



## *Strange but True*

On Thursday 25th January 1753, Ruth Pierce of Potterne, in this county, agreed with three other women to buy a sack of wheat in the Market, each paying her due proportion towards the purchase. One of these women, in collecting the quotas of money, discovered a deficiency and demanded of Ruth Pierce the sum which was wanting to make good the amount. She protested that she had paid her share, and said, "She wished she might drop down dead if she had not." She repeated this awful wish, when to the consternation and terror of the surrounding multitude, she instantly fell down and expired, having the money concealed in her hand.

The above paragraph can be found etched on a panel on the Market Cross in the Market Place.

The Coroner, John Clare, of Devizes returned the following verdict on 26th January 1753:-

"From the visitation of the great and almighty God in a great quarrel was struck dead with a lie in her mouth."

The Coroner received £1 for his services.

The Thursday Market is still held around the market cross and the inscription serves to remind both traders and purchasers alike to be fair in their dealings.