

The George Bygone – January 2018

In January 1859, Robert Adams, landlord of The George since about 1857, was hoping to drum up more business in the New Year by advertising, tersely, in both the *East Suffolk Mercury* and *Lowestoft Weekly News*.

MR. ADAMS,
George Inn, Wickham Market,
Has admirable accommodation for both horse
and man.

One has to wonder about his order of priorities, though!

We hope that you are not having to deal with any consequences of your Christmas celebrations like those suggested by this Woodbridge Court sessions report, from the 6th January 1849 in the *Suffolk Chronicle*, on 'goings-on' at The Chequers:

Jefferson Wright, 19, was charged with having, on the 26th of December last, stolen a silver watch, the property of Benjamin Morris, of Wickham-Market. Mr. Surr was counsel for the prosecution; Mr. Dasent for the prisoner.—It appeared, that on the day named in the indictment, the prosecutor borrowed 4s. of a man Hearn, and gave him his watch as security for the loan. In the evening, Hearn went to the Chequers public-house, Wickham-Market, and remained there drinking till a late hour. While standing by the fire, the prisoner came in, and snatched the watch out of his fob, and then ran out into another room. Thinking he was larking, Hearn did not follow for a minute or two, but finding he did not return, he went out and asked him for the watch. The prisoner made no answer, but walked into the kitchen. Hearn then asked another party named Claydon if he had the watch, fancying the prisoner might have given it to him: Claydon became indignant, and a fight ensued. While this was going on, the prisoner left the kitchen and went into the yard, where he remained a short time. On his return, he was given into custody of P. C. Durrant, who happened to come in at the moment. Durrant searched him, without success; but the next morning found the watch concealed under a stone in the yard, where the prisoner is supposed to have deposited it while Hearn and Claydon were scuffling.—The witness Hearn, a round-faced unsophisticated looking rustic, having given his evidence, was cross-examined by Mr. Dasent:—You are not used to having a watch, are you?—Witness: No; it was wonderful sure.—Mr. Dasent: It was a nine days' wonder, then, for you soon lost it?—Witness: Yes, I did; that shows I wasn't much used to it.—Mr. Dasent: Where did you carry the watch?—Witness: Hanging in my breeches. [Laughter.]—I suppose you pulled it out to see how the time was going?—Witness: No, I didn't, for I shouldn't have known what was o'clock if I had looked. [Laughter.]—Mr. Dasent: There was a jolly Christmas party at the Chequers that night was

there not? Witness: I don't know.—Mr. Dasent: Was there not a dance there? Witness: I don't know.—Mr. Dasent: Were there not any ladies there? Witness: I don't know. [Laughter.]—Mr. Dasent: What! don't you know a man from a woman when you see them? Witness: Oh! yes, yes. [Laughter.]—Mr. Dasent: Was there not a girl named Emily Bond there, a very nice girl? Witness: I didn't see her.—Mr. Dasent: How many were there in the house? Witness: I can't tell.—Mr. Dasent: How many pints of beer did you have? Witness (with surprise): Oh! I can't tell you.—Mr. Dasent was about to commence his address in defence, when the foreman said the Jury had made up their minds to return a verdict of Not Guilty.

To be charitable, perhaps the witness was still feeling the after-effects when testifying.