

Stacey Hill Snippets

1866, Wolverton – Disturbed man threatens locomotive with a poker.

Croydon's Weekly Standard, a newspaper covering the North Buckinghamshire area, started life in 1859 named after its proprietor and publisher, Mr Croydon. Its name was changed to *The Bucks Standard* on 2nd July 1887 under the ownership of James Line.

The following report from *Croydon's Weekly Standard* of 20th October 1866, with a connection to Stacey Hill Farm, Wolverton, was headed 'A madman'

'A man named George Woodward of Loughton near Wolverton was on Wednesday, running about in a field at Wolverton in a state of nudity. It appears that the poor man has been very strange in his conduct for some time past, saying he wanted to kill the Pope and on the above mentioned day he was seen on the railway with a large poker in his hand. At one time he confronted an approaching goods train with the poker held up as though he was going to strike the locomotive, but the driver fortunately saw him and reversed the engine, or the results in all probability would have been dreadful. Numbers of men went in pursuit of him, but could not overtake him, but eventually Mr George Weight, a young gentleman, residing with Mr W Battams mounted his horse and followed him. The naked man took the fences like a stag Mr Weight following in the rear at full gallop. After going at a killing pace for nearly two miles, the poor man surrendered completely exhausted. He was then, after some clothes had been put on him taken to his home in Loughton. Report says the poor fellow had dug a hole in his garden to bury the Pope as soon as he had succeeded in killing him'.

The report is interesting, apart from the tragic aspects of the actions of the man, for it has taken place on land at Stacey Hill Farm land and mentions George Weight residing at the farm. In fact William Battams, the farmer at Stacey Hill at that time, was instructing George Weight in farming. William Battams was later to build a house for George Weight and his bride at Shenley, where Battams owned a considerable portion of land. George Weight was the son of the Rev. George Weight, incumbent of St George the Martyrs, at Wolverton who passed away in 1860.

