



Crime and Punishment

Oaksey

Court Case

George West

Petty Sessions, March 15. (Before P A Lovell, esq, and Major Keene)

George West, of Oaksey, labourer, in the employ of the Great Western Railway Company, was summoned by the police, under the New Poaching Act. James Bustard, sergeant of police, at Kemble, deposed ---

On Sunday March 5, at half-past eleven o'clock in the forenoon, I met the defendant on the highway at Oaksey. Seeing his pockets were loaded, I stopped him and said, "George, you have got a lot of rabbits?" He denied having any. I caught hold of him. He then pulled one rabbit from his pocket, and threw it down. I insisted he had more; he resisted, and we struggled together; eventually I searched and found eight other rabbits in his pockets, a net and a ferret. The rabbits were all quite warm (except one). Whilst the rabbits, &c, was on the ground, defendant said, "You see these things, and that is quite sufficient for you." I told him I should detain them, and bring the case before the magistrates. He then seized hold of two of the rabbits and the ferret. I collared him, and in the struggle we both went into the ditch together. I advised him to desist, and go away quietly, otherwise I should be compelled to use force. He then said, "I suppose I must suffer for it." I had previously cautioned defendant, and caught and searched him twice last month beating for game, once with a gun.

Defendant did not appear in court, but was represented by his brother, Mr John West, of Oaksey, who asked the magistrates to deal as leniently as they could with the case. The Bench said they saw no grounds whatever for mitigation, neither would it be any charity to allow any time for the payment of the fine. It was a well-known fact that Oaksey had been infested for years with a gang of organised poachers. Defendant had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £5, or three months' imprisonment, in addition to an accumulative fine of £5 for poaching on the Sabbath, also to a penalty of £20, for killing game without a licence. The Bench fined defendant £5, and 8s costs, or in default three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The fine and costs were paid by his brother.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 23 March 1865