



Typical Victorian market layout

Rival Greengrocers

Chippenham – Police Court, Tuesday July 20th, at the Magistrates' Clerk Office, (before Rev. B. Winthrop, and J. C. Dowding, esq., mayor).

Rival Greengrocers

George Townsend of Studley, a hawker of vegetables, was summoned by Charles Matthews of Chippenham, greengrocer, for an assault and making use of improper language on Saturday the 10th inst.

The complainant having been sworn, said, " I am a greengrocer keeping a shop near the Rose and Crown Inn, Chippenham. On the Saturday evening the 10th inst., Townsend applied to me for the loan of a measure. I lent it to him, and he returned it in about half-an-hour, when he began chaffing me, and afterwards said, (at the same time making use of a very bad expression) "didn't you murder your first wife? And ain't you trying to murder your present one?" He said I was a thief, and he had known me to be a robber for the last 15 years. He was not drunk at the time: this was between 7 and 8 o'clock. Shortly before 10 o'clock he returned, and after some few observations, which were not so offensive as on the first occasion, he caught hold of me by the arm and turned me round. I did not strike him. On the Monday and Tuesday following he came to the front of my house and again began abusing me, which was an interruption to me in my business. Apprehending that he will do me some injury, I apply that he may be bound over to keep the peace.

In reply to defendant, complainant said he had known him for the past 15 years, and had, until the 10th inst., been on good terms. The defendant here handed to the Magistrates a printed bill, which he said complainant had given him, and which was the sole cause of the disturbance. The bill ran thus: - "Notice to the public: a vast number of noodles inform the inhabitants of Chippenham and neighbourhood that the superior garden produce I sell is inferior to their trash. They feel annoyed because I do a dozen times the amount of business that they do. I pay ready money for all that I buy. I buy in the cheapest market, and am determined that the public shall reap the benefit of my 17 years' experience in the trade, and I can sell 10 per cent lower than any hawker. An early visit or an order sent to Charles Matthews, Market Place, will meet with immediate attention."

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Defendant enquired of complainant whom he meant to insinuate were "Noodles," as he had been told that the appellation was something worse than a fool. Complainant said he should term any one a noodle that would call the attention of the public to some cherries on his stall in the market and ask if they were fit to be sold, and then invite them to his cart to buy some as was good.

P.S. Luffman said he was on duty in the Market Place on the evening in question. A crowd of persons around Matthews' stall attracted his attention, and he saw defendant take hold of complainant and turn him round.

On hearing this, the magistrates had the room cleared for a short time, and after which the Rev. B. Winthrop, addressing defendant, said they had given the case their best attention, and they considered the assault clearly proved, and that there was no justification for it, notwithstanding defendant attributed it to the bill he had read, and which he (Mr. Winthrop) considered a very foolish production. Then addressing complainant, he said, I would advise you not too make use of that vain talent of yours in issuing any more of those miserable bills: in doing so you really make yourself a greater "noodle" than others.

The defendant was bound over in his own recognizance of £5 to keep the peace for 3 months, and to pay the costs, 9s.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, Thursday, 22 July 1869