

Thomas Hargreaves – Scindian Convict #31

It was a case of third time unlucky for Thomas Hargreaves when he was sentenced to transportation for 14 years. His first recorded conviction for larceny happened when he was about 18 years old, when on 4 January 1837 in Preston he was sentenced to two months imprisonment for larceny. His second conviction at the age of 23 was almost exactly five years to the day later. Again in Preston, on 5 January 1842 Hargreaves was sentenced to seven years' transportation again for the crime of larceny. *The Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* of 30 October 1847 reported that he had only recently been discharged from the prison hulk when he struck again.

“Portsmouth Sessions

Transportation – 14 years’ – Thomas Hargreaves for stealing several articles of crockery, the property of William Morgan; the prisoner was previously convicted at Preston, in 1842, and sentenced to 7 years’ and had only recently been discharged from the hulks.”

The crockery stolen consisted of 2 basins, 2 jugs and 6 saucers. No further information has been able to be uncovered about any of the three crimes. A pattern of criminal behaviour was however evident. It is interesting to note that many crimes of theft, robbery or larceny committed by the Scindian convicts were committed around the Christmas/New Year period during Winter and likely due to need. Many of those convicted appeared to be living in poverty-stricken circumstances.

Hargreaves served the initial part of his sentence in the notorious London prison Millbank until he was transferred to Portland Prison on 28 April 1849 to await transportation. He arrived in Western Australia on 1 June 1850, convict #31 aboard the *Scindian*, the first convict ship sent to the Swan River Colony. His physical description was recorded shortly after his arrival as: height 5' 2 1/2", light brown hair, grey eyes, long visage, and fresh complexion. It is also recorded that his father Henry Hargreaves was still alive and living in Over Darwen, near Blackburn Lancashire.

He was issued with his ticket-of-leave on 17 June 1851, however, the following year he found himself frequently before the Perth Courts for misdemeanours:

Inquirer, 5 May 1852, p 2

“April 26... Thomas Hargreaves ticket of leave holder, drunk and noisy; fined 5s and costs.”

Inquirer, 16 June 1852, p 3

“Police Intelligence Perth

June 2...Thomas Hargreaves ticket of leave holder, out after hours; 3s costs.”

Inquirer, 2 Dec 1852, p 3

“Police Intelligence Perth

[Nov] 5. Thomas Hargreaves, t.l., drunk in the streets: fined 5s and costs.”

His behaviour did not improve because the *Inquirer* further reported in February 1853, that he was found to be drunk and resisting police in Perth and was remanded in police custody. He was ordered to pay 5s and 3s costs. It was however his action of lying drunk in Mr Warren's shed during divine service that was to be the last straw. The *Perth Gazette* reported that he was returned to the Convict Establishment. He was reconvicted and forfeited his ticket-of-leave, the Receipts and Discharges register recording that he was discharged as a reconvicted prisoner on 16 August 1853. The Governor's correspondence files of 21 December 1853 state that he was approved to be reissued his ticket-of-leave.

Hargreaves is recorded as having worked as a mason in the Victoria Plains district, however, little else has been found about his time in the colony. He was working in Toodyay at the time of his death in March 1868. He was around 48 years of age and is buried in the Toodyay cemetery.

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Sources:

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Toodyay Historical Society, Convict Database, courtesy of Beth Frayne.