

Western Times
1st October 1912

STEALING FOWLS

Heavy Fine Inflicted by South Molton Magistrates

At a special sitting of the South Molton County Magistrates yesterday, before Mr. R. S. Bryan (in the chair) and the Mayor (Mr. W. Mountjoy), Henry Palmer and Thomas Davey, labourers, both of Winkleigh, were brought up in custody and charged by P.C. Norman with stealing four fowls at Winkleigh on the 29th September, valued 12s, the property of Mrs. B. Molland. Defendants both pleaded guilty. P.C. Toozer, of Winkleigh, stated that on Sunday morning last, about 12.30 a.m., he was on duty near Luxton Barton, Winkleigh, when he heard loud talking. He proceeded to the spot and found the two defendants in the company of Thomas Harris and George Robins. On his arrival Palmer stated that Robins had accused him of taking rabbits from his traps, and he (the constable) noticing that his pockets were very bulgy, told the defendants he suspected them of poaching, and should search them under the Poaching Act. Palmer first resisted, but he found on him two fowls which were quite warm. Davey on seeing this, tried to run away, but was stopped by Harris, and he also found two fowls on him which were quite warm, and had apparently been dead only few minutes. On being questioned as to where they got them, they stated that they had obtained them at Bondleigh, but not being satisfied as to their answer, he took them back to Luxton Farm, where he called Mrs. Molland up, and she identified the fowls as hers. He then took the two defendants to Chulmleigh Police Station. Mrs Bessie Molland, who stated that she was widow, identified the fowls produced as her property, and valued them in 12s. George Robins, a rabbit trapper, of Winkleigh, stated that in consequence of having lost so many rabbits from his traps recently, he went out Saturday night, in company with Thomas Harris. Whilst looking over a gate they saw two men coming across his ground. 'When they came to the gate he suspected them of poaching, and just then the constable arrived. P.C. Rees stated that the case was a serious one, especially seeing that the defendants were robbing a widow. There were two previous convictions against Davey and a conviction against Palmer, who was an Army pensioner, with a wife and four children. He pointed out that if the latter was sentenced to hard labour he would lose his pension, A fine of £1 and costs £1 12s 10d was inflicted in each case.