ASSAULT!

Landlady Mrs Tripp calls customer 'old fool' and threatens to 'slay him to the ground'

May 14, 1853
MRS Tripp, landlady of the City Arms, appeared before the court to answer the complaint of Mrs Elizabeth Westcott for an assault.

Mrs Westcott went to Mrs Tripp's and asked her what she meant by calling her father "an old fool" and threatening to "slay him to the ground."

Mrs Westcott told Mrs Tripp that she dared not say that at which point Mrs Tripp held her fist up into Mrs Westcott's face and said that if she say two words more then she would slay her to the ground too.

Elizabeth Terrell who lives a few doors down from the City Arms told the court she was in her house on the day in question and on hearing a noise and raised voices she went along to the City Arms to see what was occurring.

She saw Mrs Tripp abusing and making use of foul language towards Mrs Wescott and heard Mrs Tripp say she would "put her to the ground"

Mrs Tripp denied having put her fist into Mrs Westcott's face and said that she had kept her hands under her apron while she was speaking but did not deny having used disgusting language.

At the request of Mrs Tripp a man named Coleman was summoned to give evidence of what he saw but his statement seemed to confirm the charge of assault than otherwise.

Mrs Tripp said she could not expect much less as the complainants against her were brush makers or wives of brush makers and they were under the thumb of Mr Westcott who was a foreman at the factory.

The Bench considered the assault proved and Mrs Tripp was fined 5s and 10s expenses or in default of payment 21 days imprisonment.

The fine was paid.

Wells Journal
March 2, 1851
BLIND BEGGAR FOOLS CITIZENS

PC Tucker of Wells City Police told this paper that according to information received there were several vagrants at the present time in the neighbourhood and they were resorting to all sorts of dodges to procure aid.

On the previous day a man, pretending to be blind, was seen being led about the city by a woman and in consequence of his supposed sightless condition he reaped a harvest from sympathisers.

The man was afterwards seen drinking in the City Arms in Wells where his visual organs were discovered to be in as good a state as those of his "leader"

Wells Journal
January 13, 1855
SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS PENAL SERVITUDE
An old offender

Steven Loxton, 24, was charged with stealing three pecks of potatoes at Wells. The case was proved by PC Mizen who said he was on duty at Towns End Wells when he saw the prisoner, who he knew well, with a bag of potatoes on his head which as he saw him he threw away.

The prisoner was chased and found hidden in a waggon in a barn near the County Lunatic Asylum.

The prisoner showed little acuteness and denied the charge and said that he had been at the City Arms and if he got out of this fix he would "do for PC Mizen."

The prisoner had previously been convicted and had been summarily punished for twelve to fourteen minor offences and now being found guilty of theft was sentenced to seven years penal servitude.

Wells Journal
January 10, 1857
LANDLADY FINED FOR DRAWING BEER ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Elizabeth Cardwell, landlady of the City Arms High Street, pleaded guilty to having drawn beer before half past twelve o'clock on Christmas Day.

Her house was visited at half past eleven that morning when three people were seen there and beer was seen on the table. Ten minutes afterwards when another visit was paid the three persons were sitting there and no beer was visible.

Miss Cardwell said the men were singers and she had given them beer to get rid of them but after they had the beer she was unable to get rid of them and could not get them out.

Cardwell was warned as to a better observance of the law and told her the fine would be comparatively light but that she would be dealt with vigorously if she came again before the Bench.

Fined £1 11s 6d plus expenses.

Wells Journal
January 31, 1857
CITY ARMS LANDLADY IN COURT AGAIN
A SCENE IN COURT
Complainant tells Bench "It is impossible to get justice in Wells. I will go to prison and there rot rather than pay a fine."

Mrs Alice Bath and Mr John Bath of the Red Lion Inn and Mrs Elizabeth Cardwell, landlady of the City Arms appeared in answer to a summons charging them with the assault of William Henry Fowles on the 13th inst.

