



H.M.S. York - Prison Ship anchored at Gosport

The Story of Robert Sperring

Committed to Fisherton Gaol. Robert Sperring, of the city of Sarum, labourer, charged with having on the 18th inst. stolen a piece of muslin, the property of Hugh Penfold, of the said city. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday 21 January 1828**

At Salisbury City sessions, Robert Sperring, aged 23, for stealing a piece of muslin, the property of H. Penfold, was sentenced to 7 years transportation. **Bath Chronicle, Thursday 24 April 1828**

On Thursday the following convicts were removed from Fisherton to go on board the York hulk, Gosport, viz. Robert Sperring, convicted at our last city sessions of shoplifting. **Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Mond 26 May 1828**

From the Nation Archives at Kew Ref:- HO 17/35/81

Date: 15 April 1828 - 22 July 1830

Prisoner Name: Robert Sperring or Robert Spearing.

Prisoner Age: 20 years.

Prisoner Occupation: House carpenter, of Shrewton [Wiltshire].

Court And Date Of Trial: Salisbury City Sessions, Wiltshire, 14 April 1828.

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Crime: Larceny, namely stealing handkerchiefs value 3/- from the shop of Hugh Penfold (linen draper) in Salisbury.

Initial Sentence: Seven years transportation.

Gaoler's Report: 'Character good'.

Annotated: 'Nil, May 16 1828'.

Petitioner(s): Richard Seamark (gentleman, of Blackheath [Kent]) and George Peell (Notary Public of Lombard Street [London]). William Sperring (the convict' father) undersigned by Hugh Penfold (prosecutor) and 21 inhabitants of Shrewton. Hugh Penfold (prosecutor) and William Conduit (late master) undersigned by one magistrate and 25 inhabitants of Shrewton. Hugh Penfold (prosecutor). Robert Suter (employer of the convict's sister).

Grounds For Clemency: The sentence was severe; he has an aged parent who is overwhelmed by the case and who now has to support his remaining eight children; the convict was intoxicated at the time of the offence; previous excellent character; some petitioners have offered to employ the convict if he be liberated; he has several times been in hospital since his incarceration.

Additional Information: Held on board **Hardy** convict hulk.