

George Cole, 89, *Hashemy*

Researched by Marcia Watson

George Cole said his father was Samuel Cole, chair carver, who lived at 8 Crown Court, Finsbury. He also said he was married, with one child, and his wife lived Bishopsgate St, with their child, in 1848. No records for the above have been found. There was a Samuel Cole in Finsbury on the 1851 census, but he was a crape dresser.

On 26 June 1848, at Gravesend Petty Sessions:

George Cole, William Barnett, and William French, members of the London swell mob, were charged with stealing fifty-one yards of silk, valued at £7, the property of Mr Littlewood and forty yards of silk, valued at £5 10s., the property Mr Arnold. Mr Bowditch, the solicitor, appeared for the prisoner's Cole and Barnett.

Thomas Everest deposed that between nine and ten o'clock on Saturday morning, he was on the London turnpike road, near North fleet, when he saw the three prisoners walking towards London. On seeing them, he recognized them as suspected persons. French was carrying the bag produced. On seeing him, French left his companions and passed him and then commenced running. Witness ran after him and saw him throw the bag over the hedge, and witness caught hold of the tail of his coat and pulled him back. Witness then directed Mr Mullender to go and look after the bag. Witness then took the three prisoners to Norfhfleet and locked them up in gaol. On examining the bag found it to contain the silks now produced, which were identified by Messrs. Arnold and Littlewood. When took French first said that the goods were smuggled and that he was a hawker without a license, for which he thought he was taken into custody. On searching French, the witness took from his coat pocket the parcels produced, containing socks, gloves, calico, &c. He found the other prisoners a pair of gloves and a scarf and pin.

Cross-examined by Mr Bowditch: Had suspected them before; they are called members the swell mob. When he first saw them, they were twelve yards distance from him; they were together. Has seen them attempt to pickpockets. The pin was not likely to have been bought linen-drapers. The scarf has been worn. Found the silk in the bag. I can't swear to whom the silk belongs.

Richard Miles, a carpenter, said that he saw the three prisoners walking and talking. French ran away. The other two did not make the resistance.

William Mullender said he was walking a field when he heard Everest cry out, "Stop him". French threw a bag over the hedge, and the witness went and found it.

George Patteson, assistant to Mr Marlin, linen-draper, King-street, said that on Saturday morning about half-past seven o'clock, the prisoner's Cole and Barnett came into the shop and asked for some boot hose, two pair of which Barnett bought; they likewise bought a pair gloves. I can swear they are the stockings now produced. Witness saw a third party outside the shop but would not swear that was French, although about his height. Barnett paid for everything they had; they had not missed anything out of the shop.

Francis Springett, a barmaid at the Sun public-house, said that three parties came into the house Saturday morning and inquired about the time the steamboats started. The witness can swear to Cole, ordered a pint of ale. One of them had a bag similar to the one produced, which had something in it.

John Littlewood, the son and assistant Mr Littlewood, linen-draper, residing in High-street, said that morning, about half-past seven, the prisoner Cole and another man came into the shop. Cole came to him and wanted to look at various articles but bought none. Cole had a cloak on his arm. About half-past ten, Everest came and inquired whether they had lost any silk, and looking discovered that they had lost the three pieces now produced.

James Wilkinson, assistant to Mr Arnold, linen-draper, carrying on business in High-street, said that Barnett and Cole came into the shop on Saturday morning about half-past seven. Barnett asked for some stockings and boot hose. Cole, who had a cloak on his arm, was at the end of the shop, where the silks were kept. They both left the shop together. The silk was safe on Friday night. Witness thinks, but would not

swear; the silk was the property of Mr Arnold. The paper which the silk was wrapped in is a peculiar description and is not kept any other linen draper in the town of such good quality. Witness did not miss it till Everest called when he immediately identified it. It is worth about £5 10s. Witness produced a piece the same pattern, which he sold some time since.

Cross-examined Mr Bowditch: They came about half-past seven. Did not miss anything till Everest came. The silk was lying on the shelf. All the prisoners purchased was a pair of stockings and a pair of gloves. Did not see French.

The witness Springett, in answer to Mr Tickner, said that the bag had something in it when the prisoners came into the Sun; she served Cole.

The magistrates decided to commit the prisoners to take their trial at the next sessions, and the witnesses were bound over to prosecute. Mr Bowditch asked the magistrates if they would accept bail, but the magistrates would not comply with the request.¹

The three men appeared at the West Kent Quarter Sessions, Maidstone, on 29 June 1848.² George Cole, 21, William Barnett, 35, and William French, 34, for stealing 51 yards of watered silk, value £7, the property of John Littlewood, at Milton next Gravesend.

