

Richard Balderson, 267, Mermaid

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variation: Bolderson

Baptism	~1818
Parents	
Parent's marriage	
Siblings	
Wife	Jane Ball
Married	22 December 1837, Sheffield
Children	William (~1837-1842) Richard (1840-1840) Jonathan (1842) Richard (1846)

At the Sheffield Parish Church on 22 December 1837, married by banns:

Richard Balderson, 19, single, from Gibraltar Street, anvil maker, father Richard Balderson, a horsebreaker.

Jane Ball, 21, spinster, same address, father Edward Ball, a brickmaker

Richard signed the register and Jane made her mark.

In 1841, living at Kelham Street, Sheffield, Yorkshire were:

Richard Bolderson, 20, grinder; Jane, 25, William, 3.

Their son, Richard, born in 1840 and died aged 5 months; and William died in 1842, aged 5.

At the West Riding Sessions held at Sheffield on 22 October 1838:

Richard Balderson, 20, can read and write imperfectly, was found guilty of larceny by a servant, and sentenced to 14 days imprisonment.

He was again in trouble, at the West Riding Spring Sessions at Pontefract, on 8 April 1844:

Richard Balderson, 26, stealing nine fowls, at Laughton-en-le-Morthen, the property of Wm Belk, imprisoned for nine months.¹

Then, in December 1848, Horse Stealing At Ecclesfield:

Richard Balderson (30), was charged with having, on the 25th of July last, at Ecclesfield, in the West-Riding, stolen a horse the property of William Smith. Mr Overend and Mr Smith were for the prosecution, the prisoner was undefended. The prosecutor is a gentleman residing about three miles from Sheffield, and in July last he was possessed of a small dun coloured pony for the accommodation of the junior branches of his family. On the 27th of that month, the son of the prosecutor, after having ridden on the animal a few miles, placed it in a croft adjoining his father's residence. During the night the pony was stolen, and no intelligence could be heard of it in the neighbourhood. Three or four days after the robbery, the prosecutor sent his servant to Offerton fair, a distance of twenty-five miles, in order to detect any person who might offer the pony for sale. The servant having discovered the missing animal in a stable, and he consequently remained at a short distance to watch. Two men removed the pony from the stable, and the servant then accosted them by requesting them to furnish him with an account of the manor in which they became possessed of it. They said that they had purchased it of a man named Abbott. While in conversation with the men, the last named individual drove up in a gig, stating that he had previously bought the animal of a person who gave his name Richard Hunter, at Leak in Staffordshire. From a description of the man, he was apprehended, and it was proved that the "Richard Hunter" was the accused Richard Balderson. Mr Rayner, superintendent of police at Sheffield, stated that when the man was brought to Sheffield, and when placed in the cell he was dressed in a smock frock. On the following morning, however, that article of dress could

¹ Leeds Mercury, 13 April 1844

not be round, and the only mode of getting rid of it, he supposed, was by cutting into shreds and putting it through the grate of the water closet. The witness appearing positive that this was the case, the prisoner remarked he could produce the identical frock. He immediately pulled off his jacket and waistcoat, and to the surprise of Mr Rayner he deliberately showed the frock beneath. This act created much laughter in the Court, in which his Lordship joined, and the puzzled superintendent was compelled to acknowledge his mistake. His Lordship thought that it would be well to make some of these adroit thieves into policemen, as they were foe cleverest parties of the two. The prisoner protested his innocence, and, in his defense, accused the two men who took the pony from the stable as probably connected with the transaction. Not Guilty. ²

A month later, in January 1849:

On the night of the 12th of July last, a mare, rising five years old, in foal, was stolen from the farm of Mrs. Elizabeth Thickett, of Wickersley. The facts of the robbery were duly announced in the Police Gazette, and repeated till the following month, when a counter advertisement, describing a mare, which had been left about the period alluded to at the Cross Keys, Lawton, Lancashire, just half way between Manchester and Liverpool, appeared, stating that if the owner did not release the animal it would be sold to defray the expenses. By accident this notice reached the ears of the owner of the stolen mare, and she dispatched her son to Lancashire to identify if it were her property. This proved to be the fact, and then the landlord gave a statement of his possession of the mare. He described pretty accurately the person who placed her in his keeping, and who, at the time, said that he was in the employ of Mr. Hunter, horse dealer, of Sheffield, and either himself or Mr Hunter would call for the mare and pay all demands. This was alright, in the opinion of Mr. Ashworth, the landlord, who is also a farmer, and the man went sway. It further appears that another horse was stolen afterwards, and a man named Richard Balderson, a native of Laughton-en-le-Morthen, near Rotherham, was apprehended for the offence. He was committed for trial, but acquitted at the recent assizes. We now return to the repossession of the first mare after so long an absence from Wickersley. Ashworth refused to give her up without the sum of £8 4s was paid for keep &c. Mr. Thickett objected to this demand, but offered the sum of £5, which was rejected, and the young man returned home. Magisterial advice was next resorted to, and a warrant placed in the hands of Timms, of Rotherham, to bring the mare away. Accordingly, that officer, in company with young Mr Thickett, visited Lawton last week, and after some parleying, brought the stolen mare from Ashworth's possession once more to Wickersley. This happened yesterday week, and as Timms was passing up Well-gate, Rotherham, he perceived a man hawking glass in a basket, and all in a moment, it struck him that the glass hawker, from the minute description given him at Lawton, was the identical to the thief. Mr Bland, chief constable, was consulted, and the hawker was apprehended and lodged in gaol the same afternoon. This man turns out to be the identical Dick Balderson, of whom we have given previous particulars, and he I now stands reminded till Monday next, charged with the robbery. This will give time for the witnesses to reach Rotherham from Lancashire. The officer deserves much credit for his sagacity, as he was not at all acquainted with Balderson. ³

