

Godfrey Woolnough, 271 *Mermaid* and 7301, *Clyde*

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Godfrey Woolnough was born in about 1813 at Grundisburgh, Suffolk. His father was William, and he had a brother James, a bricklayer, born about 1805. There are several families called Woolnough in Grundisburgh.

At Ipswich, on 29 June 1830, Godfrey Woolnough, of Grundisburgh, bricklayer, was convicted for having on 28 June, wilfully and maliciously broken and destroyed six squares of glass in a window at the premises of William Owls in Woodbridge, innholder. Fined 5s and costs, and in default of payment, he was sent for 14 days to Ipswich Gaol.¹

Later in the year, Godfrey, aged 17, enlisted in the Royal Artillery.² Godfrey was a gunner and driver. Until 1794, the Royal Artillery hired civilian horses and drivers to haul its guns. In that year, the Corps of Captains' Commissaries and Drivers was formed to provide these services. This was reformed as the Corps of Gunner Drivers in 1801. In 1806 these became the Royal Artillery Drivers. In 1822 these were disbanded, and from that date, all men enlisted into the Royal Artillery as "Gunner and Driver."

Army life was not for Godfrey. He was court-martialed several times:

1. 25 October 1833, quitting his post, 200 lashes, p146
2. 7 April 1834, drunk, 200 lashes and stopp (stoppage of pay), p20
3. 12 February 1836, desertion, 4 months hard labour and stopp (stoppage of pay), p177
4. 25 July 1836, desertion, theft etc., 12 months hard labour and 3 months remit, p73³

Then, at Woodbridge, Suffolk, on 12 October 1838:

Godfrey Woolnough committed to Ipswich Gaol for 3 months for deserting the Woodbridge Union Workhouse and taking a quantity of clothing with him.⁴

No information has been found on Godfrey until the Suffolk Lent Assizes, on 25 March 1847 at Bury St Edmund's:

Henry Archer, 26, and Godfrey Woolnough, 30, were charged with burglariously broken and entered the dwelling house of William Kemp at Woodbridge with the intent of committing a felony. On 29 January, at about 3 am, PC Roper was on duty in Chapel-lane when he heard some glass rattling. As he went towards the house and he heard a whistle and heard someone whisper, "come on". He saw Woolnough on his hand and knees near the window. He ran and collared him, but another man rushed in and tried to rescue Woolnough. Archer was apprehended the next day. Woolnough and Archer had been drinking until 1 am and walked around the town together. Archer was acquitted. Woolnough received 12 months with hard labour.⁵

Nearly two years later, in December 1848, Godfrey Woolnough was charged with having at Grundisburgh feloniously stolen from William Howlett one beaverteen frock, one black cloth waistcoat, one pair of braces and one hat and committed to the County Gaol and House of Correction.⁶

Suffolk Quarter Sessions, Woodbridge Division, 4 January 1849:

Godfrey Woolnough, 37, was charged with a robbery from the person of William Howlett. Mr Sirr conducted the case for the prosecution; the prisoner was undefended. It appeared that on 29 July

¹ The Ipswich Journal, 03 Jul 1830, p3

² WO 69/80D/2120, folio 114, line 14. Description of Soldiers on joining Royal Artillery.

³ Court Martials, Home and Abroad, WO 86/1; WO 86/2 (Fold3)

⁴ The Suffolk Chronicle; or Weekly General Advertiser & County Express, 13 Oct 1838, p3

⁵ The Suffolk Chronicle; or Weekly General Advertiser & County Express, 27 Mar 1847, p4

⁶ The Ipswich Journal, 02 Dec 1848, p2, 3

last, the prosecutor, prisoner and others were drinking at a public house at Grundisburgh. In the course of the night, the prosecutor, in pulling out his purse to pay for some beer, necessarily exposed its contents to the gaze of all present. The prisoner, it seems, took special notice of the circumstances, for he left soon after the house and waylaid the prosecutor on his way home, demanding money. The prosecutor had sufficient presence of mind to throw his purse over the hedge, but he was roughly handled by the prisoner, who stripped him of his coat and waistcoat and then decamped. He immediately absconded from the neighbourhood, but four months after was apprehended at the Union House, Nacton. He was found guilty. A previous conviction for burglary was p[roved against him, and he was sentenced to 15 years transportation.⁷

Prisons ⁸:

17898, Godfrey Woolnough, 37, single, can R&W, labourer, Woodbridge on 3 January 1849, robbery from person after a previous conviction, 15 years, received at Millbank on 12 October 1849 from Ipswich Gaol, convicted before of burglary, from Grundisburgh, CofE, sent Pentonville on 22 December 1849.

