



**Historical Association**  
**Gloucestershire Branch**  
with History at the University of Gloucestershire

# Rural Crime and Protest: Protest and Incendiarism in early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Gloucestershire

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**GAMEKEEPER SHOT.**—Very early in the morning of Friday se'nnight, as Joseph Watts, gamekeeper to D. J. Niblett, Esq. of Haresfield, near Gloucester, was going his rounds, he discovered several snares set, and in order to detect the poacher, concealed himself close to the spot.

**DESPERATE OUTRAGE.**— A few nights since, a gang of 16 ruffians, armed with guns, proceeded to the mansion of Henry Hicks, Esq. of Eastington, in this county, and after audaciously and loudly daring the inmates to offer any molestation to them, very coolly proceeded to shoot a considerable number of tame pheasants, which had been trained to frequent the immediate vicinity of the house.

On Monday night last, about half-past ten o'clock, a stable belonging to Mr. Hide, at a place called Banfurland, near the Golden Pheasant, on the Gloucester road, was maliciously set on fire, and totally consumed, together with a quantity of wood, fowls, and other property.

**FIRES AT HOWICK and ITTON**  
**ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY POUNDS REWARD.**  
**WHEREAS** in the Night of Saturday, the 7th of October, 1815, an OUTHOUSE at Howick Farm, belonging to WILLIAM CURRE, Esq. of Itton Court, near Chepstow, in which was a large THRASHING MACHINE, was discovered to be on FIRE, whereby the same, together with a quantity of Grain, and the Machine were totally destroyed, and a poor Man who slept in the building perished in the flames.

The stereotype of the lone poacher, forced into criminality through the desperation of poverty, taking food from the lands of an uncaring elite in order to support his family, has long been considered

synonymous with the concept of protest through crime. Arson has been described as the 'prime weapon of rural war [...] a hallmark of social protest'. Early nineteenth century Gloucestershire provides fascinating case studies of poaching and incendiarism. Tom will consider the extent to which both crimes should be considered a justifiable form of protest.

**Monday 12 May 2025, 7.30 pm**



**Francis Close Hall, University of Gloucestershire,**  
**St Paul's Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ and on Zoom**

see [www.haglos.co.uk](http://www.haglos.co.uk) to register, or use QR code

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