Mr Addison conducted the prosecution. Thomas Robert Everest deposed: I am a constable. I was on the High-road to Northfleet on the morning of the 17 June, and saw the three prisoners in company. French had a blue bag on one arm and a coat on the other. I made over to French, who ran away, and threw the bag over the hedge. I caught French, who said, "Let me go; it's only some smuggled goods". The bag was brought to me. I took with it, and the three prisoners, to a public house, and found the articles named in it. French said, "It's my own property; I am a hawker; I thought you were about to take me for not having a license". The coat contained 2 pair of half hose, 3 pair of gloves, and 3 pair of stockings.

Cross-examined by Mr Denman, who defended Cole and Barnett: The prisoners were in company, within 20 yards of me. Cole and Barnett did not attempt to run away.

The testimony of the above witness was supported by two other witnesses. It was also proved that Cole and Barnett had entered a linen-draper shop and bought some articles, which were afterwards found in the coat carried by French. They then joined French. This was on the 17 June, at about a quarter-past seven in the evening. They then went into another linen-draper shop and bought various articles. At about ten o'clock, Mr Everest called at the last shop to ask if they missed any silk when it was found that 51 yards of silk had been stolen and was found to be that which Everest had taken from French. At five minutes past eight o'clock, all the prisoners were seen in company, one of them carrying a bundle.

Mr Horn, who defended French, called witnesses to prove that French was a hawker who dealt in silk and similar goods.

Mr Denman called witnesses to the character of Cole and Barnett.

The foreman of the jury, after a short consultation, addressed the bench said, "I am sorry to say I cannot get the other eleven gentlemen to agree with me, and therefore we wish to retire".

The jury then retired. After a short absence, they returned to the court with a verdict of guilty against all the prisoners.

The prisoners were also found guilty on another indictment for stealing 40 yards of silk, valued at £5 10s, the property of Edward Billington Arnold of Gravesend. To be transported for seven years on each indictment.

[Note: there is a petition for French, but it only reiterates the evidence printed in the papers]

George Cole, 21 (now states he is 25 or 26), married with one child, imperfect reading and writing, cigar box maker, convicted on 9 June 1848 at Maidstone of stealing 40 yards of silk, value £5.10. 0; a second account of stealing 51 yards of silk valued at £7.0.0 and sentenced to seven years transportation on each

¹ South Eastern Gazette, 27 June 1848, p6

² South Eastern Gazette, 04 July 1848, p4

account. His mental capacity was small, and his behaviour orderly. His wife and child lived in Bishopsgate St. George was received at Millbank Penitentiary on 30 April 1849 and removed to Portland Prison on 6 March 1850.³ A short time later, on 129 July 1850, he boarded the *Hashemy* for the voyage to Fremantle.

On arrival at Fremantle, George was described as:

89. George Cole, 27, 5' 3", dark brown hair, hazel eyes, long face, fresh complexion, whiskers small, one mole at the right corner of the mouth, a carpenter and single.⁴

General Register:

89. George Cole, 27, single, cigar box maker, Church of England, went to a Charity School, can read, can write a little and do a little maths.

Said his father, Samuel Cole, chair carver, lived at 8 Crown Court, Finsbury, London.

Attended Divine Service?	Regular
Received Sacrament?	Never
Habits?	Sober and attentive to work.
Intellect?	Sound
State of Mind?	I hope good
Knowledge, Secular?	Limited
Knowledge, Religious?	Very limited
Alleged Cause of Crime?	His own folly.

Name of Person referred to for Character, &c. Makes no reference.⁵

George appears a few times on the Casual sick list, Fremantle Prison.⁶

Coles G	16 November 1850	Head ache	Opening medicine
Cole George	4 March 1851	Bad eye	Lotion
Cole Wm	9 March 1851	Sore hand	Ap: medicine
Cole George 89	17 May 1851	Diarrhoea	Pul: Cal: J Jalap. Mixture chalk
Cole George H	18 May 1851	Feb. C.C.	Continue mixture
Cole George H	19 May 1851	Feb. C.C.	Continue
Cole George H	20 May 1851		Discharged

Ap = aperient; H= in hospital [no convict called Wm Cole at this time]

George was issued with a Ticket of Leave on 27 October 1851 and a Conditional Pardon was granted on 30 December 1854.⁷

George left Western Australia on 28 January 1857.⁸

Shipping - On the 28th instant, the schooner *New Perseverance*, Adams, for Adelaide. Cargo and 45 passengers. Although not mentioned when the ship departed, he is named on the passengers arriving in Adelaide. Note: The Captain was Thomas Adams, a fellow convict from the *Hashemy*.