The parties had been called to court in the usual manner but after waiting 20 minutes that as the complainant Fowles had not appeared were told that the cases against them would be dismissed.

Just as his name was called for the last time Fowles appeared.

His manner is very eccentric and on his entering the court there was general tittering.

Across his shoulder he had a large stick at the end of which there was a bundle.

He also brought with him two swords, and a huge box of conical shape, the use for which we are at a loss to conjecture.

Mr Welsh informed Fowles he was late and told him that if he did not behave in a proper manner he would be put out of court.

Fowles replied to the effect that it was almost impossible to get justice in Wells.

Fowles then stated:

"On the 13th January just before dinner I went to the Red Lion for a drink. Mrs Bath said she would draw no drink to one such as me and that I might leave as soon as I pleased. I said I would not go as the house was open to all. Mrs Bath called her son and he came in and collared me and tried to turn me out neck and heels. Mrs Bath, her servants and her grandchild also collared me and I was most brutally used thinking that at any moment I might be choked and (taking off outer garments and displaying a ragged coat) here is evidence of how I was used."

"Having got to the door I was thrown out onto the stones by John Bath assisted by his mother and others. I considered my life in danger they threw me with such force and it was with great difficulty that I reached my bed and I was obliged to send for a doctor."

Here Fowles asked the court for a seat as he said he was exhausted. This request was complied with.

"After they got me down they beat my head forcefully against the ground and called me names I would not wish to repeat."

Ann Wilkins the granddaughter of Mrs Bath was called and stated under oath that she did not see Mrs Bath or her son push Fowles or in any manner try to put him out.

Fowles: "The Lord have mercy on your soul! You do not tell the truth"

The court reminded Fowles that he was taking up time unnecessarily by his remarks.

Mr Hawkes who was just about to have his dinner at the time told the court:

"Mrs Bath did not put him out. I gave him a penny and advised him to go home. He went into the commercial room but he was noisy which was the reason of his being asked to leave."

Fowles deposed: "If I did not think my life was in danger I would not bother the court. I was exhausted after having walked from Shepton and thought a glass of brandy with a little butter and sugar in it would revive me. They refused me and I said I would sit until a policeman came. I sat on the settle when Mr Bath collared me and broke my neckerchief."

Mr Bath told the Bench that "Fowles was drunk when he came into the house."

Fowles: "You were told to say this. Speak out and shame the devil."

Bath told Fowles; "You are a most impertinent fellow."

Fowles; "You call me that again and I will knock you down (catching up his stick) I am an Englishman and have English blood in my veins."

The Bench next called Mrs Cardwell of the City Arms with her servant Moon and a person called Mutton who was also summoned for assaulting Fowles.

It appeared that when complainant left the Red Lion he proceeded down the High Street to his home a few doors from the City Arms and on finding the door open he went in and was served with a glass of bandy but the drink being too strong for his taste he went to help himself to some water and was entering a room where a private party was assembled when Mrs Cardwell intervened to stop him going in there.

According the statement of Fowles given to the court he told Mrs Cardwell he would darken her doors no more if she was so choice with her company. When he got outside he noticed that he had left the collar of his coat behind that had just been torn off at the Red Lion. He accordingly returned to the City Arms and the collar was not given up to him.

He told Mrs Cardwell that unless the collar was returned he would call the police and after that a noise ensued and he was treated very roughly by Mrs Cardwell and her servant Moon and then beaten by Moon with his very own stick.

Harry Fry who was playing the fiddle in the bar interfered on his behalf but Fowles endeavoured to stop him fighting.

Upon Fry being sworn Fowles rose and shook his hand heartily, not he said with the intention of influencing him but simply because they were two honest men well met. If this was the intention of Fowles the act lost its effect as Fry, in answering the questions put to him contradicted the statement by Fowles and all the other witnesses answered in a similar manner.

Mr Welsh then went on to give the decision which the Bench had arrived at during which time he was constantly interrupted by Fowles.

