



# *Crime News*

## *Bishopstone*

### *1866*

**Swindon Police Court – Thursday September 13 1866**  
Magistrate present D. Archer, Esq.

#### **Extraordinary charge of Robbery from Bishopstone.**

**Hannah Hewlett**, a married woman, and Martha Hewlett, her daughter, a girl about ten years of age, were charged with stealing a half sovereign, the property of **Thomas Haynes**. From the evidence in this case it would appear that the inhabitants of Bishopstone are in the habit of turning out in families and enjoying themselves on the Saturday evening at the village public house.

On Saturday last, about half past ten o'clock, Hannah Hewlett, her husband, and the child prisoner, were sitting in the True Heart tap room, in company with several other persons – men and women and children – enjoying (!) themselves, when one Thomas Haynes, another inhabitant of the village, entered the tap room, having at that time about him, remaining out of the 12s. he had just previously received as his weeks wages, a sixpence and a half sovereign. From the evidence of some of the witnesses it appeared that this Mr. Haynes was in such high spirits when he entered the room that he at once made an open challenge to dance any one for a shilling, or to fight then for a shillings, just as their humour ran, and subsequently to this he offered to toss for half a gallon of gin hot. Being so flush of money he first of all treated himself to a glass of brandy and water, paying for the same with the sixpence. He then appears to have had a toss with a man, using for that purpose the half sovereign. I course of this toss the half sovereign got lost by falling on the floor of the room but was afterwards found, and returned to him. Haynes then called for a pot of beer and porter, and producing the half sovereign to pay for it, it again fell upon the floor. The girl, Martha Hewlett, with several other persons, at once commenced a search for this half sovereign, and according to the evidence of two witnesses the girl picked up the money and placed it on her mother's lap. Her mother, the elder prisoner, then took the money from her lap where it had been placed by her daughter, and put it in her pocket, and directly afterwards left the room. According, however, to other evidence, it was impossible that the girl could have picked up the money as alleged, and it was also stated that both the girl and her mother offered to be searched before they left the room, and further that they did not leave the room until pushed out by the landlady.

Later in the evening Haynes went to Hewlett's house, and demanded the half sovereign, but got a crack across his head with a broom stick instead. Both the woman and the daughter denied having the money. Mr Archer, however, thought it a case to decide by a jury, and accordingly committed them to take their trial at the next Quarter Sessions but consented to it put them on bail.

**Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 17 September 1866**

**Swindon Police Court – Thursday September 20 1866**  
Magistrates present : A. L. Goddard M.P., and Major Prower

**Jessy Hewlett** , of Bishopstone, was charged by **Thomas Haynes**, of the same place, with having assaulted him at Bishopstone, on the 8th instant. The particulars of this case appeared last week in charge preferred by Haynes against Hewlett's wife and daughter with stealing a half sovereign under somewhat peculiar circumstances, at the True Hart Inn, Bishopstone. It then appeared that Haynes flush with his week's wages, (12s.) went to the village public house and there treated himself to brandy and water and beer and porter, and whilst there let a half sovereign fall on to the floor, and, suspecting Hewlett's wife to have the money, he, Haynes, went to Hewlett's cottage and demanded the money, but, instead of getting it got a crack across the head with a broom handle. This was the assault he complained of. Hewlett did not deny striking Haynes with a broom handle, but pleaded that he had been previously struck by complainant. This statement being in a measure corroborated by the police constable stationed in the village, the Bench inflicted a fine of 1s. only with 8s. costs.

**Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 24 September 1866**

**Wiltshire Quarter Sessions - Wednesday**

Stealing half a sovereign

**Martha Hewlett**, aged 42, wife of Jesse Hewlett, and **Hannah Hewlett**, daughter of the above, aged 12, were indicted for having, at Bishopstone, on the 8th of September last, feloniously stolen half a sovereign, belonging to **Thomas Haines**. Mr. Ravenhill appeared for the prosecution; the prisoners were not defended by counsel.

The prosecutor, it appeared, was drinking on the night in question at the True Heart public house, Bishopstone, when he dropped half a sovereign on the floor, and it was alleged the younger prisoner secretly picked it up and passed it to her mother, both of them afterwards denying that they had seen it. A number of witnesses were called, who deposed that they had seen the girl pick up the coin and give it to her mother. These witnesses were all questioned as to their state of insobriety or otherwise, and the Chairman asked one of them if he had had as much as was good for him ? The witness replied that he had had none; for he called for a pint of porter, and the others had drunk it. The chairman told the witness that if he had had none he had had as much as was good for him, to which **Lane** indignantly replied that he had not had enough to do him good (laughter).

The prisoners both denied having the coin; but they were found guilty, and the girl, a child of somewhat weak intellect, was sent to the county gaol with the view of her being sent thence to a reformatory for five years. The mother was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal, 20 October 1866**

**Swindon Police Court - Thursday November 22**

**Jesse Hewlett**, labourer, of Bishopstone, was summoned by Mr. Supt. Haynes, by order of the Secretary of State, to show cause why he should not contribute towards the support of his daughter, who is an inmate of Limply Stoke Reformatory School. It will be remembered that at the last Wilts Quarter Sessions the defendant's daughter was committed to the above reformatory for five years, and his wife to six months imprisonment, for stealing a half sovereign at a public house at Bishopstone, and the present application was made to obtain an order to compel him to contribute towards his daughter's maintenance for that term.

Defendant said he was unable to pay much as he could not work full time in consequence of his eye sight being very bad. He had worked for Mr. Dore for some years, but during the summer and hot weather his eyes were so bad that he could not see at all. He had a family of six children, only one of whom was able to work.

Ordered to pay 9d. per week, the Bench remarking that unless he kept his payments up regular he would be committed to prison.

**Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 26 November 1866**