

Crime and Punishment

Hankerton



Malmesbury County Session

Before the Earl of Suffolk, Colonel Keene, and Messrs W H and C R Luce

Trial of Henry Sly and James Scutts

Henry Sly and James Scutts, labourers, of Brinkworth, were charged with unlawfully trespassing in pursuit of game on the 29th January, on lands at Hankerton, the property of John Coles.

Worthy Moody, gamekeeper, of Brinkworth, deposed to seeing the defendants in a field called Hankerton Purleaze. He watched them cross the field and get over the hedge into Colonel Keene's plantation, where they stayed quarter of an hour kicking the turf about. He watched them come out but did not see anything in their hands. He then got on to Coles' land, and the defendants came over within 10 yards of where he was concealed. He watched them beat Coles' plantation for about ten minutes, and afterwards watched them over the other parts of Coles' land. Sly came up to where witness was concealed in a ditch. He then had a gun in his hand. Defendants went back round Holborn House, and he heard a gun fired in that direction. The defendants did not see him at all. After they fired the gun, they came up near him, and he heard Sly say, "I didn't kill him." Scutts replied, "No, you were just like I was with the hen pheasant." The defendants pleaded guilty, but could not understand what business the keeper had on another man's land watching them. Two similar convictions were proved by Supt Luffman against Scutts, and one against Sly.

The bench fined the defendants 10s and 8s costs in each case, making a total of £1 16s each.

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