

George Woolgar, a Sentence of Transportation

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“SPRING ASSIZES
HOME CIRCUIT. MAIDSTONE, MONDAY MARCH 19.

CROWN COURT - (Before Lord Chief Justice TINDAL.)

George Harris, William Walker, George Woolger, William Drawbridge, W. Sanders, David Roberts, Thomas Austin, William Fennell, James Parkhurst, George Jenner and James Tolhurst, were capitally indicted for that they, on a certain day in the month of December last, being armed with guns, bludgeons, and other weapons, for an unlawful purpose, did strike, beat, cut, and wound, Thomas Allchin, feloniously to kill and murder him; the second count stated the intent to be to do him grievous bodily harm; the third, to maim and disable him and others; and the last, that the assault was committed to prevent their lawful apprehension for a breach, of the law, at Cranbrook.

The case created great interest, as some of the prisoners are connected with persons of some respectability, but are part of a gang of desperadoes who have long been a terror to the eastern part of this county.

The jury consulted for 10 minutes, and then returned a verdict on the last count of guilty of wounding, beating, and striking, with intent to prevent legal apprehension of their persons.

Several respectable farmers gave Fennell, Jenner, and Austin excellent characters.

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE addressed the prisoners in a very impressive manner, and remarked upon the narrow escape they had had of being convicted of a capital offence, and had that been so, many of them would certainly have been consigned to the hands of the executioner. He had carefully reviewed the evidence, and made such distinctions as their degrees of participation appeared to warrant. The judgment of the Court was, that Harris, Walker, Woolger and Drawbridge be transported beyond the seas for the term of 15 years; that Sanders and Roberts be imprisoned two years and kept to hard labour; that Austin and Fennell be imprisoned, &c. [etc], for only one year, they having received a good character; and the Court, in consideration of their youth, and there being no proof that they committed any act of violence, adjudged that Parkhurst, Jenner, and Tolhurst be kept to hard labour for six calendar months. His Lordship implored those who were to remain in this country to amend their lives, and when they obtained their liberty to desist from pursuits which would in the end bring upon them a dreadful death or perpetual banishment.

This case terminated the assizes, and his Lordship shortly afterwards started for Lewes.

Yesterday the Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Vaughan, after attending divine service, went to dine with Lord Romney, at his seat in the environs of the town.“

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