

Patrick Gibbons, 8011, *Merchantman 2*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Patrick was possibly born in Ireland around 1839, and Prison records note he was a baker, and his uncle, Peter Gibbon, lived in Stockdale Street, Liverpool.

On the 1851 census, living at 1 Court Stockdale, St Bartholomew district, Liverpool was his uncle and family:

Peter Gibbons, head, married, 50, dealer, born in Ireland

Catherine, wife, 50, born in Ireland

Mary, daughter, unmarried, 26, servant, born in Ireland

Catherine, daughter, 15, born in Ireland

John, son, 17, dealer, born in Ireland

and 5 lodgers.¹

His nephew, Patrick Gibbons, may have been living nearby at 2 Court Benjohnson Street, Liverpool, less than a km away:

Patrick Gibbons, visitor, unmarried, 16, baker, born in Ireland

Julia Gibbons, visitor, unmarried, 12, hawker, born in Ireland

They were staying with Peter Mulheran, 35, hawker, born in Ireland; his wife Margaret and three children, all born in Ireland and one child born in Liverpool (2 months old); and another visitor.

At some stage, Patrick joined the Royal Artillery as a driver, and several Court Martials appear to be Patrick.²

- Driver, Patrick Gibbons, R Arty, by a Court Martial held at Woolwich on 14 March 1860, absent, losing necessaries &c, 84 days hard labour and stoppages.
- Driver, Patrick Gibbons, R Arty, by a Court Martial held at Benares 7 December 1860, biting a comrade's nose, 12 months hard labour and stoppages.

The next two charges appear to be Patrick; however, they happened when serving his 12 months:

- Driver, Patrick Gibbons, R Arty, by a Court Martial at Allahabad 8 January 1861, insubordinate language, 4 days hard labour.
- Driver, Patrick Gibbon, R Arty, by a Court Martial held at Allahabad³ on 14 June 1861, asleep on sentry, 3 days hard labour.⁴

Then in 1862, Patrick Gibbons, 23, single, can't R&W, baker and driver Royal Artillery, was convicted 18 July 1862 at Benares by General Court Martial for desertion and striking his superior officer, and sentenced to 14 years penal servitude.

Patrick spent 5 months and 7 days in prison at Calcutta, where his conduct was indifferent, he spent 4 months and 17 days on the *Adamant* being transported from India to England.

¹ 1851 census, HO107/2178

² He has a common name and there was also a gunner called Patrick Gibbons also in the Royal Artillery at the same time.

³ Benares is now called Varanasi, and Allahabad is Prayagraj, both in Uttar Pradesh, India.

⁴ TNA WO86/12, piece 012, Judge Advocate General's Office District Courts Martial Registers (1861-1862)

Portsmouth, 2 May 1863. *The hired transport Adamant, No 815, arrived at Spithead this morning from Calcutta, having on board Captain M McCausland, 11th Regiment (in command); Lieutenant Teevan, 94th Regiment; Staff Assistant-Surgeon Skinner (in medical charge), 10 sergeants, and 92 men of various regiments whose time of service had expired; also 12 military convicts, and Captain Daly and child, and Mrs Skinner, passengers. The troops were landed at the dockyard, and sent by railway to their different depots. The convicts were handed over to the military authorities for disposal. The Adamant left Calcutta 25 December 1862; arrived at the Cape on 18 February, and remained there eight days, leaving on 26th. She has made a very long passage home, having experienced bad weather. When off Madagascar she encountered a severe hurricane on 3 February which lasted three days. The hatches were battened down, and the troops kept below for 72 hours; she was running at a rate of 8 knots under close-reefed topsail only; the lowest barometer at the time being 29.80. She did not sustain any damage.*⁵

Patrick was received at Millbank on 12 May 1863 from Calcutta per *Adamant* and spent 2 months and 15 days at Millbank Prison, where his conduct was good. He was then transferred to Pentonville Prison on 27 July 1863, where his behaviour was very good. He was transferred again, this time to Chatham, on 24 December 1863. He boarded the *Merchantman* on 14 June 1864 for the voyage to Western Australia.⁶

On arrival at Fremantle in 1864, he was described as:

8011. Patrick Gibbons, convicted 18 July 1862, 14 years, 24, 5'3½", auburn hair, grey eyes, an oval face, swarthy complexion, middling stout, letter D on left side, groom, single.

