



## *Highworth Fire Engine Inefficiency*

Between seven and eight o'clock on the evening of Wednesday last, a fire broke out at Botney Farm in the parish of Castle Eaton, the property of John Archer, Esq, of Lush Hill House, which entirely destroyed two hay ricks containing about 60 tons, a wheat rick, a barn containing a quantity of unthrashed wheat, the produce of 60 acres, two straw ricks, an outhouse adjoining, The fire continued to rage with great fury all night, and entirely destroyed a cottage near the farm yard, fortunately unoccupied. The damage is estimated at £658. The stock was insured but not the buildings. The cause of the fire is supposed to have been accidental. The Highworth fire engine did not arrive until one o'clock am; it was drawn by men all the distance, as no horses could be procured in Highworth even for such a purpose!

**Reading Mercury Saturday 18 September 1858**