temes Thomas of	- I happy Outside
Benyon Street, Shrewsbury, sa	aid at because of the lack of educational a because of the lack of educational a because of the lack of educational a lack of educat
Benyon Street, Shrewsbury, 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 7. he his sister were walking on Ca his sister were walking on Ca	aradoc outlet for Edwards McCorkell, a
Hill when they what he the t	police- I medical practitioner. I Danokes had !
man and apparently sleeping I	
three hours inter the same po	osition I He had just come ware gave him
	they i sumply of insum, the taking drugs, I
approached from behind very	ends of and he had certainly never prescribed
A great number of mormal	length any of the three drugs the
were scattered about helping	was a mentioned
little red diary lying behind They reported the matter	to the Police Inspector T. S. Cole said to the every possible enquiry had been made every possible enquiry had been to trace the source of the drugs, but to trace the source of they had been
police.	to trace the source of the had been

68 Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885.

11. Outrages on decency.] Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of or procures (a) or attempts (b) to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency (c) with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

In the May of 1949, Alan, age 22, an engineer, who lived at William's address, committed suicide on Caer Caradoc.

In 2012 the Government passed law which allows William & Geoffrey (if still alive) to apply for their records to be disregarded. 'Pardoning' has also been considered, if they are deceased.



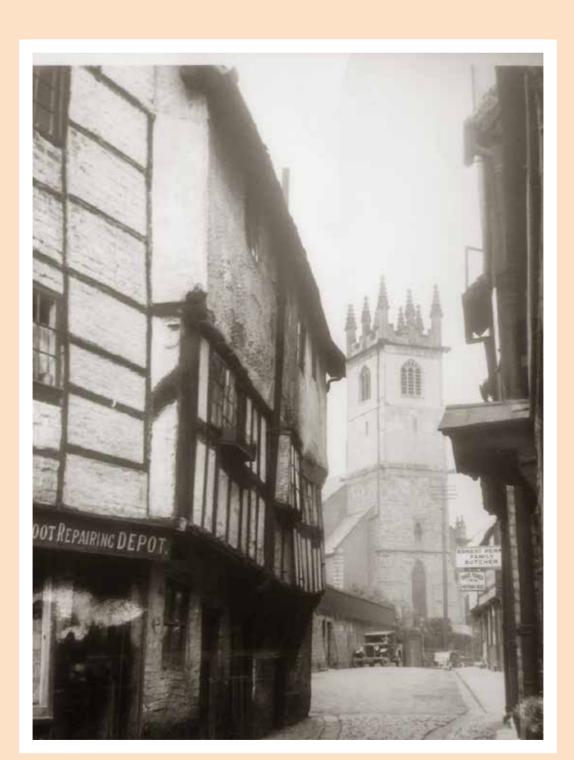
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012



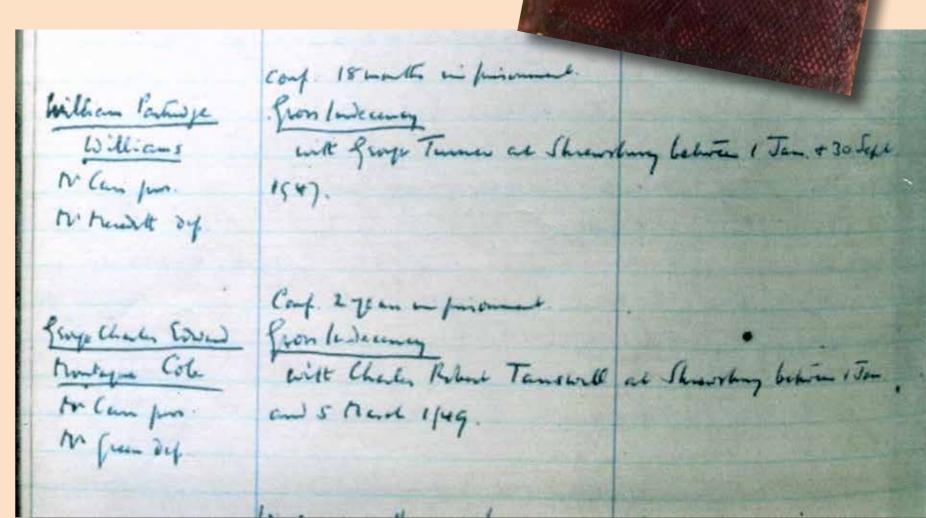
Salop Assize Court (at the Shirehall in the Square), Shrewsbury



The old Smithfield Market – a place where gay men met clandestinely



The 'Three Fishes Inn', Fish Street. Gay men met there – late 1940s



William & Geoffrey's names and sentences – recorded in the court's Minute Book





Percy by another man. The police interviewed them both separately, and Cole gave a statement in which he implicated Tanswell and a large number of other persons.

"You will see from Cole's statement he has been in touch with men all over the country. Aberdeen, Newcastle-on-Tyne and London," said Mr. Carr. "He refers to his boy-friend, and a boy named Geoff."

Apparently he used his photographer's trade to support him in these offences.

Det. Constable Rees said Williams came out of the R.A.F. with a very good character, and

Cole, continued Mr. Carr, was caugh, on March 5. He and a man

named Percy, came to the police station to complain of an assault on

Cole was wounded in the Sicilly campaign and discharged next year.

"This man is a real danger, isn't he?" asked the Judge, referring to Cole.—"He is." replied witness.

Mr. Meredith, for Williams, said he was corrupted by an elderly man when he was 10. He had become engaged to a young woman, from whom there was a letter, and it was hoped by a normal marriage he would be able to put an end to this trouble.

During the case, Mr. Justice Hilbery and both men seemed to have bery both men seemed to the

CROWN COURT
MINUTE BOOK

1944

Churchy behire 1 Jan + 30 left