

Crime and Punishment

Sutton Mandeville



Wm. Russell, Thos. Hoskins, and Geo. Bricknell, are charged with feloniously assaulting Samuel Bench, and forcibly stealing from his person a sovereign, a half-sovereign, and other articles at Sutton Mandeville.

(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette – 8 March, 1855)

William Russell, Thomas Hoskins and George Bricknell, were indicted for assaulting Samuel Bench, and stealing from his person a sovereign, one half sovereign, and other articles, his property, at Sutton Mandeville.

Mr HODGES prosecuted, and Mr COLE defended the prisoners.

Samuel Bench, the prosecutor, stated that on the day before Britford fair, he was driving some sheep through Sutton Mandeville, and went into the Fovant Hut public-house to have some drink. The prisoners were there drinking. After he left the house, on going along the road on the down near the old road, Russell came up and knocked him down, and Bricknell picked his pocket of a purse containing a sovereign, a half-sovereign, and some silver. They then ran away towards Donhead. He (Bench) got up and set his dog on them. He ran after them about a mile; and went to the house of a policeman, and gave information of the robbery.

Cross-examined: I was not very drunk. I did not keep tumbling down; I can't say I didn't tumble down. When I paid for the drink Mr Mills, the landlord, saw my purse. I swear that I had more than enough to pay my reckoning. I swear I had a sovereign, a half-sovereign, and some silver. No-body else saw it.

Mr COLE: I thought you said Mr Mills saw it.

Witness: Mr Mills was not in my purse, was he? *(laughter)*.

William Jay was at Fovant Hut when the prosecutor and the prisoners were there. He saw them leave the house, and they went towards their own home. He saw Russell go and push the shepherd down. Russell went on after the others.- The prosecutor got up and went on about seven or eight Ing and then laid

himself down. In about ten minutes Russell and Hoskins came back and helped him up, and then they all went on together. They were all in liquor.

Other evidence having been adduced.

The jury acquitted Hoskins, against whom there was no evidence, and found the other prisoners guilty.

A previous conviction having been proved against Russell, his Lordship sentenced him to four years; penal servitude.

Mr HODGES, on the part of the prosecution, recommended Bricknell, who was very young, to mercy.

His LORDSHIP said he should make a marked distinction between him and the other prisoner, and sentenced him to be imprisoned for five months, with hard labour.

Bricknell, who, though stated in the calendar to be 19 years of age, appeared to be much younger, burst into tears, and protested his innocence. He said he did not strike the man, nor did he know that his purse was stolen.

His LORDSHIP said he had no doubt that Russell was the man who planned the robbery and committed the deed. This should be a warning to Bricknell not to associate with bad characters again; he would make some inquiries about him, and would consider whether he should mitigate his punishment.

The Court then adjourned until Monday at 9 o'clock.

(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette – 15 March, 1855)

William Russell, assaulting and robbing Samuel Bench, at Sutton Mandeville, of 1 £ 10 s., and other articles – guilty.

Four years' penal servitude.

Thomas Hoskins, charged with being concerned in the same affair, was acquitted.

(Salisbury and Winchester Journal – 17 March, 1855)
