



Night Poachers 1851

Wiltshire Assizes.

Robert Scaplehorn, a decent looking workman, was charged with maliciously shooting at James Wright, a gamekeeper to the Marquis of Lansdowne,

Wright deposed that on the night of the 9th December last, he went to Bremhill Grove Wood and saw the prisoner and three others come out armed from the wood. Witness seized Scaplehorn, and, after a struggle, the prisoner discharged the gun at him, and the smoke blackened his face. A policeman was with witness, and heard the party call out to shoot him.

Other witnesses deposed that immediately before the gun was discharged they heard the poachers call out to shoot the keeper. Three guns were found in the wood, one of them loaded with powder and shot. A pheasant was found on the prisoner when he was secured. The prisoner, in his defence, said the keeper struck him first, and that, while they were fighting, the gun went off accidentally.

The jury found the prisoner guilty of common assault. Sentence was deferred, as the prisoner was included in an indictment with two others for night poaching.

Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette Thursday 13 March 1851

Robert Scaplehorn, together with John Smith and George Turner, was then placed at the bar charged with being armed about the hour of one in the morning, and unlawfully entering certain enclosed lands in the occupation of the Marquis of Lansdowne to destroy game at Bremhill. Scaplehorn pleaded guilty; the other two pleaded not guilty. The evidence clearly proved the parties to have been guilty of the offence, and the jury accordingly returned a verdict of guilty. - Sentence deferred.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal Saturday 15 March 1851

From the Criminal Registers: 8th May 1851.

Robert Scaplehorn for Night Poaching and Assault – 2 convictions - 1 Day and 6 Months to commencement.

John Smith for Night Poaching – 6 Months

George turner for Night Poaching – 6 Months