



D'Angibau Willmot
SOLICITORS

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO:

IMMEDIATE

THE BOURNEMOUTH WHALE OF 1897

Roger Turner of local law firm D'Angibau Willmot has revealed that Scotland is not the only place to have exciting news about a lost whale. Boscombe had its own 70ft whale weighing an estimated 40 tons which beached itself just over 100 years ago in this area. The Bournemouth Guardian reported on 9 January that "On Tuesday night the carcass of a whole whale, some 70ft long, was washed ashore at Pokesdown. During the next two days it drifted with the tide westwards, and finally stranded close to Boscombe Pier".

Auction

The story became a long drawn out episode. The carcass of the whale was claimed by the Crown and was then auctioned by the Receiver of Wrecks being sold for £27.00 to a Dr Spencer Simpson. He was then prosecuted by the Town Clerk acting for the Sanitary Authority in the Bournemouth Police Court accused of causing a nuisance as he had not removed the carcass. The Doctor claimed that he was trying to obtain skilled knowledge of how to cut up the whale, sell the blubber estimated to be worth £200.00, and to preserve the skeleton.

Public Nuisance

Local solicitor Mr D'Angibau, a partner in the Boscombe law firm of D'Angibau & Malim which had been founded six years before (now known as D'Angibau Willmot), represented Dr Simpson in court. The story became more and more complex with description of knives allegedly being wielded and the police being involved keeping the crowds away who had come "from long distances by train and road". Dr Simpson was ordered to abate a public nuisance within forty-eight hours and was told that he would have to pay the police if he wanted to keep the crowds away.

Assault

Unfortunately, Dr Simpson failed to remove the rotting whale in time and when the Sanitary Inspector, Mr Cooper, went to inspect the carcass on the beach, there was a contretemps with Dr Simpson who, in the words of the newspaper report of 23 January 1897 "drew a swordstick, made a thrust and said he could run him through". A policeman who was present, thought that the Doctor was going to attack

15/16
JAW
1897

15 New Fields Business Park, Stinsford Road,
Nuffield, Poole, Dorset BH17 7NF
Telephone: (01202) 672598 Fax: (01202) 680598

2 Sea Road, Boscombe,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH5 1DA
Telephone: (01202) 393506 Fax: (01202) 394231

40A Haven Road, Canford Cliffs,
Poole, Dorset BH13 7LP
Telephone: (01202) 708634 Fax: (01202) 709989



D'Angibau Willmot
SOLICITORS

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO:

Mr Cooper and took the stick away.

Mr Cooper was in fact not particularly alarmed and had no intention to prosecute but was instructed to lay a complaint by the Sanitary Committee and there is a wonderful report in the Bournemouth Guardian of 30 January 1917 about the subsequent proceedings for assault in the Bournemouth Petty Sessions when Dr Simpson was represented by Mr Malim (the partner of Mr D'Angibau). Like all good lawyers in a hopeless case, Mr Malim introduced certain legal issues to try to obtain a technical acquittal but this was not successful and his client was found guilty being fined £1.00 with costs of 13 shillings.

Sale of Blubber

Having lost two cases in court, Dr Simpson then tried to auction the blubber hoping to receive up to £200.00 for some 35 tons of what was left of the carcass. By then the bones had been removed to Brighton, and he commissioned the firm of Burden & Co of Poole to take the blubber by ketch to a spot in the Wyche Channel "near Branksea Island". The report in the Bournemouth Directory of 6 February 1897 gives a superb detailed description of the antics arising at this sale. The end result however was that the only offer received was for 5 shillings from a local resident, Mr Hescroff.

Court Again!

Dr Simpson's legal battles did not end there for his next appearance was in Bournemouth County Court in April 1897 when he was sued by Burden & Co for the balance of the account for the hire of the ketch. For this case Dr Simpson represented himself: he did raise a defence but judgement was given against him.

The Skeleton on Display

In due course the skeleton was cleaned, assembled and then displayed for public scrutiny on Boscombe Pier. The Bournemouth Guardian of 20 August gives a photograph and a graphic display of the skeleton stating "It will without doubt be a source of great attraction both now and in times to come". We do not know how long it stayed there.

"An Extraordinary Lecture"

This was not the end of the story for Dr Simpson then tried to recoup his lost expenses and reputation by mounting a lantern lecture entitled "Wonders of the Deep" in May 1900 which involved an elaborate programme of slide shows, musical entertainment and talks. It all went disastrously wrong and the local

Poole
15 New Fields Business Park, Stinsford Road,
Nuffield, Poole, Dorset BH17 7NF
Telephone: (01202) 672598 Fax: (01202) 680598

Boscombe
2 Sea Road, Boscombe,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH5 1DA
Telephone: (01202) 393506 Fax: (01202) 394231

Canford Cliffs
40A Haven Road, Canford Cliffs,
Poole, Dorset BH13 7LP
Telephone: (01202) 708634 Fax: (01202) 709989



D'Angibau Willmot
SOLICITORS

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO:

papers were extremely critical of the event.

Roger Turner, a partner of the current firm of D'Angibau Willmot, comments "We were fascinated by this story involving the original founders of this firm and intrigued by the events which occurred in the local courts in what we thought was the respectable and sleepy Victorian town of Boscombe. It also shows how versatile a local solicitor has to be in representing clients!".

Roger added "We must convey our thanks to Bournemouth Library who researched this story after finding newspaper reports quite by chance some months ago well before the news of the Scottish whale "Moby". They put on an extremely interesting display of all the newspaper cuttings at Bournemouth Library".

Poole

15 New Fields Business Park, Stinsford Road,
Nuffield, Poole, Dorset BH17 7NF
Telephone: (01202) 672598 Fax: (01202) 680598

Boscombe

2 Sea Road, Boscombe,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH5 1DA
Telephone: (01202) 393506 Fax: (01202) 394231

Canford Cliffs

40A Haven Road, Canford Cliffs,
Poole, Dorset BH13 7LP
Telephone: (01202) 708634 Fax: (01202) 709989