

## Robert Ennis, 7405, *Lord Dalhousie*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Known name variations and aliases: Robert Adolphus Ennis, George Thomas, G.J. Abgood, George Marsden, James Fox

Baptism	10 September 1843, St. Patrick, Liverpool, Lancashire
Parents	Peter Ennis and Jane Heyes / Hayes
Parent's marriage	12 April 1819, Walton-on-the-Hill, Lancashire, by Banns
Siblings	William (1820), Catherine (1825), Johanna (1827), Peter (1829), Michael (1831), Ann (1833-1833), Jane (1834), Silvester (1837), Sarah (1840)
Wife	Belinda Roberts
Married	1875, Albany, Western Australia
Children	Robert Ennis Pearson (1875-1946), registered birth name; known as Robert Adolphus Ennis Edward James Silvester(1877), registered birth name, known as James Ennis Alfred Ernest (1879-1958) Edward Silvester (1883-1883)



On the 1841 census, Ashton St, Toxeth Park, Liverpool.<sup>1</sup> There are several mistakes on the census form, possibly originating from its rewriting from the census collectors' books.

Peter Ennis, 52, tailor, born in Ireland; Jane, 40, dressmaker, born in Ireland.

Catharine, 16, dressmaker; Jonathan [Johanna], 14; John [Peter], 12; Michael, 10; Jane, 6; Silvester, 4; Susan [Sarah], 6 months, all born in the county.

Robert's father, Peter, was buried on 1 December 1850 at the age of 60. In the following March, on the 1851 census, the family were living at 34 Primrose Hill, Liverpool: <sup>2</sup>

Jane Ennis, widow, 50, plain sewer, born Liverpool

Peter 21, tailor; Michael 19, tailor; Silvester 13, scholar; Sarah 10, scholar; Robert 7, scholar, all born in Liverpool.

Around 1855-6, Robert was summarily convicted and sent to the Reformatory. According to a Prison Register, he served two periods in the Reformatory, 28 days and 5 years. He was possibly released early, after 4 years, if the following newspaper article is correct.

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<sup>1</sup> H The National Archives (TNA) UK, O107/567/2

<sup>2</sup> TNA, HO107/2179

At Birkenhead Police-court on 11 January 1861, Robert Ennis, a young man recently discharged from a reformatory after serving four years, was committed for trial on a charge of stealing a gold ring and a purse from the shop of Messrs Bevan and Weare, jewellers, in Argyle Street.<sup>3</sup>

At the Chester Quarter Sessions at Nether Knutsford, on 19 February 1861:

Robert Ennis, larceny, 6 months.

The newspaper reported that Robert Ennis, who had been sentenced to six months' hard labour the previous day for a felony, was charged in a separate indictment with another felony. He pleaded not guilty. The charge was dismissed due to the witness's non-appearance.<sup>4</sup>

On the 1861 census, Robert was in the House of Correction, Knutsford, Chester, listed as: R.E., 16, tailor, prisoner, born Liverpool.<sup>5</sup>

Later in the year, at the Quarter Sessions in Liverpool on 2 December 1861, Robert Ennis was found not guilty of larceny.

In January 1862. Robert Ennis, a respectably-dressed youth, aged 18, a tailor, was charged with stealing a gold wedding ring from the shop of Mr Alfred Tunstall, pawnbroker &c, London-road. From the evidence of an assistant in the employ of the prosecutor, the prisoner entered the shop and asked to see various articles of jewellery, amongst which he was shown a card of wedding rings, from which it subsequently transpired that one ring was missing. The prisoner and another youth with him left the shop hastily. A diligent search for the ring in the shop proved fruitless, and the matter was reported to the Police. The prisoner was arrested. The jury found him not guilty.<sup>6</sup>

The court records show:

Robert Ennis, 18, tailor, can and write imp, committed 19 December 1861 for stealing one gold ring, the property of Alfred Tunstall. Tried 14 January 1862 and found not guilty of larceny.<sup>7</sup>

In February, Robert Ennis, a youth who had been apprehended some time previously on a charge of having stolen two rings from the shop of Mr Marquis, jeweller, Whitechapel, while there selling a valuable breast-pin, was brought before Mr Raffles. The breast-pin turned out to have been stolen from Mr Hayman's shop in Castle Street. It also turned out that Ennis had stolen a silver vinaigrette from the establishment of Messrs. Elkington and Co., in Church-street. The prisoner was committed for trial on all three charges.<sup>8</sup>

