



## Murder of Eliza Jones

Henry Wynn, 47, wilful murder of Eliza Jones, at Highworth

**Salisbury & Winchester Journal, 7 March 1836**

### Murder

Henry Wynn was indicted for the wilful murder of Eliza Jones, an Irishwoman, at Highworth. The prisoner, when called upon to plead, said, I must acknowledge that the deed was done by my hand, but it was not done wilfully.

Sophia Dix deposed - I am a servant of Richard Griffith, who keeps a beer-shop and lodging house in the parish of Highworth. Eliza Jones came here on the evening of the 7th of Dec., with a blind man, another man, and his wife. The prisoner came about two hours afterwards; the deceased was then in the kitchen, sitting between the other woman and the blind man. When the prisoner came in, he said, Joe, I don't thank thee for sending me to walk, and taking woman away with thee. He addressed these words to the blind man, in the hearing of the deceased. The blind man replied, he did not take her away; he had not spoken half a dozen words to her. The woman got up, and told him not to fall in a passion, for she was not away with any one. The prisoner made no answer, but struck her with his right hand on the left side of the head. He had nothing in his hand; she screamed out. He then put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a claspknife, and as he was opening it, he said to her, that he had a d—d good mind to stab her. She said, Pray don't hurt me, and drew back one foot. I told him to keep the knife at a distance. He said he was going to scrape the dirt off his coat with it. He scraped the coat twice, and then hit the knife into her left side, without saying a word. Deceased then said, I, my god, am a ruined woman! She was falling as she said this. The other woman caught her in her arms. I did not hear the prisoner speak at all. Deceased did not afterwards speak till she was carried up stairs. I called for assistance, to help me take the knife from the prisoner. One John Dine jumped up, and went towards the prisoner, who took the knife out of his waistcoat pocket and delivered it up to him; Dine then gave it to me. As soon as the prisoner had stabbed the woman, he shut the knife, and put it in his waistcoat pocket. I carried the deceased up stairs; I pulled her things off, and a surgeon was sent for. I remained with her till half-past eleven. I saw her again between five and six o'clock in the morning; she was groaning very much. She died between eight and nine o'clock that morning. She kept saying she should die. Just before she died, my mistress asked her if she should like to see the prisoner, and as well as she could speak, she said No. This was the only time she mentioned him. I kept the knife till the Coroner's inquest, and then the Coroner took it.

Thomas Sealey, Assistant Overseer at Highworth, produced the fatal knife, which had been given to him by the coroner, and deposed that the prisoner acknowledged having committed the crime, for which he expressed his sorrow, and explained to him how it had been done. Prisoner said he had stabbed her in consequence of her having left him, and gone away with the blind man. Witness had never seen or heard any thing of either of the parties before this melancholy affair.

Mr. Gane, a surgeon of Highworth, deposed that the woman, who was in a healthy state, had met her death from a wound between the ninth and tenth ribs, passing into the bowels, a part of the contents of which had escaped. This closed the case for the prosecution.

The prisoner, in his defence, said, he did not know what means he did it, or how it was done; he took the knife out of his pocket, but how he struck her he did not know; his reason was gone.

Sophia (examined by the Jury) - The deceased had stays on. I don't know that the prisoner was in a passion; I don't think he was tipsy.

The learned Judge then carefully and impartially summed up the evidence, and the few minutes, returned a verdict of "Guilty of Murder". The wretched man was then immediately sentenced to be executed Monday next, the 14th instant, and his body was directed to be buried in the precincts of the prison."

**Salisbury & Winchester Journal, 14 March 1836**

Friday March 11  
CROWN COURT - Before Mr. Justice **Littledale**

### **Murder**

Henry Wynn was indicted for the wilful murder of Eliza Jones at Highworth on the 7th of December. The prisoner, when called on to plead, said "I must acknowledge that the deed was done by my hand but was not done wilfully."

Mr. Smith conducted the case for the prosecution.