The Bench were of the opinion that Fowles had failed in substantiating his case and that he was in fact the aggressor and that Mr and Mrs Bath and Mrs Cardwell had acted with propriety and were deserving of praise.

On fining Fowles 14s he cried out:

"I will not pay it. I will not pay it so help me God. I will go to prison and there rot rather than pay."

He then left the court taking with him all he had brought with the exception of the two swords which he directed the hall keeper to take care of.

We believe we have never before attempted to describe such a case in as witnessed in this court of justice. Editor.

Elizabeth Cardwell married George Curry of Wookey in February 1857.

Wells Journal
March 7, 1857
CAUTION TO PUBLICANS

Elizabeth Curry, landlady of the City Arms, was summoned on the complaint of Police Sergeant Gilbanks for having kept her house open for the sale of beer after the hour of half past twelve on the morning of Sunday the 18th February whereby she rendered herself liable to a penalty of £5.

Mrs Curry pleaded guilty to this offence and told the court that she had drawn half a gallon of beer to oblige a person who had just arrived from Bath and the policeman who was in the street outside had seen the person carrying off the liquor.

Fined 2s 6d.

Wells Journal
March 28, 1857
NUT SELLER DRUNK AND DISORDERLY

Joseph Isgrove who obtains a livelihood from the sale of nuts at public houses etc was charged with being drunk and disorderly. It appears that he was at the City Arms where some patrons had been playing a practical joke by burning his nuts and setting fire to his basket and bag and upon his leaving the City Arms he, in rather uncourteous language, threatened those parties who had deprived him of his little property.

Ordered to pay the cost of his summons 1s 6d.

Wells Journal
May 30, 1857
EMPLOYEE SUMMONED FOR ABSENTEEISM

John Moon was summoned for absenting himself without permission from the service of his master Mr G Curry of the City Arms. Moon admitted the offence and according to his employer this was not the only time that he had given cause for complaint.

He had 9s due as wages, 6s 6d which was paid to the court for expenses incurred and Mr Curry was awarded the remainder for the inconvenience he had been put to.

Wells Journal
June 20, 1857
CITY ARMS LANDLADY CHARGED WITH ASSAULT
"I was pushed down the stairs"

Mrs Elizabeth Curry, landlady of the City Arms, appeared before the court charged with having assaulted Sarah Oatley.

Sarah Oatley stated that on the evening of Whit Tuesday she was passing by the City Arms and she heard the fiddle being played they entered and went towards the room where a party was assembled and as she was proceeding up the stairs the landlady said she would not have them in the room but before she had time to turn around the landlady pushed her down the stairs.

By this act her foot was much hurted and she went into the bar to rest herself but form this place she was turned away too and she was obliged to limp home as best she could. She also stated that she had to purchase oils for her foot from a druggists shop.

Henry Small who was in company with Sarah Oatley at the time of the alleged assault corroborated the story.

Mrs Curry admitted that the girl had been pushed but that it was her husband who had done it.

Oatley, she added, had come to her house accompanied by others of a very low character at about one o'clock in the morning and she refused to admit them to the club room which was occupied by a private party but it was not until these people had repeatedly been asked to leave that Oatley was pushed.

A person named Louise Pearse was called to prove that Oatley had done no damage to her foot. She stated that she had seen the girl dancing at the Red Ox beer house the day after the assault and also at Croscombe whilst the club was holding its annual festival there.

The Bench thought that as the young woman was a native of Wells she ought at so late an hour to have been at home.

It was their opinion that Mr and Mrs Curry had in this case acted very properly and they hoped she would have done the same on a similar occasion.

Innkeepers had frequently been summoned before the court and heavily fined for allowing disorderly conduct in their houses and keeping improper hours and unless innkeepers had command over their houses it would be impossible for them to prevent disturbances.

The case was dismissed and the costs would be paid by Oatley.

Wells Journal
October 15, 1867
"NOT A BETTER CONDUCTED HOUSE IN THE TOWN"

Mr D Stevens, landlord of the City Arms Inn was summoned for having his house open during prohibited hours for the sale of drink.