The Court Record shows that Robert Ennis, 18, tailor, read and write imp, committed 27 January 1862 for stealing two plated rings, the property of Wolf Marquis; two vinaigrettes, the property of George Richard Elkington and others; and also with having taken into his possession two breast pins, the property of Lewis Hayman, well knowing them to have been feloniously stolen. Tried on 11 March 1862 and found guilty of larceny after a previous conviction and sentenced to 10 years penal servitude.<sup>9</sup>

The Prison Registers show that Robert Ennis, 18, single, read and write imperfectly, tailor, was received at Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire, from Liverpool Prison on 12 July 1862. He was then transferred to Chatham Dockyard in Kent on 17 February 1863, class 2. His previous convictions were recorded as once convicted, once summary – 28 days and 5 years in Reformatory, twice acquitted.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Patriot, 17 January 1861, p12

<sup>4</sup> Chester Courant, 27 February 1861, p6

<sup>5</sup> TNA, RG9/2594

<sup>6</sup> Liverpool Mercury, 13 January 1862, p6

<sup>7</sup> TNA, PCOM2/335

<sup>8</sup> Liverpool Albion, 3 February 1862, p9

<sup>9</sup> TNA, PCOM2/335

<sup>10</sup> TNA, HO23/19, Wakefield

At Chatham, Robert Ennis, 18, was described as 5'4½ ", brown hair, fresh complexion, grey eyes, tailor, with no marks.<sup>11</sup> Robert was not well-behaved at Chatham. Governor's Journal shows: <sup>12</sup>  
8 May 1863. I heard reports and awarded 5334 Robt Ennis 2 days of bread and water  
29 May 1863. I heard reports and awarded 5334 Robt Ennis 3 days of bread and water  
17 July 1863. I heard reports and awarded 5334 Robt Ennis 2 days of bread and water

After about 6 months at Chatham, he was transferred to Portsmouth Prison in the September quarter of 1863. <sup>13</sup> He boarded the *Lord Dalhousie* on 14 September 1863 for the voyage to Western Australia.

### Western Australia

Robert arrived on 28 December 1863, after a voyage of 90 days. On arrival, he was assigned number 7405, and a physical description was recorded.

Robert Ennis, convicted 11 March 1862, 10 years, 21, 5'4½ ", light brown hair, light blue eyes, oval face, fair complexion, stout, small scar on the back of left hand, musician, single. <sup>14</sup>

Another register said he could read and write, was Protestant, and that his father was recorded as Michael Gibbons, a signwriter, at 22 Circle Street, Liverpool. It is unclear whether Robert provided this misleading information or whether it concerns another prisoner.

Another Register said Robert had three books, a belt and letters when he arrived on 31 December 1863. A music book, a locket, and a toothbrush were retrieved on 17 April 1866 on his discharge. The record seems to be wrong as the two accounts don't match.

The prisoners on the *Lord Dalhousie* started being removed from the ship the day after she arrived. Small numbers of Probationary Prisoners, often according to trade, were sent to Perth, Guildford and other depots. From January 1864, men were assigned to road parties.

On 8 February 1864, Robert Ennis was one of eight Probationary Prisoners transferred per Police Escort to be employed at New Government House. <sup>15</sup>

Less than a month later, on 1 March 1864, he was returned to Fremantle Prison from Perth.

On 11 March 1864, he forfeited his tobacco for 14 days for being a nuisance in cells. It was the beginning of a long history of being uncooperative.

7 April 1864. Wilfully upsetting an oil lamp, 3 days of bread and water

23 May 1864. Untidy and dirty cell, forfeit tobacco for one month

On 24 May 1864, he was discharged from Prison and sent to Bunbury. He was back in Fremantle Prison by 13 October 1864, when he was charged with insolence and fined 14 days' tobacco.

The first few months of the year saw Robert sick with headaches, coughs, chest infections, or debility. He was employed at the prison tailor's shop. On 3 June 1865, Robert Ennis was one of the Probation Prisoners promoted to the rank of Constable of the 3rd Class from 1 June.

