

John Roberts, 153, Hashemy

Researched by Marcia Watson

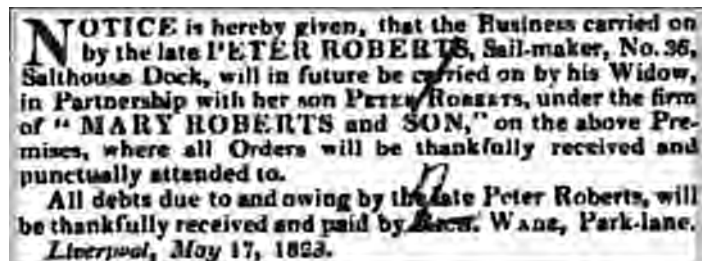
Born	20 September 1830.
Baptism	4 November 1830, St Peter's Church, Liverpool, Lancashire
Parents	Peter Roberts and Elizabeth Howard
Parent's marriage	13 June 1827, St James, Toxteth Park, Lancashire
Siblings	Letitia (1829), Elizabeth (1833), Thomas Howard (1834-1834), Teresa (1835), William Howard (1838), Ann (1839). Half-siblings Richard (1842), Mary Jane (1844), Emily (1845), Maria Scotson (1847), Alice Holland (1850), Agnes Augusta (1851), Atlanta (1853-1854)
Wife	Elizabeth Tonkin
Married	28 February 1860, Fremantle
Children	

John's grandfather died in December 1826:

Last week, Peter Roberts, of Parkgate, boatman, in the employ of Mr Ball. He was well known and respected as an intrepid sailor and an industrious and honest man.¹

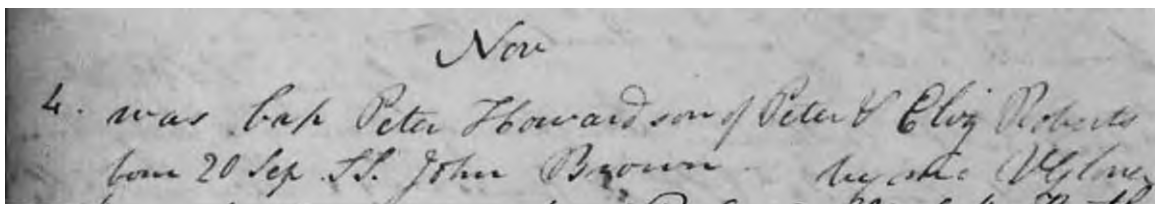
The following year, his father, also called Peter Roberts, married:

On Wednesday last, at St. James's Church, Mr Peter Roberts, jun., sail-maker, Upper Parliament-street, to Miss Eliz. Howard, Toxteth-park. ² On the church register, the marriage was by licence on 13 June 1827, and both signed their names. They also married on 26 June 1827 at the Catholic Church in Liverpool. The witnesses were Mrs Roberts and Richard Wade.³ (Richard Wade was married to Mary Robert's sister Ellen) Then, in 1828, this advertisement appeared in the newspaper. ⁴



Note: There is more than one Peter Roberts sail-maker in Liverpool.

It seems John Roberts' real name is Peter Howard Roberts.⁵



On 12 July 1830, an advertisement announced the partnership between Mary Roberts and her son Peter Roberts, Liverpool, sail-makers, has been dissolved.⁶

John's mother died between 1839 and 1841. In 1841, the family lived with John's grandmother at Summer Gardens, Walton on the Hill, West Derby, Lancashire:

Letitia Howard, 65, Independent; Peter Roberts, 35; Letitia Roberts, 12; Peter Roberts, 11; Elizabeth Roberts, 8; Teresa Roberts, 6; William Roberts, 4; Ann Roberts, 2

¹ Liverpool Mercury, 22 December 1826, p7

² Liverpool Mercury, 15 June 1827, p7

³ Liverpool Records Office, Catholic parish registers, 282 PET/2/1

⁴ Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser, 22 May 1828, p1

⁵ Liverpool records Office, 282/PET/1/3

⁶ Aris's Birmingham Gazette, 26 July 1830, p4

John's father re-married on 1 November 1841 at St Philip Church, Liverpool:

Peter Roberts, full age, widower, sail-maker, and his father Peter Roberts, a sail-maker.

Jane Holland, full age, spinster, daughter of John Holland, a plasterer.

On the 1851 census, Peter Roberts was a proprietor of houses. His youngest daughter, Ann from his first marriage, was living with them in West Derby, Liverpool.