Sophia Dix - I am a servant of R. Griffith who keeps a beer shop and lodging house in the parish of Highworth. Eliza Jones came there on the evening of the 7th of December with a blind man and another man and his wife. The prisoner came about two hours afterwards. The deceased was then in the kitchen sitting between the woman and the blind man. When he came in he said "Joe, I don't thank thee for sending me to walk and taking my woman away with thee." He addressed these words to the blind man in the hearing of the deceased. The blind man replied, he did not take her away; he ha not spoken half a dozen words to her. The woman got up and told him "not to fall in a passion, for she was not away with anyone". The prisoner made no answer but struck he with his right hand on the left side of the head. He had not anything in his hand. She gave a scream out. He put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a clasp-knife and, as he was opening it, he said to her "that he had a damned good mind to stab her." She said "Pray don't hurt me" and drew back one foot. I told him to keep the knife at a distance. He said he was going to scrape the dirt off his coat. He scraped his coat down twice and then hit the knife into her left side without saying anything more. The deceased said "Oh! My God, I am a ruined woman." She was falling as she said this. The other woman caught her in her arms. I did not hear the prisoner speak at all. The deceased did not speak any more till she was carried upstairs. I called for assistance to help me to take the knife from the prisoner. One John Dine jumped up and went towards the prisoner who took the knife out of his waistcoat pocket and delivered it to him and Dine then gave it to me. As soon as the prisoner had stabbed the woman he shut up the knife and put it into his waistcoat pocket. We carried the deceased upstairs. I held the candle. When we got her upstairs, I pulled her things off and a surgeon was sent for. I remained with her till half past 11. I say her again between 8 and 9 that morning. She

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kept saying that she should die. Just before she died my mistress asked her if she should like to see the prisoner and she replied "No". This was the only time she mentioned him. I kept the knife till the coroner's inquest and then the coroner took it.

Thomas Scaley - I am assistant overseer of the parish of Highworth, I saw the prisoner on the morning of the 8th of December between 9 and 10 o'clock at the poor-house in custody. I had then heard the woman was dead. I asked him if he knew whether the woman was dead. He said he did and that he was sorry for it. Then Sophia Dix came in and gave me a knife. I asked the prisoner "whether he knew the knife" and replied "that was the knife he had done the deed with." I marked the knife and gave it back to Sophia Dix. At the inquest the coroner gave it to me. This is the knife. The prisoner held his hand up and showed me how he had done the stab and said "it was in consequence of her leaving him and going away with the blind man and that he was very sorry for it, but he knew he must suffer for it." He told me her name was Eliza Jones, an Irishwoman.

By the Judge - I had never seen him before. I know nothing of her name being Eliza Jones except what he told me.

William Gane, a surgeon at Highworth - I was called in to attend the deceased between 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening. I found her in bed with a wound in her left side about an inch in length. I did not at first ascertain whether or not she was in danger. I saw her between 8 and 9 o'clock the next morning; she was then dying. I examined the body on the 10th of December. I found a wound between the ninth and tenth rib, passing into the bowels. The contents of the bowels had escaped; the colon was wounded. In my judgment she was very healthy and died from the wound which had been caused by a flat instrument. It had penetrated two inches and a quarter.

This closed the case for the prosecution.

The prisoner, in his defence, said he did not know by what means he did it, or how it was done. He took the knife out of his pocket, but how he struck at her he did not know, his reason was gone.

Sophia Dix by the Jury - The deceased had stays on. I don't know that the prisoner was in a passion. I don't think he was tipsy.

The learned Judge then proceeded to sum up the case to the jury. He was sure they would give this case their most serious and deliberate consideration. The prisoner was charged...effect. The question was whether there was anything that could reduce it to manslaughter. It appeared that there was some attachment between the prisoner and the deceased, because it was evident that there was some matter of jealousy as regarded the blind man. It was laid down by the law, that if a man found his wife in bed with an adulterer and he put them to death on the instant, that crime was only manslaughter; but if he did this deliberately and after he had time to think and reflect, the crime would amount to murder; but that was only applicable to a case of a man and his wife; but there being no evidence here that these parties were man and wife, that case could not have reference to the present question. His lordship then read over the whole of the evidence; they were then first to say whether the prisoner occasioned the death of the deceased; and then whether the crime amounted to murder or could be reduced to manslaughter. The Jury found the prisoner Guilty of murder and he was sentenced to be executed on Monday next and his body to be buried within the precincts of the prison.

**The Times, Monday, 14 March 1836**