On 2 July 1866, the Resident Magistrate, Fremantle, approved a Ticket of Leave on his own account for Robert Ennis to enable him to commence business in Fremantle as a Tailor. The letter said, "This man has had money sent to him from England to the amount of £500, and I have therefore to request that you will cause a strict watch to be kept upon him to see that he really does work and not idle about the town". <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> TNA, PCOM2/2, Chatham

<sup>12</sup> TNA, PCOM2/428

<sup>13</sup> TNA, HO8/157

<sup>14</sup> State Records Office of WA (SROWA), Acc 128/32

<sup>15</sup> SROWA, Superintendent Orders, 1858 - 1864 (So6 - So8), p452, 473

<sup>16</sup> SROWA, Comptroller General of Convicts Correspondence, CONS 1156/C2; C3

Robert's good behaviour didn't last long. On 31 August 1866, he was convicted of aggravated assault and sentenced to 18 months in Prison. He received 3 days of bread and water a week later, for malingering. On 17 September, he was sent to Mr Collet's Party at Guildford. The work was not to his liking, and he was sentenced to 12 months' hard labour, with 6 months in irons, for refusing to work and for gross insubordination on 28 September. He was returned to Prison.

6 February 1867. Ten prisoners were released from their irons. Five other prisoners, including Robert Ennis, would have been released from irons had they not misconducted themselves while in the chain gang.

On 28 May 1867, Robert was charged with stealing a quantity of kerosene from a feeder left in the passage and received 3 days' bread and water.

He was discharged to the Guildford Depot on 5 July 1867 and was soon in trouble again.

On 24 September 1867, he was charged with leaving his work without permission and telling falsehoods, and was sentenced to 3 days of bread and water. He appears to have been transferred to the Perth District, as on 12 October 1867, at Perth, he was charged with habitual idleness and refusing to work and given 3 days' bread and water. Bad behaviour continued:

19 October 1867, Perth, having three parts of a sheet of foolscap paper hidden under his bed, one day bread and water.

6 November 1867, Perth, highly insubordinate conduct, 7 days bread and water

23 November 1867, Perth, general idleness on the public works, 7 days' bread and water

10 December 1867. Robert Ennis is to be transferred from Perth to Fremantle Prison, where he will be employed as a Tailor.

On 3 January 1868, in Fremantle, Robert quarrelled in the tailor's shop; he was cautioned and discharged.

He worked on the construction of Perth Town Hall from 10 September to 11 December 1867, when he was reported and returned to Fremantle Prison.

On 5 October 1868, he was charged with having two extra blankets and a pack of cards in his cell.

The blanket case was not proved, and he had to forfeit the cards.

He was engaged by H Griffiths as a tailor at 40/- on 10 July 1869. Griffiths had a shop in Hay Street, Perth.

At the Perth Court, on 13 September 1869. R. Ennis, t.l., out after hours on the night of the 11th inst; dismissed.<sup>17</sup>

Police Court, 7 February 1870. Robert Ennis, charged with entering the dwelling house of Bernard Evans for an unlawful purpose; he was further charged with committing a breach of the T. L. regulations, having an engagement with Griffiths, and at the same time working for himself. He was also living with a prostitute. Sentenced to two years' hard labour. His Ticket of Leave was revoked on 1 March 1870.<sup>18</sup>

He was soon back to his old habits:

17 February 1870, smoking in cell, 2 days bread and water.

2 May 1870, Fremantle, writing an untruthful letter to the Comptroller General, 7 days of bread and water

30 September 1870, drunk, 6 days of bread and water

16 November 1870, stealing 10 pence from a boy named John Caporn at Fremantle, 18 months' hard labour. Robert was a reconvicted ticket-of-leave holder on the public works.

24 January 1871, being on the separate confinement landing, 2 days of bread and water.

5 May 1871, unnecessarily coming to see the Surgeon, 3 days bread and water.

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<sup>17</sup> The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times, 4 September 1869, p3

<sup>18</sup> The Express, 8 February 1870, p3, Government Gazette, 1 March 1870

On 27 December 1871, being under the influence of liquor at the Lunatic Asylum, 7 days of bread and water. No other information has been found about his apparent time in the Asylum.

22 May 1872, discharged, probably to North Fremantle Depot or associated outstations.

28 June 1872, idleness and absence from camp, cautioned.

7 July 1872, received back in Prison from North Fremantle Depot.

21 July 1872, talking during Divine Service, 2 days bread and water.

In October, he was again under medical supervision. From 19 October 1872, he was in hospital with Gonorrhoea and was discharged back to Prison on 1 November 1872.

