

***Griffith BOYER (aka BOWYER), Runnymede Convict # 4027
by Carol Wheat***

Griffith BOYER was baptised 7 August 1836 at Little Leigh, near Barnton, Cheshire. By 1851 the family had moved to Yorkshire, where his father was a Contractor for the railways, the sons also becoming railway labourers. At age 19, Griffith was indicted at York, for the manslaughter of George Turton at Silkstone. The deceased was a working miner at Silkstone near Barnsley. 14 August 1854 was feast day at Silkstone and in the evening the deceased was at the "Bunch of Roses" public house. There was dancing going on and he remained at the public house till a little after 11pm when he went, intending to call for his father who was at a beer house opposite, so that they might go home together. When he arrived at the beer house, he found some scuffling going on, the prisoner and his father being of the party. The deceased made some remark as to the impropriety of such proceedings and further altercation ensued.

The deceased soon afterwards left the house and there were at the same time on the road the prisoner, his father and a brother and one or two other persons. William BOYER, the brother of the prisoner called out to the deceased saying, "If he would come to him, he would give him it" or something to that effect. The deceased did go to him saying, "Now that I have come what would you mean to do" and presently a regular fight took place between the prisoner's brother and the deceased, the prisoner and others standing by. The two men fought. Each hit the other and at last they both went down the deceased being uppermost. While they were scuffling in this position the deceased was stabbed in the arm by someone. When he got up the parties separated.

The prisoner and his father however followed the deceased and made a fresh attack on him, the prisoner having a knife with which he stabbed the deceased in three places, twice in the body and once in the thigh. The deceased finding himself wounded screamed out and was carried to the Bunch of Roses and medical aid was called in. The injuries were so severe in nature that it was deemed expedient to take his deposition the next day before a magistrate and he died a few days later on 20 August.

In his deposition the deceased described the fight between himself and the prisoner's brother. Explained how he was kicked in the arm, the prisoner and his father being about at the time and swore positively that the three stabs he received afterwards were inflicted by the prisoner. For the defence, it was urged that the evidence adduced in support of the prosecution was confused and contradictory and that the identity of the prisoner, as the man who stabbed the deceased was not so conclusively and satisfactorily established as to justify the jury in saying that he was without doubt guilty of serious crime imputed to him. The jury retired to consider the verdict and after three-quarters of an hour they found the prisoner guilty.

Griffith BOYER, unmarried platelayer, had received 15 years for manslaughter and was sent to Portland Prison. He was transported to Western Australia aboard the *Runnymede* arriving in Fremantle on 11 September 1856. He received his ticket of leave on 9 July 1858, and later married Isabella LUCAS on 7 January 1861 at York, Western Australia. Twin daughters were born that year followed by five other children, including Joseph the youngest son born in 1869 who married Isabella Eliza WHEAT (nee LITTLE). Griffith died in the Colonial Hospital aged 43 years with Softening of the Brain and was buried in the Church of England section of the East Perth Cemetery, plot unknown.

Carol Wheat has written a series of related convict stories called 'Convicts in the Family' based on her husband, Jeffrey George Wheat's family history.