Another child, Agnes Augusta, was born in 1851. Then in 1853, the family, Peter, Jane and their children migrated to Victoria, leaving on 23 July 1853, per *Goldfinder*, and arriving on 23 October. Peter is listed as a Grocer. Jane gave birth to Atalanta during the voyage; perhaps she was born in the Atlantic Ocean. She died aged eight months, in March 1854.

Jane Roberts died on 8 July 1854 of general dropsy and effusion of the chest, aged 39. The family had been in Victoria for eight months and stayed in Victoria.

On the 17th May, at Melbourne, Australia, aged 37, ELLEN, wife of Mr. MICHAEL HEALY, and youngest daughter of the late Mr. Peter Roberts, sailmaker, of this town; also, on the 16th June, aged 36, Mr. MICHAEL HEALY, husband of the above, and late of Dublin; and, on the 7th July, aged 38, JANE, wife of Mr. PETER ROBERTS, sailmaker, late of this town, second daughter of Mr. John Holland, Everton Village, and sister-in-law to the above.

7

Peter Howard Roberts becomes John Roberts:

In February 1848:

Daring shop robbery.— On Wednesday afternoon, three young men named John Dixon, **John Roberts** and George Butler went into the shop of Mr Sach, baker, of Kelvedon, and asked for some bread. Mr Sach was at home, and the lad behind the counter, William Potter, told them it did not lie in his power to comply with their request, whereupon one of them deliberately took the loaf from the window which broke and distributed to his companions. The boy called his mistress, who came into the shop, and he went for a neighbour. After he was gone, the prisoners remained in the shop for about ten minutes, during which they ate the bread and then decamped. They were, however, overtaken and apprehended at Rivenhall by police constable Varnham and were yesterday morning brought before W. W. Luard Esq. at Mr Blood's office, at Witham, by whom they were committed for trial at the adjourned sessions.⁸

At the Essex County Adjourned Sessions, on 15 February 1848:

George Butler, 20, John Roberts, 21 and John Dixon, 23, were convicted of larceny and sentenced to 7 days and whipped.⁹

The following month, at the Home Circuit, Chelmsford, on 10 March 1848:

John Roberts, 21, Thomas Folks 17, and George Butler, 20, three miserable-looking lads, were indicted for a burglary in the dwelling-house of Lucy Marshall and stealing some silver money and other articles, her property.

Mr Glyn prosecuted. It appeared that the prosecutrix is a widow, and she occupied, with her sister, a cottage in a lonely position near the village of Stansted, Mountfitchet. In the dead of the night of 25 February, she was awoken by hearing a noise in her sister's bedroom, and, upon going to see what was the matter, she found her sister in bed in a state of great alarm. The prisoners, Folks and Roberts, were in the room, the former with a large dinner knife in his hand. When they saw the prosecutrix, they demanded her money and took away a pocket containing about seven shillings. They then asked for "grub," and regaled themselves with some food, and drank a bottle of homemade wine, after which they told the prosecutor to

⁷ The Albion, 9 October 1854, p27

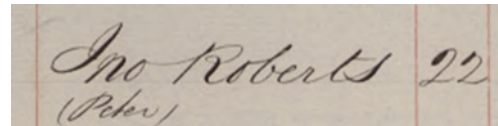
⁸ Essex Herald, 15 February 1848, p4

⁹ HO 27/84, p289

go to bed again, threatening her with violence if she gave any alarm, and they said they should leave a "watcher" outside to see if she disobeyed their injunctions.

The prisoners then went away but were apprehended shortly afterwards with part of the stolen property in their possession. It appeared pretty clear that Butler was outside the cottage watching, as they stated, while the others were committing the robbery. The prisoners were found Guilty, and Roberts and Butler, who had been before convicted of a felony, were sentenced to be transported for fifteen years, and Folks was ordered to be kept to hard labour for eighteen months.¹⁰

The following convicts were on Saturday removed from the Convict Gaol, Springfield, to Millbank Penitentiary —For fifteen years. John Roberts and George Butler, for burglary at Stansted Mountfitchet.^{11, 12}



John Roberts, 21, single, can read and write, labourer, was convicted on 6 March 1848 at Chelmsford of burglary after a previous conviction and sentenced to 15 years transportation. Once previously convicted and whipped. He was received at Millbank prison on 1 April 1848 from Springfield Prison in Essex. Eight months later, John was transferred to Pentonville Prison on 9 December 1848.¹³ He was received at Pentonville prison on the same day. At Pentonville, his age was 22, and his occupation was a Gentleman's servant. The Pentonville Prison register mentions his real name, Peter.