His conduct must have improved, as on 10 May 1873, he was granted a remission of 3 months' gang labour. On 7 June 1873, drunk and incapable at Perth, 10 days' hard labour at Perth.

Robert was employed as a tailor in several establishments:

18 July 1873, piece work, Thomas Stanley, St Georges Tce, Perth

15 September 1873, 50/- per month, T.G. Molloy, Perth

26 September 1873, piece work, Agnew and Kelly, Fremantle

17 October 1873, piece work, G Cooper, Fremantle

Then, on 15 December 1873, he was drunk and disorderly at Fremantle and sentenced to one month's hard labour at Fremantle Prison.

Robert was then sent south to Bunbury on 16 January 1874. He was transferred to the Sussex District on 26 January, where he was employed as a labourer for J Simpson, at Lockerville, near the townsite of Wonnerup, close to Busselton and the Vasse Estuary.

1 April 1874, employed as a labourer, 30/- per week, by Thos Carter, Busselton.

13 June 1874, convicted at Vasse for being out after hours and received 14 days' hard labour. His Ticket of Leave was not revoked.

He began working as a tailor again for:

27 June 1874, piece work, W.W. Bramwell, Busselton. Then he was transferred to Bunbury on 25 July 1874 and began piecework for J.O. Bryan.

On 10 August 1874, he was transferred back to Perth and engaged by H.B. Haynes, doing piecework on 26 August. He was allowed to work on his own account or to decide where he would work for 3 months.

On 31 August 1874, he was engaged for 50/- per month by T.G. Molloy, Perth, as a tailor.

31 December 1874, working as a labourer for £3 per week, on own account.

On 1 May 1875, Robert appeared as a witness in the indictment hearing of Ellen Thwaites and George Levi, charged with stealing from the person of Jas. Ford, a sum of £16 in notes and gold. They were sent to trial. Robert Ennis said he resided in Murray Street and worked as a tailor.<sup>19</sup>

Robert, now calling himself Robert Adolphus Ennis, married Belinda Roberts in Albany between 5 May and 19 August 1875.<sup>20</sup> Where and when he met Belinda is unknown.

Robert Ennis, son of William Pearson and Belinda Roberts, was born in 1875 at Albany. It is unclear whether a mistake was made when registering the birth or the baby was born before the marriage, and William said he was the father, so the baby was not illegitimate. Later, Robert's birth was given as: 30 July 1875 in Western Australia; 25 August 1875 in Adelaide; 24 August 1875 in Victoria.

The ship, *Emily Smith*, left Albany on 4 December 1875 and arrived at Adelaide on 23 December. Passengers included Robt Emes, Belinda and a child.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Western Australian Times, 14 May 1875, p3

<sup>20</sup> Clifton marriage. No 3900, 5 May 1875; Ennis marriage, No 3957; Egerton Warburton marriage, No 3977, 19 August 1875.

The family had moved to New South Wales by 1876-7.

In April 1878, in the list of unclaimed letters at Sydney, there is one for Mrs R. Ennis, who appears to be Robert's wife.

Then, in June 1878, the following appeared in the Victorian and New South Wales Police Gazettes.

Missing Friends. Information is requested of Mrs Ennis. Her husband, Robert Ennis, is an expirée from Western Australia to Adelaide in December 1875; he left Port Adelaide for Newcastle about two years ago, and his wife left shortly after in a Melbourne steamer, supposed for the purpose of joining him. He is described as 5 feet 4½ inches high, age not given, brown to grey hair, fair complexion, scar on the back of the right hand, a tailor, a drunkard. It is believed that he is working at his trade in or about Melbourne, and no doubt his wife would be with him.

Information to the officer in charge of Detectives, Melbourne. 3 June 1878.<sup>22</sup>

Is the person inquiring about Mrs Ennis the same person who wrote the letter to Sydney? It could be her stepfather, William Pearson.

The birth of Edward J. S. ENNIS, son of Robert A. and Belinda V, was registered at Glebe in 1877.

Later records note he was born on 31 July 1876 or 18 January 1879!

There is a Robert Ennis convicted of stealing on 12 January 1878 at Darlinghurst, sentenced to one calendar month, and discharged on 11 February. He appears to be Belinda's husband.

The 1879 Sands Directory has R.A. Ennis, tailor, living at 123 Abercrombie Place.

