



# Crime and Punishment

## *Minety*

### **Court Case**

### **Grace Bridger**

“I married Bridger, lived with him, and had a child by him that is now six years old,” was the admission made by a young London woman to her second “husband”, when the latter accused her of being “Mrs Bridger.”

In the dock at Malmesbury Police Court yesterday stood Grace Bridger (aged 24), who surrendered to her bail on a charge of bigamy by going through the marriage ceremony with William Edward Stock at Minety Parish Church, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1924, her lawful husband, Richard Bridger, of 72 Nelson Roads, Twickenham, whom she married on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1917, at the Registry Office, Gunnersbury, being then alive.

Stock is an engine painter at Dursley, Glos. but at the time when he met the woman he was employed as a baker at Brinkworth, whilst his parents' home is at Woburn Farm, Minety, Wilts. He said that early in this year, he attended dances at the Swimming Baths, Swindon, and he there met accused. He knew her as Grace McGhee (her maiden name), and she posed as a single woman, but did not tell him her age. They kept company until July 1<sup>st</sup>, when they were married at Minety Parish Church.

While returning from a visit to the police he met accused, and she said to him, “What is the matter?” He replied, “I believe you are Mrs Bridger.” Accused denied this, and asked him to go with her to his home and she would explain matters, saying that she thought some mistake had been made. He did not accompany her, but left her and went to live at Minety. Accused went away, but returned, and he then told her he could not help her. It was a very wet and rough night, and as accused had nowhere to go, his parents accommodated her in their home, where she stayed until she was arrested.

Formally charged with the offence, accused, who had asked no questions, replied, “I would rather wait and say what I have to say at the Assize.

She was committed for trial at Devizes in January next. Bail was allowed – accused in her own recognisances in the sum of £40, and one surety for the same amount.

Western Daily Press 18 November 1924

## January Assize

Grace Bridger (24), alias Grace Veronica Stock, was indicted for bigamy.

Mr Chitty Thomas, prosecuting, stated that in March 1924, defendant met William Stock at a Swindon dance and told him she was single. They were married at Minety in July, but he discovered she had been previously married at Hounslow in 1917. She had been coerced by her husband into signing a document stating she was divorced from him.

A brother-in-law of defendant said her husband Bridger had been persistently cruel to her and having deserted her more than once was separated from her. Defendant said her husband drove her to commit the offence by his cruelty and desertion, and when she signed the document, she thought she was free. She kept one child, but he would not let her have the other.

The Judge imposed sentence of four months' imprisonment, on hearing which defendant collapsed.

Western Daily Press 20 January 1925