

Public hangings were still taking place in the 1840s and the *Ipswich Journal* reported in 1844 that a 'new drop' was in course of preparation in front of Ipswich Gaol. Fanny was aged around 16 in 1845 when William Howell was hanged for the murder of James MacFadden, a constable with the East Suffolk Police. Almost certainly this was the hanging she observed along with between 10,000 and 12,000 others, according to the newspaper. The story of Howell's execution, the evidence against him and his conviction were covered on three columns in the *Ipswich Journal* of 1st February 1845.

William Howell lived at Hulver and, with his brother, Walter, and Isaac Shipley were known to MacFadden as thieves and he obtained knowledge of a planned

theft from the barn of Mrs Button of Kessingland. The constable hid in her garden and when he challenged the three William Howell took a gun from one of his companions and shot the constable, who lay dying for two days. During that time he was able to identify William to two police inspectors and key evidence was that his assailant was wearing a velveteen frock (coat) and a policeman's old hat, both of which were found in Howell's house after the murder.

Although Howell's wife claimed he was in bed with her on the night of the murder there was no denying the evidence and, although Walter and Isaac did not hang and were transported for life, William had to pay the ultimate penalty.

Lost at sea

(to be read in conjunction with Notes and Queries in Issue 25)

Between 1589 and 1591 Thomas Agas, rector of Orford, recorded 20 deaths in the parish burial register of men who died at sea and were therefore

not buried in the graveyard. Until 1615 I could find only one other similar case and that was in 1603 by which time Agas was dead. Of the 20, eight were lost in the North Sea, some specifically *en route* to Scarborough.



Elizabethan shipping near Orford Quay taken from Norden's survey.