



Slate Club Embezzlement

The Melksham Bench were occupied for three hours in hearing a serious charge against James Rayner, formerly licensee of the Barge Inn, Seend, Melksham, and treasurer of a "slate" club, whose headquarters were the inn.

Mr Walter H Taylor, Bristol and Melksham, was for the prosecution, and Mr J Compton for the defence. Mr Taylor stated the club was formed in January 1920, and payments were made monthly, but when December came, after having paid during the year £17 17s 2d in sick pay and £3 11s 6d other expenses, instead of there being a balance of £80 4s 10d for division, there was only £9 7s 9d in the bank. Defendant admitted during examination that he had used the money to pay the brewers. He also admitted absconding the day before payment should have been made to the members. Defendant, who was arrested in London, was convicted for embezzling two specific amounts and sentences of three months for each offence, to run concurrently, were passed. The case created considerable interest, and the Town Hall was filled.

Western Daily Press Monday 19 September 1921