Patrick, like many convicts, suffered several times from ophthalmia.

1 March 1869, aged 26, admitted to hospital with ophthalmia, discharged 14 April 1869, employed as a hospital orderly.

21 June 1869, admitted again with ophthalmia and discharged 2 July 1869. He was still employed as a hospital orderly.

19 September 1874, now aged 30, he was admitted with ophthalmia and discharged to a ticket of leave on 30 October 1874.

Patrick was a violent man; he drank heavily and was always in and out of court and prison, mostly in York. He had no proper skills and worked as a labourer, general servant, and a shepherd. He was often charged with being loose, idle, drunken and disorderly, loitering, with no visible means of support etc.; perhaps best described as a vagrant.

M. Brady tol reported at the station at 3:30 pm that last night when he was at Beverley, he had a few words with Patrick Gibbons tol. While he was asleep at about 11 pm, he felt a sharp pang and, upon awakening, found his lower lip gone and saw Gibbons standing in front of him with the piece of his mouth. The whole bottom lip had been bitten off from the chin leaving only the corners.⁷ Patrick was sentenced to 12 months with hard labour for biting off the lip of Michael Brady during a drinking bout at Beverley.⁸

⁵ Irish Times, 14 May 1863, p3

⁶ TNA PCOM2/70; HO8/160

⁷ The York (WA) Occurrence Book. 30 Oct 1877:

⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle (York, WA : 1877 - 1927), 10 Nov 1877, p2. Michael Brady, 7590 per *Merchantman* 2.

In 1890, Patrick was arraigned on a charge of arson of the York Hotel. He had confessed while drunk and was acquitted because there was no corroborating evidence.⁹

An inquest was held at the York Hospital on Saturday evening into the death of Patrick Gibbons, who was found dead on the roadside near Maywood.

The following evidence was taken:

Thomas Balderson - I live near Greenhills. I was in York yesterday with my son. On returning home, I found Patrick Gibbons lying on the road at a spot about 5 miles from York. When he heard my cart coming, he staggered up; he was very drunk. I put him in my cart and took him about 7 miles. We were going through Maywood paddock; after getting through the gate, the horses left the track to go down to the river. One of the wheels of the cart went into a hole, and the deceased fell out of the cart. I was in the cart at the time, but my son was not. We removed the deceased from the wheel and placed him on a bag. I heard the deceased say, "You undo my trowsers". We covered the deceased with a bag and left him. We went home as it was dark. My son wanted to take the deceased home with us, but I said, "What's the use? We have no place to put him". I had two bottles of beer in the cart. The deceased got hold of the bottles and drank about two-thirds of the contents.

By the Jury - It was dark when the deceased fell out. Deceased was sitting in a box on the dray when he fell out. He was alive when we left; I thought he was drunk.

By the Coroner - the deceased fell over the wheel at the side. The right arm was under the wheel, and the wheel was up against his armpit. I left the man because I thought he was drunk. I did not think he was hurt. The cart did not get on the deceased. My son stopped the horses.

Thomas Balderson jun - corroborated his father's evidence. He further stated that just before leaving on Friday night the deceased said he thought he was done. On Saturday morning, he went to the place where they left Gibbons and found him dead, lying in the same position. He seemed to have only moved his right arm. He came to York to report the matter.

By the Jury - the deceased told me to slack his belt. He never complained of being hurt. He appeared to be dead for some time when I found him. Gibbons started out of York with Taylor. I do not know why Taylor left him.

John Albert O'Meehan - I am the medical officer in York. I have made a superficial examination of the body. There is a skin wound over the right hip, another one over the ribs on the left side, and there are three or four ribs on the right side over the liver smashed in. There are three or four small bruises over the place where the ribs were broken. Considering the evidence of the first witness, there is very little doubt that the cartwheel went partly on the body. I am under the impression that there has been some penetration of the ribs into the body, which caused the death. The wheel did not go right over the body. I do not think that a man could fall from a cart and break ribs without the wheel going over him.

Verdict: the deceased, Patrick Gibbons, came by his death by falling out of a cart and being crushed under the wheel while under the influence of intoxicating liquor.¹⁰

⁹ The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), 8 Oct 1890, p6

¹⁰ Eastern Districts Chronicle (York, WA : 1877 - 1927), 20 Dec 1890, p2