

Henry Simpson, 8126, *Merchantman 2*

Marcia Watson

Henry Simpson spent three weeks in gaol before his trial at the Monmouthshire Assizes on 30 March 1863. Henry, aged 17, a stable-boy, pleaded guilty to wilfully and feloniously setting fire to a rick of hay belonging to Thomas Ferrers Edwards, at Raglan, on 08 March. In sentencing the prisoner, the learned judge observed that he should sentence him to what he had said he desired - penal servitude and that for 8 years.¹ Thomas Ferrers Edwards was an innkeeper and farmer at Raglan and owned racing horses.

Henry, who has an *alias* of Walter Bishop, spent a total of one month and 27 days in Monmouth Gaol, where his conduct was good. He was then transferred to Millbank Prison, where he spent four months. Henry could read and write the prison register notes imperfectly, was Protestant, and had been convicted twice summarily. His conduct continued to be good. From Millbank, Henry went to Pentonville Prison for eleven months; his conduct was indifferent. On 8 April 1864, he was received at Portland Prison, where he stayed for two months and 18 days before boarding the *Merchantman 2* for Western Australia.²

On arrival at Fremantle on 12 September 1864, Henry was described as 19 years old, 5'2", light brown hair, blue eyes, round face, fair complexion, slight build, no marks, a jockey and single. He had a Hymnbook, memo book, a locket and sixpence.³

On 30 September 1864, he was discharged to Harvey Road as a probationary prisoner.⁴ Five years later, he received his Ticket of Leave issued on 10 September 1869.⁵

Henry's sentence expired on 29 March 1871. A Certificate of Freedom was sent to Resident Magistrate at Vasse on 21 April 1871.⁶

Note:

A newspaper article said an H Simpson, t.l. was convicted of being drunk and using obscene language on 3 August 1865 at Perth. He was sentenced to three months of hard labour. The prison records show this was Robert Simpson 6438. *The Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth, WA: 1855 - 1901), 9 August 1865, p2

¹ *Usk Observer*, 04 April 1863, p8. Note: Two newspapers called him Henry Simpson, and two named him Henry Sampson.

² PCOM2/380; PCOM2/70; PCOM2/47; HO24/17; HO24/9

³ SROWA, Acc128/40-43

⁴ SROWA, Acc1156/R&D3-R&D4

⁵ SROWA, Acc1156/S4-S6

⁶ SROWA, Acc1156/R21B