

## James HUNT, 1488, *Dudbrook*

**1851.** Wisbech. Impudent Robbery.— At a late hour on Sunday night, as Mr. Spraggs, of Timber Market, was proceeding home, he was assailed by three fellows, who knocked him down in the street, within few yards of his own door, and robbed him all the money he had. Suspicion attached two parties, who were apprehended; and at their examination on Tuesday, fully committed for trial the charge at the next Cambridge Assizes. Their names are Joseph Walton, and James Hunt; and a strong belief prevails that they were concerned in the late robbery Mr. Langley, who, it will be remembered received severe personal injury from his assailants, and in other depredations of late occurrence.

*Cambridge Independent Press*, 10 May 1851, p3

HIGHWAY ROBBERY. Joseph Walton (18), labourer, Wisbech, and James Hunt (21), carpenter, Emneth, were indicted for having, May 5th, feloniously assaulted John Spraggs, of Wisbech St. Peters, and with personal violence, stolen from his person two half-crowns, three shillings, and one sixpence, his property. Mr. Couch prosecuted Mr. Metcalfe defended Hunt, and Mr Douglas Brown defended Walton. Prosecutor, who is a gardener, living in the Timber market, Wisbech, was returning home about half-past twelve at night, when was seized near his own house, and robbed by three men. The question turned entirely upon the identity of the prisoners, two of the men who robbed prosecutor. Guilty. Hunt was stated to have borne a very good character until about year-and-a-half ago, when got into bad company. The Chief Baron commented upon the gravity of the crime of street-robbery, accompanied by violence, and sentenced the prisoners to transportation for ten years.

*Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* , 26 July 1851, p7

**1859.** RETURNING FROM TRANSPORTATION.— James Hunt, a tall and respectable-looking man, described on the police-sheet as a joiner, age 29, with no home, was brought before Mr. Selfe, on remand, charged with unlawfully returning from transportation before the term of his legal sentence had expired. William Lush, police constable, 200 K, said—On the evening of Tuesday, the 23rd of August he met the prisoner in the Mile-end-road, and took him to a deserter, in consequence of his attempting to avoid him. The prisoner walked into public-house, and he followed him and put some questions to him, which answered satisfactorily, and he permitted the prisoner to go at large. Soon afterwards the landlady of the public-house brought him a letter in an envelope, and said the man who had just left the house had thrown it under the settee. He looked at the address on the envelope, which was as follows:— “James Hunt, on board the convict ship *Dudbrook*, or elsewhere.” He immediately went in pursuit of the prisoner, and traced him up the road to Aldgate Church, where he could hear no further tidings of him. On the following morning he again saw the prisoner in the Mile-end-road and took him into custody. He told him suspected him to be a returned convict, and that he had found a letter addressed to him, on which the prisoner said he knew nothing at all about it.

Mr. Edward Fleming Burrows, governor of Wisbech goal, Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire, said the prisoner was given into his custody, after his committal for trial, in May, 1851, as James Hunt. On the 19th of July following the prisoner was tried before Chief Baron Bollock and a jury at the Cambridgeshire Summer Assizes, convicted of highway robbery, and sentenced to ten years' transportation. On the 21th of November in the same year he took the prisoner to the Wisbech Penitentiary, by order of the Home Secretary. Since the prisoner had been away he had been left very comfortable annual income, from inquiries had made, the prisoner was respectably connected, learnt a good trade, and unfortunately fell into bad company, with whom he committed serious a highway robbery. He also ascertained that after probation in the Penitentiary the prisoner was sent out in the convict ship *Dudbrook*, to Western Australia

to finish the remainder of his sentence there. A few months since was informed the prisoner had returned Wisbech, and had seen his relatives, who were very respectable, in the night time, and immediately afterwards left the town. He had his suspicions, and requested the relatives to send Hunt to him if was ever seen in Wisbech, but never came.

Mr. Selfe.—Has he had a conditional pardon?

Mr. Burrows.—I never received any information of it.

Mr. Selfe.—How long is it since he returned to England—to Wisbech ?

Mr. Burrows.—About four or five months. The letter spoken of by the police-constable is from the prisoner's mother; it five years old at least.

Mr. William Stein, chief warder of Portland Prison, was called to prove the identity of the prisoner, and upon getting into the witness-box, said, "I cannot undertake to make oath that the prisoner is man of whom I once had charge."

Mr. Selfe.—We will take your evidence.

Mr. Stein was then sworn, and said that a convict named James Hunt was in his charge in 1852, and he saw him embarked on board the *Dudbrook* the same year.

Mr. Selfe.—That is enough to fix the identity of the prisoner, for here is a letter, found upon him, addressed to James Hunt, on board the *Dudbrook*.

The prisoner in defence said he was shipped on board the *Dudbrook*, and was sent to the penal settlement in Western Australia. On the 1st of April, 1851, he received ticket of leave, and that did not expire until the 26th of September, 1856, when he received a conditional pardon from Governor Kennedy. He did not leave the colony until 1858.

Mr. Selfe.—You say you received conditional pardon. One of the conditions of that pardon was that you should not leave the colony.

Police-constable Copping, 379 K, said he had been twice to the Home-office, and was there informed the prisoner had not received any pardon at all.

The Prisoner.—I did receive one, and the registered number was 1,499. I have lost it. I have never been in custody for any offence, except the one upon which I was convicted.

Mr. Selfe.—One of the conditions of a conditional pardon is, that you shall not leave the colony until the term for which you were sentenced expired. If what you say is true, you will most probably only have a slight punishment, or a nominal one but I must commit you for trial at the next Old Bailey

*Morning Post*, 01 Sept 1859, p7

Old Bailey Sessions, 19th September **1859**

JAMES HUNT (29), Feloniously being at large before the expiration of the period for which he had been transported; to which he

PLEADED GUILTY .

Mr. Gent, for the prosecution, stated that the prisoner was sentenced to ten years' transportation in 1851, and received a pardon in 1856, conditional on his not returning to England; but having come into possession of some property was induced by his friends to return home. — Confined One Week, and afterwards to be confined Three Years' in Penal Servitude.

*Old Bailey Proceedings Online* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 8.0, 05 December 2020), September 1859, trial of JAMES HUNT (29) (t18590919-803).

James was received at Millbank Penitentiary on 23 September 1859 from Newgate Prison. He was then transferred to Pentonville Prison on 5 November. Seven months later, on 12 July 1860, he was sent to Chatham Prison. The prison records show he was a carpenter, single, and could read and write well. James was released on 18 September **1862** from Chatham Prison.