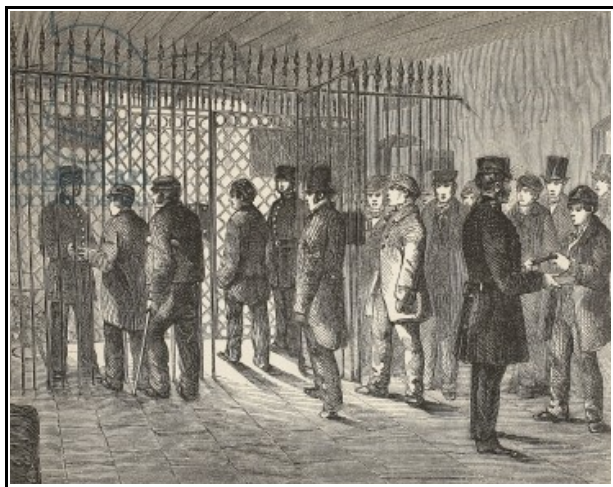


# Crime and Punishment

*Hankerton*



## Trial of John Woodward

John Woodward was indicted for embezzling the sum of 18s 7¼d, on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1862, and the sum of £1 10s on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 1864, the property of his master, Mr Charles Reeve of Lea.

Mr Snowden prosecuted and Mr T W Saunders defended.

From the opening statement of Mr Snowden it appeared that the prosecutor is a butter dealer and baker, carrying on business with his mother at Lea. The prisoner had been in his employ about 11 years, and it was his duty to deliver bread, and to account for the money received to Mr Reeve.

The prosecutor's customers included two persons named John Sparrow, of Hankerton, and William Reynolds, who previous to Christmas owed, the one 18s 7¼d, and the other £1 10s. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of February the prisoner was discharged, and in consequence of something that took place the prosecutor made enquiries, and found that Woodward had received these sums, and not accounted for them.

A warrant was obtained for his apprehension, but he could not then be found. He was ultimately taken at Lechlade, in Gloucestershire, and afterwards made a statement to the effect that he always intended to pay his master. The prisoner was on one occasion asked if Sparrow had not paid and he replied that he had not, on account of the illness of his wife. When on his way to the police station at Malmesbury, the prisoner told a policeman that if he would ask Mr Reeve to step over, he would give him an account of all money that he had received and not accounted for.

Mr Saunders suggested that the case had arisen out of mere forgetfulness, and said the jury must be satisfied, in order to pronounce a verdict of guilty, that there was a willful and criminal intention to withhold the money.

The learned Judge having summed up, the prisoner was guilty, but the jury recommended him to mercy, on account of his long service.

His Lordship said that with every desire to give effect to the recommendation of the jury, he could not pass over the case without substantial punishment. The prisoner must be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for six months.

**Devizes Weekly Gazette Friday 2 April 1864**