

From Australian Newspapers

The Queenslander 30 Jan 1936

(from LONDON, January 11)

40-Year Village Murder Revived By Police

After nearly half a century, Wiltshire police have dramatically resumed the hunt for a murderer who committed one of the most savage crimes in the history of the country. Whose hand, one Sunday evening in 1895, felled 70-year-old Mark Butler in his home at Potterne, a sleepy village, about two miles from Devizes?

That is the mystery which modern detectives have set themselves to solve— and so secretly have they been working that only two or three people outside official circles know how near they are now to laying their hands on the quarry. But they are being frustrated by a wall of silence. A market gardener of good local standing, Mark Butler, lived in a big house which still stands on the fringe of the village. Old Mark laughed at the declarations of his friends that the house was haunted.

(1)

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One night he was found mortally wounded in the yard of his house. A long-handled turf cutter, known to gardeners as a "half moon," had been brought down on his head with such force that it was embedded deeply in his skull. James Butler, the dying man's son, was brought from the inn, which he kept only 400 yards away. Police made vain efforts to obtain from Mark the name of his attacker. Before three hours had passed James Butler, as he stood by the dying man's bedside, was charged with causing grievous bodily harm to his father, and when, at midnight, Mark Butler had breathed his last, his son was charged with murder.

At length, however, it became clear that the charge against James Butler was unjustified, and he was discharged an innocent man. He still lives in the district.

(2)

The following persons who left the United Kingdom for Australia, or were last heard of in these colonies, are inquired for in

LLOYD'S WEEKLY LONDON NEWSPAPER

11 Oct 1890

WILLIAM JAMES WELLS left Potterne, near Devizes, Wilts, in 1852, and sailed in the Argo for Australia. Sister Ann Maria anxious.

10 Aug 1895

Bryant (Henry), of Potterne, Wiltshire, went to New Zealand in 1865; last heard of from P.O., Sydney, in 1875. Sister Sarah asks.

