

Mary Wright

(uxor Mary Drury)

POLICE NUMBER 411¹
TRIAL DATE 14 September 1840
TRIAL PLACE Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London
OFFENCE stealing a watch, tried with Jane Chapman on board
SENTENCE 7 years
GAOL REPORT in the House of Correction before, poor, single
PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS once 14 days for an assault, again for being disorderly
SURGEON'S REPORT quiet
ON THE TOWN no
MARITAL STATUS single
CHILDREN 0
FAMILY
NATIVE PLACE Reading, Berkshire, England
TRADE ON EMBARKATION
TRADE ON ARRIVAL plain cook, housemaid

LITERACY read only
AGE ON EMBARKATION 33
AGE ON ARRIVAL 33
HEIGHT 5' 5½"
COMPLEXION fresh
HEAD oval
HAIR dark brown
VISAGE sharp
FOREHEAD high
EYEBROWS light brown
EYES brown
NOSE medium
MOUTH wide
CHIN round
MARKS mole over left eye, scar on left elbow

c1808 **Born** at Reading, Berkshire, England.²

14 September 1840 Tried at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London, England with shipmate Jane Chapman (*qv*)³ indicted for larceny in stealing on 8 July 1840 1 watch value £5, 1 watch ribbon value 3 pence, 1 watch key value 3 shillings, and 1 sovereign value 10 shillings from James Hopper, mariner on the *Leeds*, in a small house in Pope's Alley, near Lebeck's Head public house, London; Jane; found guilty; sentence 7 years transportation; aged 33.⁴

Statement of witness James Hopper:

I am a mariner, and belong to the Leeds. On the 8th of July I fell in with the prisoner Wright in the evening – I got into discourse with her, and went home with her to a place which, I believe, is called Pope's-alley – it was a small house, close by the Lebeck's Head public-house – I saw no woman there hut Wright, and I slept with her in the room up stairs – before I went to bed I saw my money was safe, one sovereign and 12s. – I took off my trowsers, and my watch was in the fob – I got up about seven o'clock in the morning, and my watch was then gone, and all my money, but 2s. – I accused Wright of it – she denied all knowledge of it – she said I had neither watch nor money when I came in, but I had – I cannot tell whether the door was locked – she prevailed on me to breakfast with her – I took a cup of coffee, but my ship went off that evening, and I was obliged to go – I went to the north, and came back again, before I gave information, which was about a month or five weeks after – I then told the police-officer, and he found my watch – this is it – (looking at out) – my name is on the cap of it – I do not know any thing of Chapman.

*Wright. You had no money nor watch, except 2s., which you gave me, and you tried to get out without giving me that. Witness. I found I had but 2s. left – I was both to give that, but she got my waistcoat, and would not let me have it till I gave the 2s., which I did – I had my watch and money when I went in.*⁴

¹ TAHO, CON40/1/10 p.217 No.411 [image 194] (Mary Wright); TAHO, CON19/1/1 p.264 [image 135] (Mary Wright); ML, CY 1282 p.155 (Mary Wright); ML, CY 1197 p.151 (Mary Wright); ML, CY 958 p.440 (Mary Wright)

² TAHO, CON19/1/1 p.264 [image 135] (Mary Wright)

³ Jane, aged 27, was indicted for feloniously receiving 1 watch, 1 key and 1 ribbon, part and parcel of the same, well knowing them to have been stolen; she also was found guilty and sentenced to 7 years transportation on the *Rajah*.

⁴ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, t18400914-2356 (Mary Wright & Jane Chapman)

This biography supplements our book *Patchwork Prisoners* available from www.researchtasmania.com.au.

