

EXTRAORDINARY SACRILEGE AT WEST WORLINGTON.

This account was taken from the South Molton Gazette.
1882.

The village of West Worlinton has been the scene of some extraordinary occurrences of late, in connection with the Church and the Rector, the Rev. C. W. Moloney. During last year a dispute arose between the Rector and the Church bell-ringers in consequence of the latter refusing to abide by certain rules which the Rector wished to introduce. Subsequent to this the Rector's out-buildings were set on fire and then on November the fifth 1881 his effigy was burnt, his gate unhung and he was subject to other indignities so much so, that extra police were stationed in the village. No-one was brought to justice for these outrages, but a man named Leach was bound-over to keep the peace towards the Rector.

On the third instant further crimes were committed; and for one of them a Smith, named Edward Holmes, an elderly man and one of the old ringers, was brought up on bail before the South Molton magistrates. The charge being that he broke into the Parish Church and stole one bronze cross, two brass candle sticks, two brass vases, one surplice, the clappers of three bells and the screw nuts of another bell.

Summary of the Court Report.

Evidence was given by Sarah Lee, the Sexteness. The evidence was that she had found certain things which indicated that the Church had been broken into; she had then called at the Rev. Moloney's house.

Next the Rev. C. W. Moloney gave evidence, he said that he also found evidence that the Church had been broken into, and that several large stones had been taken forcibly from the wall and were left lying on the ground. He also found that the Harmonium had been smashed in at the back and some keys taken from it. It could also be seen that entrance to the Church was gained through a small ventilator near the side window in the Tower.

During the investigation of the Church robbery by P. C. Yelland

the Special Constable for West Worlington and Sergeant Wellington of Witne Edge and P.C.Christopher, a toe-cap had been found beneath the bells .. but, a South Molton Shoemaker said that Mr Edward Holmes had lost his toe-cap but it was not the right size for his boot.

The Bench then committed the prisoner for trial at the next county assizes.

Another report from the Court Room

A warrent was obtained to search the premises of Mr William Hosegood, Landlord of the Stucley Arms. The house and the Arms were very thoroughly searched; but nothing was found. Then the well was emptied by bucket and two of the three missing clappers were found. So Mr Hosegood was arrested and admitted to bail for fifty pounds and two surties of Twenty Pounds each.

The bench then committed the prisoner, Mr Hosegood for trial at the next Devon Assizes.

A Report on the Devon Assizes, Exeter on July 29th. Taken from the South Molton Gazette.

Evidence was given, and it was found that the cause of the trouble was, that on Revel Sundays, all the Ringers got very drunk every year. So, the Rev.C.W.Moloney, being Custodian of the bells did'nt think it right to allow the proceedings to be sanctified by the bells. He drew up some rules, stopping drunkenness. All the Ringers protested and some even left. On top of these rules the Ringers were not allowed to ring on Revel Sunday.

Inspite of this the bells were rung, the Rector went up to the bellry and turned all the Ringers out, he then locked the door. But latter they returned and started ringing again, the Rector returned to remonstrate with them, but, from a sign given from Mr William Hosegood the Ringers continued, directly against the Rector's wishes.

It appears that Mr William Hosegood was the ring-leader, because he had the notices about November the fifth printed by a man called Mr Nott.

Luckily for Mr Hosegood and for Mr Edward Holmes there was insignificance evidence to convict either men, and therefore the Jury acquitted them and they were discharged.

AN ACCOUNT OF BONFIRE NIGHT

Before Bonfire night a notice was put up in the Village which read:-

The Bonfire for poor Guy will be
held in a field near the Village
The Procession will take place at
Six-o'clock; and the Bonfire to
Start at Seven-thirty precisely.

N.B. All Ringers should buy the new ~~ste~~ set of changes
of ten doubles in rhyme, one and a half penny each.

Address. Mr Cock

Hen and Chicken Yard,
Poultry Square,

West Worlington 1881

Verse Remember, Remember the Fifth of November,
For fifty years the bells have been rung,
But now that old Guy does strictly deny,
That any such thing should be done,

Chorus Guy Forks, Guy, poke him in the eye,

If you can't do it first, you must have another try,

On the actual night the effigy of the Rev.C.W.Moloney was burned
and it is reported that 'Horrible language was used.