



Crime News

Bishopstone 1855

SWINDON PETTY SESSIONS, 18th January

Present: The Rev. T. H. Ripley, and David Archer and W. H. Hitchcock, esqrs.

Detection of Sheep Stealers

Elijah Holdway, Ermice Boucher, and Frances Stone, all of Bishopstone; were charged with stealing a lamb, the property of Mrs. Ann Hedges of Ashbury, Berks. The police had occasion to search the premises of Elijah Holdway for stolen fowls: and from suspicious circumstances, and information which they received, they apprehended the prisoners, and also Henry Draper Pearce, a young man of very respectable connections, on suspicion of stealing the lamb. The prisoner Pearce made a full confession, and he was admitted as a witness. The following is his statement

“On the Saturday before last Christmas Day, I and Holdway were together at the True Heart public house, Bishopstone. In the evening, somewhere about ten o'clock, Holdway asked me to go with him; he didn't say where, or for what purpose. We went to Holdway's house, and started from there on foot towards Ashbury. We went across the fields, and went to a sheep-fold: the sheep were rather disturbed by our getting through a hedge. We waited a while and listened. He went into the fold, and left me to guard the hurdle. I laid hold of one by the back, and Holdway took it from me. He and I carried it to his house alive. We got back between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning. We took the sheep into a room, and Holdway cut its throat, and the blood was caught in a bucket. I had part of the meat, and I went afterwards to Holdway's and supped on some of the meat.

Other evidence having been given, the prisoners were committed for trial at the next Wilts Assizes. It is fortunate for the neighbourhood of Bishopstone that the gang has been broken up.

Elijah Holdway and Frances Stone, two of the above named prisoners, and Henry Draper Pearce, were also committed for trial at the Assizes, for having stolen some fowls, the property of **Mary Taylor** at Bishopstone. The same prisoners were also committed for having stolen some fowls, the property of Mr. **John Smith** of Bishopstone.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 25 January 1855

WILTS ASSIZES – CROWN COURT

At the Assizes recently held, out of the number of prisoners committed from this division:-
Elijah Holdway, for sheep stealing at Bishopstone, to four years penal servitude.
Henry Draper Pearce and Frances Stone, three months hard labour.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 15 March 1855