He was removed to Portland Prison on 9 December 1849.¹⁴ From Portland Prison, he boarded the *Hashemy* on 19 July 1850 for the voyage to Fremantle. George Butler, convicted with John, was also on the *Hashemy*.

On arrival at Fremantle, his description was:

153. John Roberts, 20, 5' 6", brown hair, hazel eyes, thin face, dark complexion, scar on right shin, servant and single.¹⁵

General Register:

153. John Roberts, 21, single, Gentleman's servant, Church of England, private school, read pretty well, read tolerably and fair with numbers. His father, Peter Roberts, sail-maker, lives in Bootle near Liverpool.

Attended Divine Service?	Not so regularly lately as in earlier years.
Received Sacrament?	Three times since being in prison, never before
Habits?	Attentive to duty when in place, took a little drink now and then.
Intellect?	Sound
State of Mind?	Hopeful
Knowledge, Secular?	Tolerable
Knowledge, Religious?	Fair
Alleged Cause of Crime?	An evil house, temptation

Name of Person referred to for Character, &c. Does not refer to any.¹⁶

John appears regularly on the casual sick list at Fremantle.¹⁷

Roberts John	31 October 1850	Pain in chest	Cough mixture
Roberts John	1 November 1850	Pain in limb	Blue pills & Infus luassi?
Roberts Jno	13 November 1850	Rash	Pill Sulph
Roberts Wm	22 November 1850	Eruption	Pil Cal: Comp
Roberts John	2 December 1850	Eruption	Cream of tartar

¹⁰ *Morning Post* - Saturday 11 March 1848, p7

¹¹ Chelmsford Chronicle - Friday 07 April 1848, p4

¹² George Butler, convict 90 on *Hashemy*.

¹³ HO24/4

¹⁴ HO24/16; HO8/105

¹⁵ SROWA Acc 128/40-43

¹⁶ SROWA Acc 1156 R21A

¹⁷ SROWA Acc 1156 CS1

Roberts	14 December 1850	Eruption	
Roberts	16 December 1850	Eruption	Pilul Hyd:
Roberts Jno	3 January 1851	Eruption	Cream tartar & brimstone
Roberts John	7 January 1851	Eruption	Plummers pill one each night, Flav. lotio
Roberts John	8 January 1851		(several items in Latin)
Roberts John	15 January 1851	Eruption	Lotion as before
Roberts John	16 January 1851	Eruption & pain in the stomach	Aper. & lotion as before
Roberts John	27 January 1851	Diarrhoea	Pow. Cal & jalap
Roberts John	28 January 1851		
Roberts John	29 January 1851		Castor oil
Roberts John	31 January 1851	Pain in bowels	Cal & Aper pill
Roberts John	1 March 1851	Bad eye & eruptions	Lotion & Plummer pill
Roberts John	23 March 1851	Eruption	Ointment
Roberts John	28 March 1851	Ringworm	App: argent nitrate
Roberts John 153	5 May 1851	Ringworm	Caustic
Roberts 153	12 May 1851		Nil
Roberts John 153	22 May 1851	Ringworm	Cautic? * Pil Al...
Roberts John 153	31 May 1851	Sprained ankle	Liniment
Roberts John	2 June 1851	Sprained ankle	Continue liniment
Roberts John 153	8 June 1851	Abscess hand	Poultice
Roberts John 153	10 June 1851	Abs: finger	
Roberts John 153	22 June 1851	Ringworms	Pilul Plummer
Roberts John 153	30 June 1851	Cough

John received his Ticket of Leave on 10 August 1851.¹⁸ Another record says he was discharged to Ticket of leave on 10 September 1851. Two other entries on 15 and 24 September may also refer to him.¹⁹ On 28 September 1851, he was given a pass to Fremantle.²⁰

Later in the year, on 17 December 1851:

The undermentioned were forwarded by Glyde's Boat to Toodyay this day, viz:

Reg. No. 153 John Roberts from Hospital, 66 John Bradbury and 67 John Morris.