At his trial in March 1849:

Richard Balderson, 31, was charged with having, in the month of July last at Wickersley, stolen a mare, the property of Elizabeth Thickett. Mr Overend appeared for the prosecution; the prisoner was undefended. The evidence was the same as the above newspaper account.

Several people, who saw the party with the mare at Lawton, identified the prisoner as the man on trial. The prisoner cross-examined the witnesses with considerable tact; and at the close of the case for the prosecution, he read a long defense to the Jury, in which he very strongly asserted that Rycroft, the landlord of the inn where the mare had been left, had acted very much like a person who had a guilty

² York Herald, 16 December 1848, p6

³ Morning Post, 15 January 1849, p8

knowledge of the affair, as he did not during the six months he had the mare in his possession, either endeavor to find out whether there was such a man as Mr Hunter, horse dealer, Sheffield, or have the mare advertised in the newspapers. He submitted, therefore, that from the conduct of this party, his evidence was not worthy of credit. He also suggested that the manner in which the case had been got up, shewed that there was a conspiracy among the police officers and the other witnesses against him, in order to screen the innkeeper. The Jury found the prisoner Guilty; and a previous conviction being proved, he was sentenced to be transported for fifteen years. ⁴

Richard's wife, Jane, died in the December quarter of 1849 at Sheffield, aged 31.

In 1851, young Richard, 5, was living with relatives. He later married and lived in Sheffield. Jonathan, 10 (*sic*) was in the West Gate Union Workhouse at Rotherham. He later became a mariner.

Richard Balderson, 31, married with two children, can read and write imperfectly, a blacksmith, was received at Leicester Prison on 13 April 1849 from York Castle. He had been twice convicted of a felony and once acquitted. On 3 May 1850, he was transferred to Portland Prison. ⁵ He boarded the Mermaid on 28 December 1850 for the voyage to Western Australia.

Petition

Received 11 November 1850

Richard Balderson, tried on 3 March 1849, York Assizes, aged 32, crime of Horse stealing, sentenced to 15 years. At Portland Prison on 3 May 1850.

To the Right Honorable Sir George Grey, Bart M.P. Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Humble Petition of R Balderson, Sheweth

That your Petitioner was tried for the above named offence, of which crime he most solemnly asserts his innocence.

Your Petitioner humbly prays that you will be pleased to examine minutely the evidence brought against him on the day of trial, and if any doubt exists you will be pleased to grant him the benefit.

And your petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray.

Richard Balderson

Portland Prison, 29 October 1850

Cover: twice before convicted of felony.

On arrival at Fremantle in May 1851 his description was:

267. Richard Balderson, 33, 5'3", dark hair, dark eyes, long face, sallow complexion, black whiskers, cut on left arm, colt breaker, a widower with two children. ⁶

Perth Police Court, 1 July 1853: Richard Balderson, t.l. and George Holly, charged with sheep stealing; case dismissed. ⁷

Perth Police Court, 16 March 1857: Richard Balderson was convicted of stealing iron stone plates and received six months hard labour. He was received at Fremantle Prison on 21 March and discharged on 17 November 1857, to ticket of leave.

Perth Police Court, December 1859: R. Balderson, t.l., and D. Smith, were sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour, for working on the river without a pass. ⁸

Perth Police Court, December 1860: James McKenna, free, was charged with having feloniously stolen a quantity of stone from a quarry at Freshwater Bay, the property of R. Balderson. From the evidence it appeared that both the complainant and defendant had licenses from the Lessee of the City Trusts to

⁴ Sheffield Independent, 10 March 1849, p2

⁵ HO23/4

⁶ SROWA Acc 128/1-32

⁷ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 10 August 1853, p2

⁸ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 9 December 1859, p3

quarry stone from the bay, and consequently, one considered that he had as much right to the stone as the other. The complainant and his witness, stated that they had quarried and piled the very stones that they accused McKenna of having stolen, while on the contrary, McKenna and his witnesses asserted that they had originally quarried them; in consequence of the conflicting testimony given by the several witnesses, the Bench dismissed the case.⁹

Richard Balderson died 14 January 1863, aged 50, of apoplexy. He was buried in the East Perth Cemetery.

⁹ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 7 December 1860, p3