A third son, Alfred Ernest ENNIS, son of Robert A. and Belinda, was born in the district of Sydney in 1879. A later record says he was born on 14 June 1879.

Robert was in Victoria by December 1879 when, as G.J. Abgood, he was wanted by the Police.

C. Fisher and G.J. Abgood are charged, on a warrant issued by the Sandhurst Bench, with imposing on John Lohmann, publican, High Street, Sandhurst, on 11 December 1879, to the amount of £1.9. 1st. C Fisher is identical with John Faulkner; see Police Gazette list, 1 October 1878. Now dressed in an old dark or black cloth suit and believed to be clean-shaven; see Photo No. 10236.

2nd. G.J. Abgood is supposed to be English, 31 or 32 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, medium build, sallow complexion, dark hair and whiskers, small moustache, cheeks shaved; wore a dark brown tweed paget suit, and soft-crowned hat. They were seen at Kangaroo Flat, four miles from Sandhurst, on the 13th instant. They said they had a number of wild beasts to be exhibited. The Police Gazette of 24 December 1879 reported that the Melbourne detective police had arrested them.<sup>23</sup>

At the Sandhurst Petty Sessions, 19 December 1879. Robert Ennis, otherwise G.J. Abgood, and Chas Faulkner, otherwise C. Fisher, were charged with imposing upon Jno Lohmann by false representation with a view to obtaining money and goods at Sandhurst on 11 December 1879. One month imprisonment with hard labour each.<sup>24</sup>

In February 1880, a newspaper reported that George Thomas, alias James Fox alias Robert Ennis alias Abgood, and John Falconer were both sentenced to three months' imprisonment at the St. Kilda Court for larceny from the clothes of some of the swimmers at Hegarty's baths. The bench, very justly remarked that it was intolerable that people should not be able to enjoy a bathing without losing their personal property, and abruptly silenced the whining appeals of the prisoners.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> South Australia Register, 27 December 1875, p5

<sup>22</sup> NSW Police Gazette, 12 June 1878, p218. (From the Victorian Police Gazette)

<sup>23</sup> Victoria Police Gazette, 17 December 1879, p315, 20 December 1879, p327

<sup>24</sup> See Newspaper report: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/88879393?searchTerm=robert%20ennis>

<sup>25</sup> The Ballarat Star, 4 Feb 1880, p3; The Herald, 3 February 1880, p3

The family were living in Collingwood.

13 October 1880: Robert Ennis, tailor, Mason Street, wood house

11 October 1882: Robert Ennis, tailor, Emerald Street, wood house

At the Central Criminal Court, Melbourne, 17 July 1882.

Robert Ennis was charged with uttering a spurious half crown, he knowing it to be counterfeit, the second with uttering one "lemons" half sovereign, knowing it to be counterfeit and also having another counterfeit half sovereign in his possession at the same time. The prisoner was undefended. The evidence showed that on the 20 May the prisoner uttered a counterfeit half sovereign at the shop of Mrs Manning in Gipps Street, in payment for two mugs. On the 17 June he purchased some tobacco and matches at a tobacconist Bishop kept by a Mrs Walker in Stanley street. In payment he tendered a counterfeit half sovereign, receiving change on the supposition that it was a genuine one. Soon afterwards he was seen passing the shop, and was then arrested by Constables Bannon and Cook. He objected to being searched till he was taken to the watchhouse. On the road to the lock-up, he pulled another half-sovereign out of his pocket, but it was taken from him. The prisoner said he had won the half-sovereigns in a wager and did not know they were base.

The jury found the prisoner guilty on both counts. His Honour sentenced the prisoner to 12 months' imprisonment on the first count and to 16 months' imprisonment on the second, the sentences to be concurrent.<sup>26</sup> He was discharged from Pentridge Gaol on 15 September 1883.

Belinda was left in dire circumstances, with three children aged between 3 and 7 years old to support. On 15 December 1882, the three children were made wards of the state at Collingwood court, for neglect. Robert was committed to care for 9 years, and James and Alfred for 11 years.

Father: Robert Ennis, tailor, at present in gaol for passing bad coin.

Mother: Belinda Ennis, charwoman, off Emerald Street, Collingwood, very poor. Belinda was either pregnant or had just given birth to her fourth son.<sup>27</sup>

The three children were boarded out to a foster mother, Eliza Hartshorn, at Steiglitz on 23 December 1882. They were all discharged back to their parents on 21 September 1883, a few days after their father's release from gaol.

