

**Transcription of an undated Petition Letter to The Right Hon. Sir George Grey, Principle Secretary of State for the Home Department (main body of the letter only) – Petition No. 2**

NB: Whilst undated, it is felt that this petition letter, written by the Rev. John Hides (the parish vicar) and signed by a further 41 parishioners would have been issued circa September 1849.

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The humble petition of the undersigned Freeholders, Farmers, Tradesmen and Householdors of the Parish of Greasley in the County of Nottingham, and of the vicinity of the said parish in the Counties of Nottingham and Derby.

Most Respectfully Sheweth

That Samuel Wilcockson late of the Hamlet of Newthorpe in the parish of Greasley in the County of Nottingham was convicted at the last Midsummer Assizes held for the county of Nottingham of having set fire to the Dwelling House of Samuel Brown of the said hamlet with intent to injure Gervas Clifton of Moor Green in the said County (the owner of the house) and was sentenced by the Court to be transported for the term of Fifteen Years.

That your petitioners humble represent that up to the period of his committing the said offence Samuel Wilcockson bore a most excellent character for urbanity and kindness of disposition being always willing to assist any person in misfortune or in case of need either with his personal services or his interest of even with money beyond what prudence would dictate when his income as a small Farmer were taken into consideration.

That though your Petitioners conceive that nothing can justify the offence of setting fire to a dwelling house yet in the case of Samuel Wilcockson there are some palliative circumstances arising from the inevitable state of his mind in being deprived of his home, his farm and the means of livelihood which had existed in his ancestors for a long period by what he conceived an underhand purchase and that attended with aggravating circumstances on the part of the purchaser in not paying him for the fixtures his property which he seized when he took possession and refused to make him any allowance and even went so far as to distrain upon the effects of Samuel Wilcockson to enforce a payment that had been withheld by him on the account of the prosecutor Clifton what he conceived were his just demand for property standing in the premises.

That your Petitioners further represent that at the time the offence was committed Samuel Wilcockson was inebriated and was also in a state of great excitement having been seeking his son all day and part of the night who had absconded from his home, and that injury done to the

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house did not exceed the Damage of a few pence –

Your Petitioners therefore humbly Pray that your Honour on account of the former good conduct generosity and kind behaviour of Samuel Wilcockson to your Petitioners and all his neighbours and in consideration that the present is his first offence that you will be pleased to recommend to Her Majesty in Her Gracious clemency to mitigate his sentence to imprisonment as your Petitioners have the upmost confidence that he will never be found again offending against the laws of his country –

And your petitioners will Ever Pray –

John Hides Vicar

NB: A further 24 signatories are shown on the page.

### **Page 3**

NB: A further 17 signatories are shown on the page (making a total of 42 signatures on this petition).

#### **Additional notes re this letter**

The letter makes reference to Samuel's son, whom he had been seeking "all day and part of the night who had absconded from his home". This fact is referred to in the newspaper article (Nottingham Review, printed 27/07/1849) which reports Samuel as stating ""has thou seen our Harry" when confronted by Oliver Leaver (the main witness on the night of the fire). Could this have been the son who had absconded?

Oliver also comments that Samuel had asked him to stop whilst he went to Hannah Harwood's to see if his son, Sam was in bed.

The family tree suggests a son by the name of Henry (could this be the "Harry" within the article?) born circa 1824, so would have been approx. 25 years old, and a son by the name of Samuel, born circa 1828, so approx. 21 years old.