The two former go to Toodyay Station and Mr Syred at the Half Way House, Toodyay.²¹

The following is possibly John Roberts 153, although John Roberts 613 also had a ticket of leave. Fremantle, 26 July 1852—John Roberts, ticket-of-leave holder, charged with talking to prisoners while at work, and keeping them idle; and with being insolent to the warder in charge, when told not to do so; admonished, and fined 20s and costs.²²

At Fremantle, on 4 September 1852:

John Roberts, charged by John Duffield with having taken some timber from his grant without permission. From the evidence given by George Dixon, the employer of Roberts, it appeared he had permission from Duffield to take 6 loads, and that only one load had been taken without leave; ordered to pay compensation and expenses; in all, £1 16s 6d.²³

On 20 September 1852, at Fremantle, John Roberts, 153, t.l., charged with calling John Duffield a rogue, and using improper and abusive language to him in the streets of Fremantle; several witnesses were

¹⁸ SROWA Acc 1156 R21B

¹⁹ SROWA Acc 1156 RD1-2

²⁰ Rica Erickson's notes, PD Vol 1.

²¹ SROWA Acc 1156 SO1-3

²² Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 4 August 1852, p3

²³ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 8 September 1852, p3

examined, after which, Roberts was admonished, and informed that a repetition of such conduct would ensure his return to the Convict Establishment, and the case dismissed.²⁴

John was granted a Conditional Pardon on 13 August 1859.²⁵

John Roberts changes his name back to his real name, Peter Howard Roberts.

Peter Howard Roberts married Elizabeth Tonkin on 28 February 1860 at Fremantle. She was the daughter of John Foss Tonkin. They did not have had any children.

In February 1865, P Roberts was elected to the committee of the Western Australian Working Men's Association.²⁶

From 1869 to 1875, a P Roberts, Storeman, Fremantle, is listed in the Directory: People in the Colony of Western Australia 1863-1897.²⁷

July 1868: Fremantle Union Benefit Society. Peter N Roberts on the committee to enrol members.²⁸

An Eating and Boarding House Licence was granted to Peter H Roberts by the Fremantle Court on 6 December 1875.²⁹ He held the licence until 1884.

P. H. ROBERTS,
RAILWAY AND STEAMSHIP
BOARDING HOUSE,
AND PRIVATE HOTEL,
 MOUAT STREET, FREMANTLE, W.A.,
 Next Messrs. J. & W. Bateman's Store,
BEGBS to notify to his friends and the
 public generally, that he has removed
 from Cantonment Street to the above
 more commodious premises, centrally situ-
 ated between the Jetties and Railway Sta-
 tion.
 Travellers, by either route, will find this
 a most convenient house to stay at.
 Meals at any time. Good clean beds
 and bathroom. Terms moderate.
 Nov. 16, 1881. [u.c.]

1884. ROBERTS.--At Fremantle, 26 March, PETER HOWARD ROBERTS, formerly of Chester, England, aged 54 years. Chester papers, please copy.³⁰

His brother William was a publican in Cheshire.

1885. After Peter's death, the boarding house became ...

1887. H. C. Barnett v. Elizabeth Roberts.— Mr H. Parker appeared for defendant. The claim was for medical attendance; Mr Parker contended that the defendant, being a widow, was not responsible for her late husband's debts, and he therefore asked for a nonsuit, which was allowed, with costs.³¹

..... In the course of the hearing it transpired that the summons was serve upon her while driving to her wedding.³²

Notice of Removal.
W. SMITH
BEGBS to inform his numerous friends and
 the public that he has removed from
 Henry Street to more commodious premises
 in Mouat Street, (formerly occupied by P.
 H. Roberts) where he will be able to accom-
 modate either families, Females, and
 Boarders in general, at the shortest notice.
 W. S. begs to state that it will be found
 second to none for quietness, cleanliness and
 moderate charges &c.
 Within two minutes walk of the Railway
 Stationer Jetty.
 Please Note the Address—
W. SMITH'S
 Boarding House and Dining
 Rooms,
 Mouat Street,
 Fremantle

²⁴ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 13 October 1852, p3

²⁵ SROWA Acc 1156 R21B

²⁶ The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times (WA : 1864 - 1874), 10 February 1865, p3

²⁷ <https://www.carnamah.com.au/WA-directories?search=roberts&page=2>

²⁸ The Herald (Fremantle, WA : 1867 - 1886), 25 July 1868, p2

²⁹ The Western Australian Times (Perth, WA : 1874 - 1879), 14 December 1875, p2

³⁰ The Herald (Fremantle, WA : 1867 - 1886), 29 March 1884, p2

³¹ The Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1955), 29 March 1887, p3

³² Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954), 2 April 1887, p44