

**THE NIGHT OF THE ZEPPELIN RAID.**

**MYSTERIOUS FLASHES AT SELSEY.**

**LONDON BANK MANAGER DENIES  
 SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS.**

**REMARKABLE CASE INVESTIGATED AT  
 CHICHESTER.**

A Selsey lighting case of exceptional interest engaged the attention of the magistrates for several hours at the Chichester County Petty Sessions on Saturday. It was heard in the second court before Mr. W. H. B. Fletcher (in the chair), Colonel H. D. Fryer, and Admiral Holland.

The defendant was a London bank manager, residing at Burwood Place, Hyde Park, and Sandy Hill, Selsey, who was summoned for not reducing or shading an inside light, or so screening the windows, as required, at Selsey, on September 25th. He pleaded not guilty, and was defended by Mr. F. B. Tompkins.

At the outset a note was taken of an objection by Mr. Tompkins as to the wording of the summons.

Mrs. Allan Wilkins, who said her name was Iné de la Garde, of Westcliffe, Seal Road, Selsey, was the first witness. She said she had been summoned as a witness, and she produced a model of defendant's house, which was placed on the table in front of the magistrates. On Monday, September 25th, at 11 p.m., she was outside defendant's house in a field when she saw a light coming from the north side. The light opened very slowly and then came out extraordinarily brilliant. There were three slow flashes, and then three quick flashes from the top west window. This occurred on the night of a Zeppelin raid, and she reported the matter to the War Signal Station.

**WATCHING THE WHOLE EVENING.**

Replying to Inspector Brett she said she made the complaint before she knew anything about the Zeppelins.

By Mr. Tompkins: She had been watching defendant's house the whole evening.

Mr. Tompkins: Have you been accusing Mr. Cross of signalling to the Germans? Have you accused him of signalling to the Zeppelins? —In my opinion it was a signal.

You say you have seen these lights. I put it to you they were imaginary, or that you are mistaken? —Certainly not.

Do you know Mr. Heron Allen? —Yes.

Do you know that he thought he saw lights from the south side, and then found he was mistaken? —I don't know that.

The witness also said that she waited there until half-past two, when P.C. Hampshire came, and then she saw Mr. and Mrs. Cross. A Sea Scout fetched the policeman.

Were these flashes anything more than would be made by a person passing the window with a candle? —Yes, very much more.

Mrs. Olive Chaplin, wife of Captain Alfred Chaplin, of Westcliffe, Selsey, said she came down from London on this Monday and she was with the last witness in the field round about 11 p.m. She saw the flashes in the north window, and the light was as strong as the head light of a motor car.

**AMAZINGLY BRIGHT.**

Mrs. Ethel Benjamin, wife of Mr. Alfred Benjamin, of Rest Cottage, Selsey, a stock-broker, spoke to watching defendant's house from Westcliffe from about twenty minutes to ten until after eleven. During that time she saw the light appear about four times. At first it was feint, and then amazingly bright. She watched from a room which was in darkness, and part of the time the other two ladies were with her.

By Mr. Tompkins: She thought the lights were for a signal to the Zeppelins.

Miss Rose Wells, of Rest Cottage, also deposed to seeing the lights.

P.C. Hampshire said at 2.30 a.m. on September 26th he went to Sandy Bill in consequence of a complaint. He saw Mr. Cross, who said he was responsible for the lights. The window referred to by the other witnesses had no blind at all. It was the window of a landing on the staircase, and the glass was blurred. There was no source of light near, except a candle which Mr. Cross had. Mr. Cross produced a torch, which he said was the only one in the house with the exception of a broken one.

Mr. Tompkins: Who did you have with you? —I had two soldiers outside, and I had two of the witnesses with me, Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Chaplin.

Defendant asked him to look over the house and search it, which he did, and found nothing. He had been stationed at Selsey since June 6th, and had noticed nothing at this window before, although a previous tenant of the house was summoned for a light there.

This concluded the case for the prosecution.

**"THESE VILE SLANDERS."**

In his address for the defence Mr. Tompkins said a most serious charge had been brought against his client, who was not altogether sorry to have the opportunity of contradicting it, especially in a place like Selsey. It was an abominable accusation to make against Mr. Cross, who was an Englishman and had been manager for twenty-seven years of the Farringdon Street branch of the London and Provincial Bank. He was educated at Charterhouse, and his father was also a bank manager for many years before becoming a director. There were no suspicions that the defendant would act otherwise than as an Englishman should, and the mere fact that these vile slanders had been brought against him had annoyed him extremely. He asked the sympathy of the

Bench with him in the matter. He and his wife would tell them what happened all through this particular evening from the time they came home at 8 p.m. until they went to bed, and he was sure they would satisfy them that these witnesses had been mistaken.

#### OBLIVIOUS OF THE AIR RAID.

The defendant then gave evidence, and said he took the house at Selsey from Captain Hare. All the windows were obscured with the exception of the one in question, which was of Murinese glass. This was inclined to intensify the light, but one could not see through it. He proceeded to describe the movements of himself and his wife in the house throughout the evening. His wife used a candle and they also had a small shilling electric torch belonging to his boy for going about the house and up and down stairs. They went to bed just before eleven, and he went to sleep at once. He was awakened at 2.30 by the police constable. He did not know there had been an air raid. One of the women accused him of using a revolving light and signalling. He said he was amazed and absolutely knew nothing about it. He told them to make a search of everything and everyone in the house. The constable went in and searched the house. On the following night Inspector Brett came to the house, and they rehearsed what they had done the previous evening. From outside there was certainly a glow, but it was a matter of opinion whether it was a subdued light. If it had been facing the sea he should have said there ought to be a curtain over the window. In his London house at the bank he had forty-nine windows, and the police had never asked him to screen the windows more than they were. During part of the evening, while he and Mrs. Cross were out, there were two maids and three children left in the house.

Mrs. Cross also gave evidence.

In announcing the decision of the magistrates, the Chairman said the Bench were of the opinion that there was not the slightest suggestion of signalling, the light being caused by a candle passing in front of the window, which was not obscured, and for this defendant would be fined £1.