Statement of witness Thomas Vesper:

I am a pawnbroker. I produce the watch which was pawned on the 9th of July in the name of "James Gardner" – I cannot say who by – on the 16th a person produced the duplicate, and said, "Mrs. Chapman says will you lend 5s. more on this watch?" – I did so, and gave her a new duplicate – on the 30th of July a person came and said the same words, and had 5s. more, and a new duplicate for 1l. 10s. in the name of "Mrs. Chapman" – I have known the prisoner Chapman for ten years – it is her I speak of – after that I saw her in August at my shop – I had then received information, and asked her if she had pledged the watch, or sent it to be pledged – she said, "Yes" – I asked if it was her property – she said, "No," it was left her by a person for security for money, and that she believed he was master of a ship – she said she did not recollect his name, and he had authorized her to pledge it if necessary.⁴

Statement of witness Edward George Stone:

I am a policeman. I was spoken to about this – I found the watch at Mr. Vesper's on the 26th of August – I told him it was stolen, and wished him to stop it – I sent a letter for the prosecutor to arrive as soon as possible – I then took him to a house where I thought the party that stole it was – he went, and saw Wright and two other females in the room – he beckoned to me, and told me Wright was the one – I told her I wanted her to go to the station-house with me – she said, "What for?" – I said, "This man gives you in charge" – she said, "I never saw the man in my life in my house" – the prosecutor said, "No, I don't say I have been in this house" – she then said, "I never saw him in my life" – she had moved four or five days before to another house – she was not in the house the prosecutor was robbed in – Wright was then examined, and when we came out she told me where Chapman lived – I went and found her at home – I said I wanted her to go a little way with me – she said, "What about?" – I said I would tell her, and when she came out, she said, "It is about a watch, is it not?" – I said, "It is" – she said, "I have had that five months, I had it from a tall man with a long nose, I showed it to a number of girls in the lane" – I then took her to Mr. Vesper's, and he said, "It is a pity to take her up, she has been a customer of mine for ten years" – when I asked her for the duplicate she took down a Bible and gave me the duplicate.⁴

Statement of defendant Jane Chapman:

I did not say I had had it five months, I only had it three months.⁴

5 April 1841	Departed Woolwich, England on the <i>Rajah</i> . ⁵
19 July 1841	Arrived at Hobart on the <i>Rajah</i> . ⁵
c24 July 1841	Upon arrival at Hobart, detained on board for assignment; assigned to Mr JG Jennings, Fitzroy Crescent, Hobart. ⁶
31 December 1841	Mustered in the service of Mr JG Jennings, Hobart. ⁷
2 August 1843	Application for permission to marry James Drury ⁸ (free) sent to the Muster Master. ⁹
12 August 1843	Application for permission to marry James Drury sent to the Secretary; approved. ⁹
16 August 1843	Notice given of approval for permission to marry James Drury; Mary in assigned service at Hobart; James free. ¹⁰
10 October 1843	Married James Drury at St George's Anglican Church, Battery Point; Mary aged 38, spinster, illiterate; James aged 43, coach maker; witnesses James Vinstone and Margaret Jane Fox. ¹¹
21 August 1844	Ticket of Leave granted; gazetted 23 August. ¹²
2 August 1845	Died at the Colonial Hospital, Hobart; aged 37. ¹³

⁵ AJCP, ADM 101/63 *Rajah*

⁶ ML, CY 1282 p.140 (Mary Wright); ML, CY 1274 p.264 (May Wright)

⁷ AJCP, HO 10/51 p.404 No.411 (Mary Wright)

⁸ James Drury was transported for life on the *Chapman* in 1824; tried at Norfolk on 15 March 1823 for uttering forged notes; single, carpenter and coachmaker, native place Sirlingham[?], Norfolk, aged 25, 5' 7½", dark brown hair, brown eyes; Conditional Pardon 21 August 1837 (TAHO, CON31/1/9 p.116 No.346 [image 123] (James Drury); TAHO, CON23/1/1 No.346 (James Drury); TAHO, CSO1/1/23 Folio 403 p.29 (James Drury)).

⁹ TAHO, CON52/1/2 p.37 (James Drury & Mary Wright)

¹⁰ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 18 August 1843 p.955; 25 August 1843 p.981; 1 September 1843 p.1008 (James Drury & Mary Wright)

¹¹ TAHO, RGD 37/1/3 1843/734 Hobart (James Drury & Mary Wright)

¹² *Hobart Town Gazette*, 23 August 1844 p.1008 (Mary Wright)

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Mary Wright

6 August 1845

Buried in the Prisoner's Burial Ground, Trinity Cemetery, Hobart.¹³

¹³ TAHO, RGD34/1/2 1845/1415 Hobart (Mary Wright)

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