



Not Giving Poor Relief

On Wednesday last at the Petty Sessions held at Chippenham, William Gingel, Overseer of the Poor in the parish of Bremhill, paid a fine of forty shillings and costs, under the New Act, for disobedience to an order of the Magistrate, for the relief of a poor woman of that parish. This is probably the first conviction under the New Act of Parliament for this offence.

Hampshire Chronicle Monday 7 February 1820

The following account of a decision at the Warminster sessions has been received from a correspondent:-

“At these sessions one case of considerable parochial importance was determined. Our readers may remember that we gave an account of the conviction of William Gingel, one of the overseers of Bremhill, who, at the Petty Sessions held in Chippenham, was fined 40s and costs for peremptorily refusing to obey an order of magistrate to relieve a poor woman. When the overseers gave in their annual account of expenditure at Easter, after the vestry held in the church, many of the farmers assembled at the public house, and after dinner (which was at the parish expence) it was agreed, in defiance of every principle of justice and equity, that this fine should be paid out of the **parish rates!** The appeal was nominally that of John Dark; but in fact, it was that of the Rev W L Bowles, the magistrate, for disobedience of whose order the fine was imposed, and who was precluded from appealing himself.

The particular circumstances which caused the order for relief were not entered into; but the fact of justice having been so disgracefully attempted to be defeated being clearly proved, the defendant, Gingel, was ordered to pay back the money, and to pay moreover, with the other overseers, the costs of all proceedings.

Thus probably the expence of nearly seventy or eighty pounds will be incurred, from the obstinacy of one man refusing to pay sixpence a week additional (two and sixpence a week in the whole) for one month, in the severest cold weather of January last, to an old woman of nearly seventy years of age, attending on her husband upwards of eighty!

Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 17 July 1820