

William Devereux (7075) and John Devereux (1403)

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Bedford

Caution to Poachers.— William DEVEREUX and John DEVEREUX were charged with shooting at a man named WORKER—first, with intent to murder; second, with intent to do grievous bodily harm; and third, with intent to prevent their lawful apprehension.

It appeared that on the night of the 28th of December, or rather on the morning of the 29th, WORKER and another man of the name CASE, who were game-watchers in the service of Earl de Grey, went out on duty in the Cainbol-park-wood, a very large preserve of his Lordship's. Between 1 and 2 o'clock some men came upon them as they sat beside a barley stack, and on being challenged, the men, three in number, two being armed with guns, ran away up a wide drive that led through the wood. The watchers in pursuit closed upon them, and the two armed men faced half-way around, and presenting their guns at the watchers, covered their own retreat and that of their companion until they came in a narrow path leading out of the wood. Here one of them fell on his side, turned around upon his back, put his gun to his shoulder, and fired, right in the face of WORKER, who was within a yard of him at the time. The shot, which appeared to have gone together like a bullet, struck his face near the corner of the mouth, passed through the cheek and came out at the ear. The face and ear were burnt and the whiskers singed by the powder. The man who fired the shot, called out to his armed companions, as he sprang to his feet, to do the same, but no other shot was fired, and the poachers made off.

The two prisoners were identified by the watchers, and William was proved to have fired the shot; and a good deal of evidence was given, tracing them, and another man, who had absconded from the village of Compton, where they lived, one mile and a half from the wood, through the fields to the wood and back. A recently discharged gun was found at their house, with wet dirt stuck in the muzzle, and their clothes were found wet and dirty, particularly the trousers of William, which showed evident symptoms of his having fallen on his knees in the dirt. The Jury found both prisoners Guilty on the second and third counts. William was thereupon sentenced to transportation, for life, and John to a like punishment for 10 years.

References and Notes:

Weekly Dispatch, 23 March 1851

Before boarding the *Clyde*, William was on the *Chatham* hulk, number 4012. John boarded the *William Jardine* from Portland Prison, where his prison number was 2635.

Note: *Convicts in Western Australia, 1850-1887* by Erickson and O'Mara has the trial date for John as 13.3.1847 and William as 3.3.1851. It is probably 13.3.1851 as a report of the trial is in *The Times* on Monday 17 March 1851, p8, col A.

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