



THE LIFE, TRIAL, CHARACTER, AND EXECUTION OF
**THOMAS SAVAGE, WM. WITHERS, WM. TOWLE, JOHN
 AMOS, JOHN CROWDER, and JOSHUA MITCHEL,**

For breaking Machines at Loughborough, and

T. BABINGTON, for setting fire to two Stacks, at Brascot Lodge, near Newbold Verdon,

Who were executed on the New Drop, at Leicester, this Day (Thursday the 17th of April, 1817).

THE above unfortunate men were charged at the last Assizes, held at Leicester, on Wednesday, March 26, with having, on the 28th of June last, unlawfully and maliciously shot at John Asher, and with breaking 54 twist-lace machines.

The public has it fresh in memory, that James Towle suffered as one of the above party at the last summer assizes; since that time the above unfortunate men have been impeached upon the evidence of John Blackburn and Wm. Burton, who were accomplices, and others.

Blackburn deposed that he lived at Lambley, near Nottingham, and had been along with most of the prisoners at the Radford job, which had taken place about 3 weeks before the Loughborough one, that after Radford job he met Withers and two others, who told him that they would be wanted for another job at Loughboro'. Withers told him he had 18l. down to buy tools and pistols, for the purpose of attacking Heathcoat and Boden's factory, at Loughboro', 40l. more was to be paid as soon as the job was done, and 6l. more was to be distributed to the men engaged in the job. Blackburn had met most of the Old Luds (meaning them that had been out before), who told him the job would be on Friday next, the 28th of June, 1816; the number that engaged to go had set off different times and ways from Lambley, for Loughboro', were seventeen, and some of them reached there on Wednesday evening, and some on Thursday. Dakin, big Sam, and little Sam, Savage, and Disney, alias Sheepshead Jack, was at several public-houses in Loughboro' the day before, and the day which the job happened at night, particularly the Green Man, White Lion, Seven Stars, &c. The hatchets which were previously stolen wanted handles, they were left at Hanford's, a wheelwright, at Hathern, to be done, they were brought and laid in a dry ditch in a lane leading to the factory after dark. Savage bought of Mrs. Tyler a quart of rum. Savage then drank a glass of ale as a signal to assemble and get ready. This was on Friday night about eleven o'clock, or half-past eleven the whole assembled. Blackburn saw Bill Towle, Bill Burton, James Watson, Big Sam, Little Sam, Aaron Dakin, alias Hudson, Sheepshead Jack, C. Blackburn, Savage, Amos, Old Crowder, Jos. Mitchell, Jack Hill, Slater, and Withers, James Towle came soon after. Savage handed the quart of rum, they each drank, Blackburn, who turned evidence, had a pistol given him—they began to disguise themselves—they all saw the factory at this time; Slater, Bill Towle, and Burton, carried the hatchets; a little hesitation took place which way to attack, Blackburn, the evidence, led the way, the cry was "Brush on, my lads;" they put their pistols to a man going into the factory, and swore they would shoot him if he made the least alarm. The man knocked at the door of the factory, which flew open; a dog began to bark, Bill Towle chopped at it, but missed; James Towle then shot it, it barked no more.—We met three men in the casting-shop, who were ordered to lie down. They would not, but aimed a pistol at my brother, Chris. Blackburn. I fired at the man, he dropped. Slater, Little Sam, Towle, and others were breaking the frames: they called for more hands. In the course of 40 minutes the job was completed. Savage stopped in Malt-mill lane upon guard of a woman. During the machine-breaking, Asher requested his guard that he might go out and get some assistance to his wound. No answer was given; but another person stepped up, and asked Asher how he did. Asher begged he might have assistance; he told him the job was nearly done, and shook hands with him. As soon as they had finished, the high number of ninety were called over, in order that their small number might not be ascertained. They fired their pistols also, as they usually did at a triumph. Slater struck a desk in the factory with a hatchet, it flew open, and Big Sam took away two pistols which were in it, with a gun and bayonet. They then took the road to Garrendon Park; they all went together as far as the Trent (except Disney, who went home to Sheepshead). They took Aaron's ferry; the boat was on their side, and eleven or twelve got in first, and were taken over: four more came over in the boat afterwards. Most of them had pistols. The firelock was thrown into the cut, as also one

hatchet; the other hatchets were thrown into the Trent. Savage paid the charge of the ferry. When they got across the Trent they undisguised themselves, and then separated. Witness, Big Sam, Little Sam, and Dakin went to Beeston. Savage gave the witness (Blackburn) two £1 notes to be divided between himself, Little Sam, Big Sam, and Dakin.