On 12 November 1883, there was a train accident in Melbourne. The train was taking passengers to the Flemington races when the axle broke on one carriage, piercing the floor of the carriage.<sup>28</sup> The carriage rocked violently, causing three passengers to be injured and taken to the hospital. By the end of the year, 17 writs, totalling £16,000, had been served on the Government by the injured passenger. Robert Adolphus Ennis put in a claim for £300. Whether he was paid or not is unknown.

Then at South Melbourne Court, 27 February 1884. Robert Ennis, alias George Marsden, was brought before the South Melbourne bench for stealing some knives, forks and spoons valued at 15/-, the property of Joseph Gaff, who keeps the Talbot Inn. It appeared that on the 22nd instant, the prisoner, while in the house in question, asked to leave to go to the yard at the back, and seeing the cutlery lying on a table within convenient reach, transferred the articles to his pocket. The bench determined to place him beyond the reach of temptation for a period of three months.<sup>29</sup> He was released from Pentridge Gaol in the week ending 2 June 1884.

Earlier in the year, on 25 January, George Marsden was charged with stealing a pair of tailor's shears from the shop of Mr John Marshall, High Street. He was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The Argus, 18 July 1882, p10

<sup>27</sup> The birth of their fourth son, Edward Sylvester, was registered in 1883 and he died in 1883 aged 11 months.

<sup>28</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/202608062?searchTerm=train>

<sup>29</sup> The Age, 28 February 1884, p7

<sup>30</sup> The Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra Guardian, 26 January 1884, p5

South Melbourne Petty Sessions, 12 December 1884. Robert Henderson charged Robert Ennis with using insulting words; no appearance. No further information has been found on this charge. In February 1886, Robert Adolphus Ennis was arraigned for wilful and corrupt perjury at the South Melbourne police court on 9 December last. The prisoner had been summoned at the suit of Jas. Leary for £2 6s. 6d. for money lent. Ennis swore that he had never borrowed any money from Leary. The magistrates dismissed the case. The prisoner adhered to what he had sworn in the South Melbourne police court. The jury brought in a verdict of guilty. The prisoner, who had been convicted on two previous occasions, was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour, the first five days in each month to be passed in solitary confinement.<sup>31</sup> He was discharged in the week ending 24 January 1887.

While Robert was in prison, two of his sons were truant. The warrants were not served as Robert, according to the Prahan Petty Sessions, on 16 September 1886. Robert was in Gaol.

Robert Ennis (defendant), truancy of his son James, not served

Robert Ennis (defendant), truancy of his son Robert, not served

Belinda was not so lucky, at the Prahan Petty Sessions, on 23 September 1886:

Belinda Ennis was charged twice for truancy by her sons, James and Robert. Each fine was 2/6, or in default, 12 hours imprisonment.

St Kilda Court of Petty Sessions, 8 May 1888. Robert Ennis summoned for owing £2 5 3 in Industrial School fees. The charge was withdrawn.

By 1888, Robert and Belinda's marriage had broken down.

St Kilda, 24 April 1888. Belinda Ennis, on Friday last, had her husband, Robert Ennis, bound over to keep the peace towards her. She complained that since that date, he returned to her house and kicked her in the stomach. A warrant was issued for his arrest.<sup>32</sup>

27 April 1888. Robert Ennis was charged with assaulting his wife. The case was adjourned for 7 days to enable the defendant to go away, as his wife desired that he should leave her.<sup>33</sup>

20 April 1888. A man named Robert Ennis, said to be a tailor, was, at the St Kilda court on Friday, charged with threatening the life of his wife, Belinda Ennis, on the 10th inst. He was bound over himself in £25, and two sureties of £25 each, to keep the peace towards his wife for three months.<sup>34</sup>

Robert Ennis, who was charged with assaulting his wife, was called but did not appear. Adjourned for another week.<sup>35</sup>

St Kilda Court of Petty Sessions, 11 May 1888. Robert Ennis, who threatened Belinda Ennis, was discharged.

