

## **William Wilks, 517, *Pyrenees***

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variation: Wilkes

William was born about 1818. He said he was born at Roxon [Roxton], Bedfordshire, and his father was William Wilkes. Roxton is about 30km from St Ives, in the district of Huntingdonshire, county of Cambridgeshire, where William was living in the 1840s.

According to the Prison Register, William had been in Gaol 12 times. Some of his offences are recorded in the newspapers.

St Ives Petty Sessions, 1841

Joseph Simper, beer shop keeper of St Ives, charged William Wilkes with having assaulted him, and George Hopkins with aiding and assisting Wilkes in the same assault. Wilkes ordered to pay 30s and Hopkins 6s. Wilkes was committed in default.

William Wilks (by the same magistrates) was then convicted of assaulting Joseph Simper, and damaging the door of his dwelling house, and other property at St Ives, one month's hard labour or pay £2 4s 6d. He was committed to Huntingdon Gaol.<sup>1</sup>

St Ives Petty Sessions, 11 April 1842.

William Wilkes, of St Ives, labourer, was charged on the information of Serjeant Hardy, of the same place, with fighting in the public street of the town, being at the same time stripped to the skin. He was ordered to find sureties for his keeping the peace, and in default committed for three months.<sup>2</sup>

St Ives Petty Sessions, 8 August 1842.

Joseph Earl of St Ives was charged with having, in conjunction with George Hopkins and William Wilks, assaulted James Tibbutt of St Ives and incited him to commit a breach of the peace. They were ordered to find security for keeping the peace, and in default committed for one month.<sup>3</sup>

St Ives Petty Sessions, January 1844

George Watson, of St. Ives, charged William Wilks, a very old offender, with having assaulted him: ordered to pay 8s; in default committed for 14 days imprisonment.<sup>4</sup>

30 December 1844

William Epey, 36, labourer, was charged with stealing the 14 sacks, and Wm Wilks, 26, *alias* Snap, with receiving them knowing them to have been stolen. Epey sold the sacks to Stocker for 1s. The Jury returned a verdict of guilty against both Epey and Wilks. Epey was sentenced to 14 years and Wilks to six months' hard labour. Lamball Stocker, labourer, charged with receiving 11 sacks, knowing them to have been stolen. Stocker said he obtained them from Snap, also known *as* William Wilks. Stocker was found not guilty. <sup>5</sup>

St Ives Petty Sessions, 9 March 1846

William Wilks and four other labourers were charged with fighting in the street on Saturday night. They went to a close in Pig-lane on the Sunday morning to fight their battle out. Ordered to pay 9s 2½d each expenses, and enter into their own recognisance of £5 to keep the peace for three months. They all paid except Wilks, who was committed for three months' hard labour.<sup>6</sup>

St Ives Petty Sessions, 11 June 1846.

John Chapman charged William Wilkes, of St Ives, with being drunk and disorderly. Ordered to find sureties to appear on Monday next.

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 04 September 1841, p3.

<sup>2</sup> Bedfordshire Mercury, 23 April 1842, p1

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge General Advertiser, 10 August 1842, p1

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge Independent Press, 13 January 1844, p3

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 28 December 1844, p3; Cambridge Independent Press, 04 January 1845, p4

<sup>6</sup> Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 14 March 1846, p3

William Wilkes, brought up on remand, was charged by Mr Chapman with being drunk and disorderly. He is an incorrigible and had only left prison on Monday last. Committed to 14 days hard labour.<sup>7</sup>

His luck finally ran out in 1848. At the Huntingdon County Sessions, on 16 October 1848: William Wilks, 30, coal porter, was charged with stealing a sack, the property of James Driver at St Ives. Driver deposed to having deposited a sack in Mr Lindsell's saw pit on a night in September. The next morning, it was gone, but he found it at How's lodging house, and How refused to give it up. Driver went to the prisoner with P.C. Hemp, who said he had sold the sack to How. How admitted buying two sacks from the prisoner, one of which Driver claimed. P.C. Hemp took the prisoner into custody. The Jury found Wilks guilty; a previous conviction was proved, and he was sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>8</sup>

The Prison Registers show that William Wilkes, 30, was convicted on 16 October 1849 at Huntingdon Sessions of stealing one sack and having a previous conviction, and was sentenced to 7 years. He had been 12 times in Huntingdon Gaol, 12 months twice, drunkenness, assaults and once for felony. William weighed 10st 11lbs, was received at Pentonville Prison on 3 May 1849 from Millbank Prison. He was born Roxon [Roxton], Bedfordshire, and he said his father is William Wilkes, with an unknown address or occupation. He was single, had no children, and was a coal porter; his character was good. He was removed to *Justitia* hulk on 27 December 1849 and boarded the *Pyrenees* on 5 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia.<sup>9</sup>

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, William was assigned number 571, issued with a Ticket of leave and a physical description was recorded.