PC Duke said he was on duty in the High Street and as he passed the City Arms taproom he saw a man drinking.

He told the servant to call Mr Stevens who said that the man was Scudamore, the carrier, who had brought a parcel from Bristol for him and he would not take any money but took some porter.

Sergeant Tucker said there was not a better conducted house in town. It was a case which the police could not pass over but he did not wish to press it.

The magistrates said they were sorry he was brought before them for that offence as the police had spoken so well of him but they were bound to inflict a fine.

Fined 2s 6d and 7s costs.

Wells Journal
August 17, 1859
AQUTTED ON THEFT CHARGE

Elizabeth Vincent of East Wells was charged by Mr Curry with stealing several articles consisting of a broken cream jug, a saucer and a knife from the City Arms.

Mr Broderick prosecuted. Defendant was acquitted.

Wells Journal
September 6, 1863
STEALING GLASSES FROM CITY ARMS.
JAILED FOR ONE MONTH

Martha Burley, John Burley and their son were remanded by PC Kelly for taking three glasses the property of Henry Peach of the City Arms.

The case was proved against mother and son and they were sentenced to one month each at Shepton Mallet prison.

The father was discharged.

Wells Journal
September 2, 1865
PROFANE LANGUAGE USED. CURSED FATHER AND POLICE

John Isgrove was summoned for using profane and offensive language.

PC Stride said the defendant came out of the City Arms drunk and made use of bad language. He first cursed his father and then the police. Several people came out of their doors in consequence of his noise.

Acting sergeant Tucker corroborated the evidence.

Fined 1s and 9s costs or seven days hard labour in Shepton Mallet Gaol

Wells Journal
March 14, 1873
DRUNK AND DISORDERLY

John Cornish was brought before the Bench and charged with being drunk and disorderly at the City Arms Inn.

Fined 8s and 7s costs.

Wells Journal
October 14, 1880
REFUSING TO QUIT

Joseph Baker was charged with refusing to quit the City Arms. He entered the house between 6 and 7 o'clock very drunk and sat down and slept for about two hours. On being removed from the inn y the police he used very insulting language.

Fined 5s 1s 6d costs

Wells Journal
March 30, 1882
ALARMING ACCIDENT INVOLVING RUNAWAY HORSE

What might have been a very serious if not fatal accident occurred in the city this week.

It seems a powerful grey horses harnessed to a cart was left to drink at the fountain in the Market Place and the water being very low the animal in attempting to reach it slipped its halter and bolted down the High Street at a rapid pace.

When near Guard House Lane it was apparently frightened again and made another start where the wheel came into violent contact with a donkey cart drawn up by the side of the road and which was in charge of an old man named Edgar.

Edgar was at the time of the collision standing at the donkey's head and was struck violently in the chest by one of the shafts. He fell and his head came into contact with the kerbstone.

When the poor fellow was picked up he was insensible and was taken into the City Arms where restoratives were supplied.

The donkey received no injury and the runaway horse was caught as he turned into Queen Street by the City Arms.

Wells Journal
July 6, 1882
CITY ARMS OSTLER ON INDECENT ASSAULT CHARGE

Charles Brown an ostler at the City Arms was charged with indecently assaulting the wife of a Grenadier Guard the previous evening.

From the evidence of the prosecuterix who appeared in court with a babe in arms it appeared she met the prisoner and he asked her to go for a drink with him. She at first refused but he dragged her into the Crown Inn and there she had two glasses of beer. After leaving he walked her down the High Street to Priory Road and it was here that the assault was proclaimed of was committed.

A witness John Berry was called and he said he saw two persons "scrambling" on priory Road and he heard a woman say "come and help me"

He ran over and saw the prisoner and the prosecuterix struggling on the ground. The woman was much excited and her dress was covered with dust. Berry said that he then saw PC Richards approaching and that Brown went over and hit him.

PC Richards told the court that Brown on being arrested used very bad language and at the police station became very violent.

