



Knook

THE WEATHER

If the oldest inhabitant can talk of his having experienced severer weather than that with which we have just been visited, it is very doubtful of he can remember anything half so capricious. We have had blinding falls of snow, supervening upon a severe frost, then a partial thaw, then a cold compound of sleet, rain, hail and snow, converting everything into slush resembling coarse glass with a surface as slippery, and to-day comes a storm of rain so cold that it makes little impression on the snow, and threatens to occasion a heavy flood. Throughout the week our postal communication with Swindon and the North of Wilts has been necessarily interrupted, and the Plain has presented an aspect as bleak as that of Siberia. We can only hope that some of the villages on its borders are still visible, though a strong impression prevails in Salisbury that a few of them are buried in snow drifts, and that their inhabitants are still lying a-bed, amazed at the length of the night, feeling very hungry and wondering when the day will break. If our *Journal should* reach them, as there is some hope of its doing, now that a thaw has set in, we hope to be assured of their safety. Between Warminster and Salisbury on Wednesday, the communication was suspended somewhere the other side of Deptford Inn, the coach coming to this city, after making a *detour* through a field and taking a ditch in a gallant style, was imbedded in an unavoidable snow drift, and the passengers compelled to stop at the well-known hostelry all night. Next day the impediments were cut through, leaving walls of snow, seven or eight feet high, on either side the road, and the transit to Salisbury re-opened, though the passage was still a difficult and dangerous one, and much credit is due to Mr Rickards for the way in which he has conveyed his passengers in safety from place to place. Every traveller, too, speaks in terms of the warmest commendation of the zeal and kindness of Mr Flower, of Knook, whose horses have been placed at the disposal of persons along the road, at a portion of it where such assistance was especially valuable. – The *Wilts Independent* mentions that on Tuesday night last, a man named Humphries, carter to Mr Butcher, was sent from Woolbridge Mill, to Heytesbury, with a wagon and two horses, and has not since been heard of. The wagon and one horse were found on Wednesday, jammed between a bank and some iron railings, near the monument, on Chitterne Downs, and the other horse was found the next morning much cut and injured. It is supposed the poor fellow in seeking help to extricate his wagon got bewildered and is lost in some deep drift of snow. – The *Devizes Gazette* says:- The roads on every side of us are stopped up, and in some places they are totally impassable. The Bath coach has ceased to run for several days: the driver of “the Star” which usually plies between Melksham and Hungerford, did not on Wednesday attempt to go further than Devizes; and the only coach between this town and Chippenham for the last two days has been the day mail. The cart which conveys the bags from Chippenham to Devizes in the morning, and which ought to arrive about half past five or six o’clock, did not reach until near eleven. As to the people whom business has called to the Sessions, most of those who were in town on Wednesday night, prudently remained

during the night; but many who had prosecutions against prisoners have preferred to let the criminals escape, rather than face the weather, and ran the risk of being lost on their journey. The Chairman of the Sessions (Sir John Awdry) on Wednesday made his entrance into the town drawn by cart horses; he very wisely took up his quarters at "the Bear" the same night, with Mr Sotherton, Mr Merewether, and other magistrates. The Salisbury mail did not reach Swindon on Wednesday night, consequently the mail bags from the West and North, from London, and also those made up at Swindon for Marlborough, could not be forwarded in the usual course on Thursday morning.

(Salisbury and Winchester Journal – Saturday 7 January, 1854)