4 March 1857.—The schooner *New Perseverance*, 105 tons, Thomas Adams, master, from Fremantle 28 January. W. Samson, agent. Passengers: Geo. Cole⁹

No further trace of George Cole was found.

The "New Perseverance," from Swan River- It is very seldom, amongst the casualties in which our coasting trade is subject to, that so many and such varied sufferings come upon the passengers as in the case of the passengers from Swan River in the above vessel. It appears that just before she sailed from the Swan, in consequence of some disagreement, amongst the owners, the command was given, at very short

³ HO24/4; PCOM2/107, p24; HO8/105

⁴ SROWA Acc 128/40-3

⁵ SROWA Acc 1156 R21A

⁶ SROWA Acc 1156 CS1

⁷ SROWA Acc 1156 R21B

⁸ The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), 4 February 1857, p2

⁹ Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), 7 March 1857, p5

notice, to Mr Adams, who brought her round, and who had no time to see the state of the ship's stores. There were sixty-five souls on board, and rations were only provided for twenty-five days. Three day's food and water were consumed in the harbour; but, as the Captain hoped to make a quick run, he sailed without any fresh supply. All hopes of a rapid passage was however destroyed by the schooner springing her fore mast on the second day of sailing, and, to add to the misfortune, the Captain became so alarmingly ill that serious doubts were entertained of his recovery. There was no medicine chest or drugs of any kind on board. The first mate was unable to manage the ship, and the passengers begun to feel very uneasy about their position. The voyage, however, continued to be pretty prosperous, chiefly owing to the energy of the Captain, who, at great personal suffering, contained to direct the course as well as he could; but the provisions began to fall on the twentieth day, and the water became so putrid that nothing but the extremity of thirst could induce the passengers to taste it. The sufferings of some of the women with children were dreadful. About three days before Kangaroo Island was sighted, one biscuit a day was all that could be given to the crew. On the day land was made, all the biscuit was exhausted, and seven onions and a few potatoes were all that sixty-five souls had to cheer them, and to keep off the fearful dread of starvation. The prospect was a most dreary one. A few barrels of whale oil were about to be broached, to prevent death by hunger, when, fortunately, the *Ascendant* was spoken, and supplies were obtained. The passengers all speak in the highest terms of the captain's kindness and attention, and though he is certainly not to blame, surely the attention of the owners should be called to the fearful disregard of human suffering which allowed them to send a slow sailing vessel on a really long voyage, with only twenty-five days' provisions for sixty-five souls.¹⁰

The barque *Ascendant*, from London, arrived on Wednesday, after a voyage of 14 days from the Downs (her last point of departure). She reports having' reached the longitude of the Cape of Good Hope on 30 December, and that of Cape Lenin after being 116 days at sea, from which point continued strong easterly winds have prevailed. 2 March, to the S.W. of Kangaroo Island, they were signalled by the schooner *New Perseverance*, from Swan River, bound to Adelaide, in distress. The *Ascendant* bore down, and the *Perseverance* reported having both her masts sprung, with other damage. She was out of provisions, and was making water with such rapidity that it required the entire exertions of not only the crew but the passengers, 41 in number, to keep her afloat. She had a cargo of rum and oil, and was consigned to Mr Samson of this port. The following is a copy of the letter sent by the *New Perseverance* to the Captain of the *Ascendant*, the request contained in which was immediately complied with. The *Ascendant* reports having entered this Gulf on Saturday last, the 27th ult., by Backstairs Passage:

New Perseverance, 2 March, 1857.

"Sir-You will greatly oblige me-by supplying the vessel with some provisions and water, having been 33 days from Swan River, the passengers, 61 souls in number, out of provisions these last three days. If you would supply 2 cwt. of bread, some meat, and two casks of water, likewise a bottle of port wine. The master of the ship has been very unwell, and in great pain these last three days, or he should appear on board. Whatever charges will be settled by the agent, Mr William Sampson, of Adelaide. For T.C Adams, Master".¹¹

P. S. — The *New Perseverance* came in the week before last with masts sprung, other serious damages, and in such distress for want of provisions and water, though only 33 days out, that they were, compelled to speak a vessel going out, and obtain a supply. She was overladen wits passengers and the Captain (Adams) was summoned before the Port authorities to answer a charge to that effect, but before the time came, he died, having been sick nearly all the voyage.¹²

¹⁰ Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), 7 March 1857, p2

¹¹ Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), 7 March 1857, p5

¹² The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), 22 April 1857, p2