



A Clerk in Trouble

Quarter Sessions at Salisbury 10th January 1673

Whereas the Court was this day informed by Mr. Robert Hyde of Counsell with Richard Plomer of Kemble, yeoman and likewise by oath of diverse witnesses now sworn in Court¹ that Thomas Earle, of Oaksey, Clerk, hath demeaned himself towards the said Plomer and Joane his wife Verie lewdly by divers ways, by assaulting and putting Joane in affright by obtaining from her a gown and other wearing apparel by threatening to break her neck and likewise by telling her that when she heard her beasts roar she should look to herself. This Court was also informed by diverse witnesses now sworn in Court that Thomas Earle not long since borrowed a back sword unfit for his wearing and for which he had no necessary employment. And that at or about the same time, Richard Plomer in the nighttime had one cow and a horse killed and diverse other of his cattle hurt and wounded, and that done with the sword so borrowed as was strongly presumed. And further that the said Thomas Earle did by sinister means obtain keys to open the doors of Plomer's house and by that meanes had often access to the said Joane, upon due confession whereof and strict examination of witnesses touching those and the like notorious misdemeanours and lewd offences, This Court doth order that Thomas Earle shall forthwith be committed to gaol and there to remain until the end of this present Sessions and afterwards to be delivered until he become bound with good sureties to appear at the next General Quarter Sessions and in the meantime to behave himself towards our Sovereign Lord the Kings Maty and all his liege people.

Petition For His Release

To my worthy friends and associates the Justices of the Peace at Sarum. You may be pleased to be advertised that notwithstanding the foul offences and misdemeanours at the last Sessions proved against Thomas Earle the younger, clerk, for which he was then worthily bound to his good behaviour, yet upon his humiliation and repentance which as I am credibly informed he hath expressed with tears promising future amendment, I am now moved and do become an earnest suitor unto you for his release of the good behaviour, the rather for that Thomas Earle the elder, clerk, his father being an honest zealous preacher doth importune the same and of his good disposition (though he be not there unto compellable by law) is contented to pay Ten pounds unto Richard Plummer for the wrong and injuries done unto him by his said son. This is therefore to inform you that of late since the last Sessions Thomas Earle the younger hath made two sermons expressing his conversion and repentance, and if he shall at any time hereafter return to his vomit which I persuade myself he will not, you shall be sure to hear thereof, and so being sorry that I cannot attend on you at this Sessions with my best wishes of all happiness unto you all I take my leave resting, your Servant at command

JOHN POOLE.

Oaksey Parke 12th January 1631.

A certificate on similar lines is presented by the inhabitants of Oaksey and Kemble bearing over ninety signatures.

¹ There are eight pages of evidence from these witnesses