

March 17th 1866 – Carnarvon Herald

A WILD WOMAN IN WALES

The locality was thrown into great excitement this week by the report that the notorious Harriet Haines, who for seven or eight years has lived mostly on the tops of the mountains of Caernarvonshire, assuming the character of a 'wild woman,' was taken into custody and committed to take her trial, on the charge of child stealing.

Little is known of the prisoner in this neighbourhood beyond that she is an Irishwoman, that she lives during the summer months on the top of the mountains, and at night comes down to the lowlands to steal fruit and vegetables from the orchards, and to milk cows in the fields, thereby chiefly gaining her sustenance. In the cold weather she was in the habit of going into remote houses on the mountains, pretending to be out of her mind, and if there happened to be a weak or aged person in charge of the house, impudently demanding the best food in the house, being careful however, to make her exit before the rest of the family came home.

To crown her impudence, she on Wednesday last went to Ty Newydd, Dolwyddelan, to warm herself, it being a cold wet morning, and on leaving the house she got hold of a child, between two and three years of age, who was playing by the door, and took it with her towards the mountains.

Fortunately the mother immediately missing the child, went out to look for it, and overtook the defendant about 200 yards from the house. A hard struggle then took place, for one fought for her child the other for her prey, at last the mother got the best of it and rescued her child. Information was given to the police, who apprehended the woman on the same day near Capel Curig, and conveyed her to the lockup in Llanrwst, where she is safely lodged.

Harriet Haines somehow escaped her trial and was released. She was arrested again two years later, still living wild in the mountains and was charged with 'Wandering abroad with no visible means to support herself,' she was sentenced to one month hard labour.



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