DCC Bisgood said that as this was the prisoners first offence and he had been deep in drink he would not press the charge of assault on the constable but he would fine him £5 and in default one months imprisonment.

Wells Journal
October 9, 1882
TRAMP EXPELLED BY POLICE FROM CITY ARMS

Emma Taylor, a tramp, was brought up before the court charged with being drunk and disorderly. The previous day PC Richards said he had to expel the prisoner from the City Arms.

She was very drunk and would not go away and used vile language so he was obliged to bring her to the Police Station and lock her up overnight.

Sentenced to seven months hard labour in Shepton Mallet.

Wells Journal
January 15, 1885
OBSTRUCTING THE HIGHWAY

Lucy Morgan was summoned for obstructing the highway in Queen Street by leaving her horse and cart there. PC Richards said he saw the defendant's horse and cart stationary for about half an hour while she was drinking in the City Arms.

Dismissed with a caution.

Wells Journal
August 16, 1888
A PAIR OF TIPPLERS
"A terror to the neighbourhood" say Police

Thomas Scott and Caroline Scott of Southover were summoned for drunkenness.

PC Holley said at about 9.30pm on Saturday he saw a number of people gathered outside the City Arms. He went there and found the defendants very drunk and using very bad language.

PS Kinght said the defendants were a terror to the neighbourhood.

Both committed to prison for 14 days with hard labour.

Wells Journal
April 10, 1890
"LOR NO MY DEAR IT IS SPLENDID BRANDY"

Mary Evans landlady of the City Arms was summoned for selling a pint of brandy not of the nature and quality demanded.

PS Knight said that on the night of the 25th February he went to the City Arms at about eight o'clock in the evening and saw the daughter in the bar and asked for a pint of brandy.

The daughter took a cup to go out of the bar but he said:

"No. I must have brandy from the vessel in which you supply the customers."

She went to the back of the bar which was rather dark and eventually brought him a pint of brandy.

Mrs Evans then came into the bar and he asked the price and was told 3s 6d which he paid. He then told Mrs Evans that it was going to be examined and would be taken to Taunton the next morning and he asked her if she had anything to say. She replied:

"Lor no my dear it is splendid brandy."

She then asked her daughter which vessel she had taken it from but the reply he could not hear.

PS Knight told Mrs Evans he would seal down the brandy in her presence and did so and labelled it and took it away.

The brandy was examined and the result came back that it was 28 degrees under proof.

Mr Roach from the Licensed Victuallers Association appeared for Mrs Evans and told the court that for the weeks previous to the 25th February that she had been ill for a fortnight and she had only just come downstairs when PS Knight came into the City Arms.

Mrs Evan's daughter supplied PS Knight with the brandy from the chiffonier which was the brandy specifically supplied for her on the advice of her medical attendant who had prescribed her brandy mixed with water. Mrs Evans daughter was unaware that that receptacle was brandy for her mother's use only and not the receptacle that held the brandy with which the customers were served.

Mrs Evans said that she had kept the City Arms for ten years and had frequent applications from the police for samples and she had never been summoned before.

The court came to the conclusion that a breach of the act had been committed but the dilution was small and there were other circumstances to be taken into consideration and they would content themselves by imposing a fine of 1s with costs of 20s.

Wells Journal
March 20, 1890
OBSRUCTING THE PUBLIC STREET

Gilbert Hobbs, a farmer of Street, was charged with obstructing the High Street.

PC Hansford said he saw the defendant's horse and cart standing in front of the Kings Head for about one hour. There was no-one in charge of it. He went in and spoke to Mr Hobbs who subsequently removed it and then he saw it stopped outside the City Arms for some time and then outside the Mermaid.

Mr Hobbs was ordered to pay 8s costs.

Wells Journal
September 14, 1893
STENCH FROM SEWERS

Mrs Evans, landlady of the City Arms, told the council that there was a sewer ventilation shaft in Queen Street and the stench from it into her house was horrible.

The council said that they would send an inspector to look at it.

Food, glorious food