The Rate Books show various addresses for Robert and Belinda Ennis:

City of Prahan, 1888 and 1889. Belinda Enis, 56 Peel Street, wood house, 4 rooms

St Kilda, Rates, 1888. Robert Ennis, tailor, Queen Street

City of Prahan, 1890. Robert Ennis, tailor, Peel Street, brick, 4 rooms

City of St Kilda, 1893. Belinda Ennis, nurse, 32 Linton Street, 4 rooms wood house

City of St Kilda, 1894. Belinda Ennis, D.D. 16 Prentice Street, 3 rooms wood house

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<sup>31</sup> The Age, 27 February 1886, p9

<sup>32</sup> The Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahan and South Yarra Guardian, 28 April 1888, p6

<sup>33</sup> The Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahan and South Yarra Guardian, 28 April 1888, p6

<sup>34</sup> The Argus, 23 April 1888, p8

<sup>35</sup> The Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahan and South Yarra Guardian, 5 May 1888, p6



St Kilda Petty Sessions, 25 April 1890:

Robert Ennis, in arrears for £7.7.6 maintenance order. The arrears were cancelled as from 31 March 1890. It appears they were back together.

When their son Robert was committed to State Care again, for larceny, on 24 August 1891, the record shows:

Father: Robert Ennis, tailor, Vine Cottage, Octavia Street, St Kilda.

Mother: Belinda Ennis, same address, in poor circumstances

Robert continued to be in trouble with the law. St Kilda Petty Sessions, 21 September 1894:

Robert Ennis, on a warrant of 20 September 1890, being an idle and disorderly person having no visible lawful means of support, was remanded until 28 September, bail set at self £10.

28 September 1894. Robert Ennis, charge withdrawn. He was then charged with feloniously stealing one copper boiler of the value of 24/-, the property of John Strong, on 19 September 1894.

Committed to prison for 3 months.

## Death

Died 12 September 1895 at Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum. Robert Ennis, tailor, 49, died of disease (softening) of the brain. An inquest was held by the Coroner on 16 September 1895. Robert was buried on 16 September 1895 at Melbourne Cemetery. The death certificate records that he was born in England, was married, and that the names of his wife, his parents, and any children were unknown.

Robert Ennis was admitted to the Yarra Bend Asylum in December 1894 under legal custody. He was in fair bodily health and quiet and well-behaved. In February 1895, he had a severe attack of epilepsy. From then on, he had frequent epileptic attacks and became very weak. In June, he developed a bedsore on his sacrum and was sent to the Hospital ward on 29 June.

In July, he had a severe attack of shingles, and during his last month, he was almost continually in bed. His fits became more severe, and gradually he became exhausted and sank. He died on 12 September 1895 at 3:30 pm.

No friends visited.

The Post Mortem findings: Sparingly nourished, slight bedsore over the sacrum, no marks of violence. The chest and abdomen were healthy. The brain was softened throughout, and the membranes congested. Cause of death: Softening of the brain.

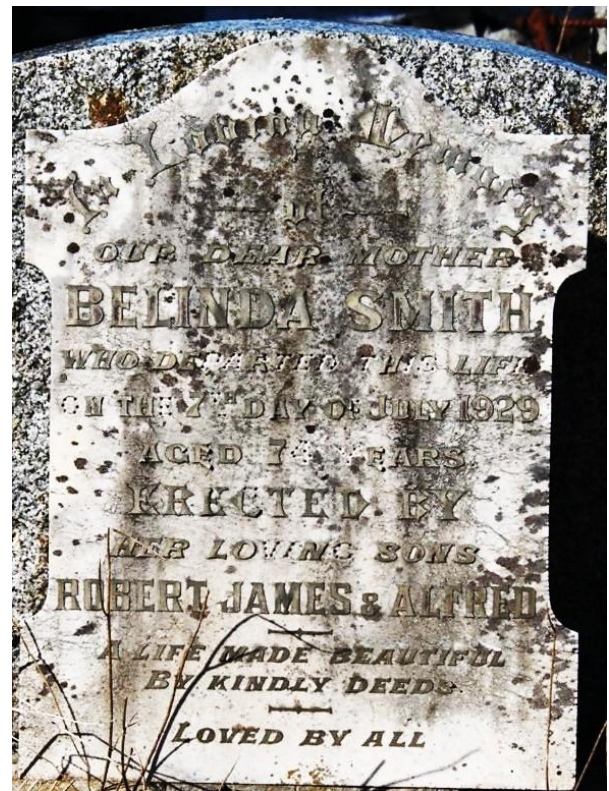
After Robert's death, Belinda married Henry Smith in 1902. His wife had died giving birth to her 12th child in 1901.

