



Greedy Beggars

Two fellows who were on Monday relieved by the Mendicity Society in this town, stole, on the following morning, a wallet with four loaves of bread from a little boy on the Bath Road. They were apprehended and placed in the blind house; and feeling cold during the night, they set a fire with a lucifer match, to some straw in a part of the cell where there had formerly been a chimney, but which was stop'd up, and consequently there was no vent. A considerable smoke was by accident seen to issue from the crevices of the door, and persons went and put the fire out; or the fellows lives might have been endangered by suffocation.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 13 December 1838

OPC Note:

The Mendicity Society were formed to combat vagrancy in cities, town and parishes during the Victorian Era. Normally the Society would provide some financial relief to street beggars on the condition that they leave the area.