Wm. Burton, another accomplice admitted evidence, deposed that Wm. Towle, himself, C. Blackburn, and Watson met at the Bell in Hoton, pretending not to know one another: they took refreshment there, and Towle sung a song, the chorus of which was,—“Damn such laws, and so say I.”—This was on Thursday evening. After some hours, they proceeded to Loughboro', and sang the same song at the Seven Stars. All the other part of his evidence was similar to that of Blackburn.

There were many other witnesses against them, and near thirty who gave them excellent characters. They all died truly penitent.

T. Savage, aged 32, has left a wife and six children;—J. Amos, 30, a wife and five children;—J. Mitchel, 29, unmarried; these are natives of Nottingham. W. Towle, 22, a wife and one child, a native of New Basford;—W. Withers, 33, a wife and one child, a native of New Radford;—J. Crowder, 40, a wife and five children, a native of Leicester.

The following is a copy of a Letter from Savage to his Father:—
 Leicester County Gaol, April 7th, 1817.

“Dear Honoured Father,

“I have just had my son with me, who has informed me of a circumstance which has hurt my mind, to think that I should be thought guilty of such a crime.—[It was supposed Savage paid the money to the men who shot Mr. Trentham.]—Mitchel I may call a stranger to me, as I did not know him at the time Mr. Trentham was shot; and I declare, as a dying man, that I do not know who shot him, nor ever did. I am as innocent of the crime as a child unborn; and this I solemnly declare, that I never imbrued my hands in the blood of my fellow-creature, nor ever thought of committing such an act. I never was a procurator to the Luddites in my life, and if I am so judged, I am judged wrongfully. The men who were along with me I had no acquaintance with at all. I acknowledge being at Loughborough, and had the truth been spoken, it would not have appeared so bad against me.

“I remain, your affectionate Son,

“Condemned Cell.”

“THOMAS SAVAGE.

THOMAS BABINGTON, aged 31, was charged upon an indictment at the last Leicester Assizes, which commenced March 26th, 1817, charging him with setting fire to a stack of Oats and some Clover, the property of John Moore, of Brascot Lodge, near Newbold Verdon, farmer, to which the prisoner pleaded not guilty. The indictment being read, Counsellor Denman called Mary Toone, who lived servant with John Moore, when going to bed between 11 and 12 o'clock on the night the fire happened, saw a light in the stack-yard, she gave immediately the alarm.

Joseph Williams, a servant to Moore, was called up by Mary Toone, between 11 and 12 o'clock on the night in question, and found the oat and clover stacks on fire.

John Moore deposed he found a bag in the yard which seemed to be burnt, and some matches in it, which corresponded with a pinnafore and dish-cloth found in the search of prisoner's house; this Thos. Gilbert, the constable, who went with witness to search the house, confirmed.—Several other witnesses appeared against him.

Babington is a Warwicksh. man, but gained his settlement at Newbold Verdon, Leicestershire, by servitude; he married in the above parish, and leaves a wife and four children to lament his ignominious death. He persisted in his innocence, and begs his persecutor, and the evidences that appeared against him, to read the 35th and 69th chapters in the Book of Psalms, as a caution to all false swearers; he leaves their consciences in this world but a little longer, in hope they will be prepared to meet their fate and forgiveness in another. This is from his own mouth, and desired to be published.

The execution took place about twelve o'clock, and after some time being spent in prayer, they were launched into eternity, amidst an immense concourse of spectators, almost unprecedented.