Belinda died in July 1929. Her children, Robert, James and Alfred, erected a plaque on her grave.

Their two sons, Robert and James, had criminal records.<sup>36</sup>

Robert Ennis, Prisoner 27541

James Ennis, Prisoner 27363



## Belinda Ennis née Roberts

Baptism	27 June 1852, at St John Baptist, Coventry, Warwickshire
Parents	James Roberts and Henrietta Chaplin
Parent's marriage	30 December 1850 at Parish of St Stephen, Norwich
Siblings	Sarah (1857), Priscilla (~1861)

When Belinda Roberts was baptised, her father, James, was a Private in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lancers, living at George Yard, Coventry.

The marriage and family of James Roberts is not acknowledged in the Army records.

On the 1861 census, Henrietta, Belinda and Priscilla have not been found. Young Sarah is living with her grandparents, James and Virtue Chaplin, in Bawdewell, Norfolk. James was in the Hounslow Barracks in Middlesex, recorded as single.

The family arrived in Western Australia on the convict Ship *York* in 1862. However, Henrietta and the girls are not listed among many others on the shipping record. James was an Enrolled Pensioner Guard.

At the Supreme Court, Perth, on 2 July 1863:

Michael Monaghan, indicted for the rape of **Belinda Roberts, a child of 11 years of age**, at Rottneest. The prisoner is a Pensioner belonging to the Enrolled Force and stationed at Rottneest; the Prosecutrix was the child of a brother Pensioner, also stationed on the island. Mr Landor conducted the defence.

The jury, after four hours' consideration, returned a verdict of guilty of an assault with intent, and a sentence of 12 months' imprisonment was passed.<sup>37</sup>

On 10 January 1865, the *Daylight*, 629 tons, Captain C. H. Pearce, for London. Passengers included—**B Roberts and Sarah Roberts** in steerage.<sup>38</sup> Belinda would have been 12, and Sarah 7.

Belinda has not been found on the 1871 census in England. At some stage, she returned to Western Australia.

Later, on 4 June 1866, the *David & Jessie*, 141 tons, R. McMichen, master, for Melbourne. Passengers included: Steerage Passengers included **Henrietta Roberts and Priscilla Roberts**.<sup>39</sup>

Henrietta and Priscilla returned to Western Australia. Possibly her marriage had broken down when James went to New Zealand. His Army Pension was paid to the Districts of:

1866 Victoria

1869-1875 Auckland, New Zealand

1876 New South Wales

Henrietta married William Pearson in 1872 in Albany.

Henrietta Pearson, daughter of William Pearson and Henrietta née Chaplain, was born in 1874. She died on 20 October 1874, aged 6 months

Her mother, Henrietta Pearson, died on 12 April 1874, aged 40, the wife of William Pearson, cabinet maker, Albany. She was buried on 14 April 1874.

William Pearson is probably convict 6706 who arrived on the convict ship *York* in 1862. He was in Albany in 1865, a carpenter, when he received his Ticket of Leave.

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<sup>37</sup> The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 3 July 1863, p2

<sup>38</sup> The Inquirer and Commercial News, 18 Jan 1865, p2

<sup>39</sup> The Inquirer and Commercial News, 27 June 1866, p3

**Belinda's sisters:****Sarah**

On the 1871 census, Eden Road, Grosvenor Rise, East, St Mary, Walthamstow, Essex:  
Thomas Brigham, head, 60, labourer, born Weston, Norfolk  
Frances Chaplin, 43, niece, laundress, born Bawdeswell, Norfolk [sister of Henrietta]  
Sarah Roberts, niece, 13, laundress, born Bawdeswell, Norfolk  
Mary Short, 78, lodger.

No trace has been found of Sarah Roberts after the 1871 census. She was not with Frances Chaplin on the 1881 census. It is unknown if she returned to Western Australia.

**Priscilla**

Priscilla Roberts married David James Denfield Harris at Albany in 1880. They had five children: Henrietta Lydia 1881, Sarah Adelaide 1882, Maud Ada 1883, David Henry 1885, Edward James Albany 1887.

A Decree Absolute was granted on 12 September 1911. A potted history of their marriage is found at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/81749340?searchTerm=priscilla%20harris>

After her divorce, Priscilla married William Clarke at Guildford in 1911.

She died on 19 May 1943, Goomalling Hospital, Western Australia, aged 82, and was buried at Northam.