



Sutton Mandeville

James Mitchell

Murderer

From the two reports listed below it can be assumed that James Mitchell was born at Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire. He was apprehended after the murder of Miss Mary Welchman, which occurred in London, in 1814, by Mr Edward Bracher of Sutton Mandeville, of whom James Mitchell had once worked for as a Labourer. Miss Welchman was reported in the newspapers to be the daughter of a respectable farmer of Street, near Glastonbury.

On the 13th of August Mitchell was brought up to Bow Street, in custody, where he underwent an examination, after which he was fully committed to Newgate. Mitchell appeared very little affected at his situation, and preserved a sullen silence.

On Friday, September the 16th, 1814 Mitchell was arraigned at the Old Bailey, for the murder of Miss Welchman. The evidence was circumstantial, but conclusive; and, when called on for his defense, he denied the crime with which he was charged, and said that it was not proved the pistols and hat were his. He called no witnesses and the jury, having been charged, retired for a few minutes, and returned with a verdict of Guilty – *Wilful Murder against Smith, alias Mitchell.*

James Mitchell was executed at Newgate, by hanging, on 19th September, 1814 for the murder of Mary Welchman. Mitchell was hanged with Henry Hollings who had murdered his step daughter.

A description of James Mitchell from the *Glasgow Herald* (12 Aug. 1814) – “Mitchell, it appears, is a gentleman’s servant out of place, but had introduced himself to Miss Welchman by holding an umbrella over her head on a wet evening, and afterwards insinuated himself to her residence as the purser of an East Indiaman.....The murderer is about five feet and a half or six inches in height, swarthy complexion, with forcible eyes, and has the appearance of a shabby gentleman, rather than of a servant.”

Further particulars from the *Glasgow Herald* (12 Aug. 1814) – “He lodged at No. 16 Grosvenor Mews, and previously in Wood’s Mews, where his box had been detained for rent. The Officers, on searching the box, found some documents, by which it appears that he has two wives, one of whom he announced a separation from, by advertisement, in August 1807....Some letters are found addressed to him from his brother at Bath, recently, which treat him altogether as a worthless fellow. He lived recently with a barrister in the Temple.”

Newspaper Reports indicating Mitchell's place of birth as Sutton Mandeville:

We have great pleasure in announcing that James Mitchell, the wretch who assassinated Miss Welchman, in Mount-street, Hanover-square, London, on the morning of Friday se'nnight, was apprehended on Wednesday last at Sutton Mandeville, in this county. It appears that he is a native of Sutton, and had doubtless effected his retreat thither in order to elude justice. Mr Edward Bracher, a respectable farmer of the parish, most fortunately recognized Mitchell, who formerly worked for him as a labourer, and as his person exactly answered the minute description of the assassin given in the newspapers, Mr B. without hesitation, took him before Mr Penruddocke, who immediately committed him to Fisherton goal, for further examination. Intelligence of Mitchell's apprehension having been transmitted to Bow-street, two Officers from thence arrived here and conveyed him to London on Friday last.- Not the smallest doubt is entertained of this Mitchell being the assassin, as, besides his completely answering the description in point of person and dress, his demeanor in Fisherton gaol betrayed guilt and horror; his spirits forsook him, and he occasionally shed tears. Many persons through curiosity visited him in prison, but although he was not questioned directly as to his guilt, he acknowledged to several persons on Wednesday evening last, that he had a brother in Bath, that he had been a servant to Mr J. C. Jervoise, and to Capt. Death, and that he had lately been in Spain.

(Salisbury and Winchester Journal – 15 August, 1814)

In the night of August 4, Miss Mary Anne Welchman, assistant to a dress-maker in Mount-street, was assassinated by a ruffian named James Mitchell, who had for some time past pretended to pay his addresses to her. The fate of this young woman, who is described as having been twenty-four years of age, of a handsome person, amiable manners, and exemplary conduct, will, we trust, afford a salutary warning to other females against forming hasty connexions with persons of whom they have no previous knowledge. The first meeting of Miss Welchman with her murderer, who is reported to have several wives living, and who introduced himself to her as the purser of a ship, was accidental; he afterwards visited her by her consent, but she was dissuaded by her brother from continuing to countenance his courtship. It is supposed, that, at their last meeting, this question was to have been finally settled. Be this as it may, they had been alone together a very short time, in a room on the first floor, when the report of two pistols alarmed the whole house. Before any one could arrive, the villain had effected his escape out of the window, leaving behind his hat and a brace of pistols. His unfortunate victim, whose head was dreadfully shattered, expired in a few minutes. The murder was some days afterwards apprehended at his native village in Wiltshire, brought to London for examination, and fully committed for trial.

(The New Monthly Magazine & Universal Register – Vol II July to December, 1814)
