



Serious Assault

On Tuesday evening last, Charles Powell, the Fittleton carrier, was robbed and desperately beaten by two men belonging to Figheldean, names Samuel Sawyer and Silas Batchelor, the former of whom has been fully committed for trial, while the latter having escaped from custody, a reward has been offered for his apprehension. Powell lies dangerously ill.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 2 November 1835

Committed to Fisherton Gaol: Samuel Sawyer, charged with having feloniously assaulted and beaten Charles Powell, on the highway, and stolen from his person several pieces of silver money, his property, at Figheldean.

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The Trial

James Sawyer was indicted for assaulting and robbing Charles Powell of Figheldean.

Charles Powell deposed: I live at Fittleton and am a carrier to Salisbury Market. I went to Salisbury on the 27th October last. On going from Salisbury to Fittleton you pass Potter's Lane which leads to Figheldean. On my return I turned down that lane, about half past seven o'clock. A person ran up to the horses and said "Powell, I have dropped a knife". I was in the wagon with the reins in my hand: there was a woman in the wagon. I told the person to move out of the way, gave the horses a cut with the whip and drove on. When I had proceeded half a furlong, I heard some one doing something at the tail of the wagon. I jumped out and ran round to see what was the matter. I then found two persons, one of whom was the person who had stopped me before. It was a very light evening: the moon was up: one of them was the prisoner, and I called him by name, saying, "Sawyer, what do you want? I knew him well: he lived at Figheldean. They said they "were doing nothing at present". I said "Walk on then and leave the wagon alone." One of them replied, "Damn thee! I'll let thee know: and I was directly knocked down with a stick. My head bled. Prisoner jumped on my breast bone with his knees, and struck me several blows on the forehead. I begged for mercy, and said I would give them all I had if they would let me get up. The other man lay across my legs. The more I begged for mercy the more the prisoner repeated the blows, and all in one place. I was blind for three weeks after. My

head was cut open. I cried "Murder!" they continued ill using me till I could speak no more. I had 9s in my pocket. When I came to myself my pocket was turned inside out, and the money was gone. I felt a hand in my pocket when I was down. I said, "Lord have mercy on me! I shall die, and Manning (another carrier) will come by and pick me up". The prisoner gave me another blow: One then said "Is he dead?" and the other said "Yes" and they then left me. I heard them go across Mr Mills's fallows, in the direction of the church. My horses were gone on. I have never been able to work since. I vomit blood in consequence of the injury I received in my chest.

Other confirmatory evidence having been produced, the prisoner was found guilty and sentenced to be transported for life. Batchelor has absconded.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 14 March 1836

OPC Note:

James Sawyer was transported to Australia aboard the Transportation Ship Norfolk on 27th October 1836 arriving in New South Wales on 12th February 1837.