517. William Wilks, 36, 5'5½", light brown hair, light brown eyes, oval face, fair complexion, stout, no marks, coal porter and single.<sup>10</sup>

The Superintendent's Journal records:

14 July 1851. The following 44 men will be received from the ship *Pyrenees*, and located in 3rd division, including 517 William Wilks.

15 July 1851. The Steward will provide beds, blankets, knives, spoons, plates, rations &c for the following 40 men proceeding Fremantle Station tomorrow, including 517 Wm Wilkes.<sup>11</sup>

Ticket-of-Love-Men at North Fremantle Station. 517, William Wilks, Labourer. The men were available for hire.<sup>12</sup>

Perth Ticket of Leave Register:

William Wilks, 517, 36 years old, *Pyrenees*.

Hired by Joseph Hardey, Peninsula, as a farm labourer, on 18 August 1851.

Wages £1 per month for the first 6 months, for the next 6 months according to future agreement

Re-engaged for 12 months from 31 August 1851.

Conditional Pardon 27 July 1853, Thos Yule, resident magistrate.<sup>13</sup>

William had repaid £3 10 1½ of his passage money by the end of December 1852. By December the following year, he had repaid the £7 of his passage money.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 20 June 1846, p3

<sup>8</sup> Cambridge Independent Press, 21 October 1848, p4

<sup>9</sup> The National Archives (TNA) UK, PCOM2/62; HO24/16; HO8/107

<sup>10</sup> SROWA, Acc 128/32

<sup>11</sup> SROWA, Superintendents Orders, So1-So3, p 58, 60

<sup>12</sup> The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 25 July 1851, p2

<sup>13</sup> SROWA, Perth Ticket of Leave Register Cons 1386/1 1851 - Aug 1854

<sup>14</sup> TNA, CO18/69, 82

Now aged in his early 40s, William appears numerous times in Court for drunkenness and later vagrancy.

Perth Court, October 1860

W. Wilks, expiree, fined for drunkenness.<sup>15</sup>

Perth Police Court, 12 August 1861

William Wilks, expiree, was charged with being drunk and incapable of taking care of himself. Fined 5s.<sup>16</sup>

Perth Court, 20 September 1865.

William Wilks, expiree, was cautioned and discharged for being drunk.<sup>17</sup>

517. Admitted to Prison on 14 October 1878, Expiree, William Wilks, 60, vagrancy, one month, sentenced at Perth, labourer, Protestant, discharged 14 November 1878.

City Police Court. 19 May 1883

William Wilks, 67, was brought up on a charge of drunkenness. He is an old man, stone deaf, and was evidently suffering from *delirium tremens*, being unable to walk or stand, and had to be brought into Court by two constables. He was fined 5s, or seven days imprisonment, so that he might receive medical attention. 517. William Wicks was admitted to Prison on 19 May and discharged on 26 May 1883.<sup>18,19</sup>

At the City Police Court this morning, before the Police Magistrate, William Wilks, who was charged with vagrancy, was sentenced to prison for 3 months.<sup>20</sup>

517. Admitted to Prison on 23 October 1884, William Wilks, found wandering abroad, etc., sentenced at Perth to 3 months, boatman, can't read or write, Protestant, he was discharged to Mount Eliza Poor House on 23 January 1885.

Perth Police Court, 29 December 1885.

Philip O'Reilly and Wm. Wilks, two aged tottering inmates of the Invalid Depot, were charged with being drunk and were discharged with a caution.<sup>21</sup>

A man named William Wilks died at the Invalid Depot early this morning, at seventy-one years of age, from the effects of senile decay.<sup>22</sup>

East Perth Cemetery.

William Wilks died on 2 May 1886 and was buried on 3 May 1886 in the Church of England section.

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<sup>15</sup> The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 26 October 1860, p3

<sup>16</sup> The Inquirer and Commercial News, 21 August 1861, p2

<sup>17</sup> The Inquirer and Commercial News, 4 October 1865, p3

<sup>18</sup> SROWA, CONS 1156/F3-F4. Various prison dates.

<sup>19</sup> The Daily News, 19 May 1883, p3

<sup>20</sup> The Daily News, 23 October 1884, p3

<sup>21</sup> The Daily News, 29 December 1885, p3

<sup>22</sup> The Daily News, 3 May 1886, p3