2687, Godfrey Woolnough, 35, weighed 10st 3lbs, received at Pentonville on 22 December 1849, single, father (?) Wm Woolnough, Grundsiburgh, Suffolk, R&W, bricklayer's labourer, character good, convicted 7 January 1849, Woodbridge Sessions, highway robbery, 15 years, once convicted for burglary at Ipswich, good behaviour in Ipswich, 9 months in Ipswich and 2 months in Millbank, sent to Portland 11 June 1850. While at Portland, Godfrey Woolnough had earned £1.1s, had 8s 5d in private cash, for a total of £1.9.5 up until 26 December 1850.

Godfrey arrived at Fremantle, Western Australia, per *Mermaid* on 15 May 1851. ⁹

He reported being sick three times during the first few weeks at Fremantle.

Woollough	Godfrey	26 May 1851	Morn blind, given blue pills
Woollnough	Godfrey	29 May 1851	
Woolnough	Godfrey	28 June 1851	Pain in side, admitted ¹⁰

A Ticket of Leave was issued on 2 September 1852. Godfrey celebrated his semi-freedom: Perth, 6 September 1852 - Godfrey Woolnough, ticket-of-leave holder, drunk in the streets; fined 5s and costs. ¹¹ Later in the month, he worked for Issac Place in Perth. Isaac got a cart license in February 1852.

At Perth Police Court on 15 October 1853: Godfrey Woolenough, t.l, drunk and absent from Mount Eliza Depot, interfering with the Police in the discharge of their duty, rescuing a prisoner, and making a violent resistance when apprehended; returned to Depot without pay for 1 month, and not to be allowed in Perth for the same period.¹²

He was working for John Dobson on 25 November 1853. A Conditional Pardon was granted on 19 January 1856.¹³

Between 1856-1859, Godfrey made his way back to England, possibly to Bristol, working as a sailor. At Newport, Wales, in December 1859, Godfrey Woolnough, charged on his own confession

⁷ Suffolk Chronicle - Saturday 06 January 1849

⁸ HO24/4; PCOM2/30, p120, PCOM2/63, p30

⁹ SROWA ACC 1156/R17

¹⁰ SROWA, Casual Sick Registers, Acc 1156/CS1 - CS3

¹¹ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 22 Sep 1852, p2

¹² The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 11 Nov 1853, p2

¹³ SROWA ACC 1156/R21B

with being a returned convict, was remanded to afford time for communicating with authorities.¹⁴ He was remanded several times before appearing at the Spring Assizes at Monmouth in 1860:

Godfrey Woolnough, 47, seaman who pleaded guilty to feloniously returning from Western Australia, having been duly convicted of a felony at Woodbridge session in January 1849, and sentenced to transportation for 15 years before the expiration of the term, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment, without hard labour, to give time for communicating with the proper authorities.¹⁵ Perhaps the authorities took too long to answer, as Godfrey was set free after a month.

Then, at Spilsby, Lincolnshire, he was taken into custody on 4 November 1861 and stood trial on 7 January 1862.

Godfrey Woolnough was charged with stealing, at Spilsby, on the 2 November last, a silver watch, the property of Joseph Boyall. He pleaded guilty. He had before been convicted of a felony. The Chairman said the severe suffering he had before undergone did not appear to have produced any good effect. It was, therefore, necessary to pass a heavy sentence: 7 years' penal servitude.¹⁶

At the House of Correction in Spilsby, his previous convictions were recorded:

1. Was convicted at Bury St Edmunds Assizes on 24 March of Burglary. 12 calendar months
2. Woodbridge, Suffolk Quarter Sessions, 3 January 1849, stealing from the person, 15 years' transportation
3. Monmouth Assizes, March 1860, tried for being at large before the expiration of his term of transportation. One calendar month and a certificate was then given to enable him to be at large.¹⁷

Godfrey began the circuit of prisons again.

4556 Godfrey Woolnough, 49, single, R&W imperfectly, bricklayer and plasterer, convicted 7 January 1862, Spilsby, larceny, seven years, received at Millbank on 28 April 1862 from Lincoln Castle, 15 years in 1849, once convicted, brother James Woolnough, bricklayer, Grundisburgh, Suffolk, CofE, sent on 31 April 1862 (or 1 May 1862).¹⁸

721, Godfrey Woolnough, 49, single, R&W imp, convicted 7 January 1862 at Spilsby, larceny after a previous felony, 7 years, received on 1 May 1862 at Pentonville from Millbank, 15 years 1849, one conviction burglary, one conviction for being at large before expiration of sentence, Spilsby 3mths, Lincoln 3mths 24 days, Millbank 3 mths, brother James Woolnough, bricklayer, Grundisburgh, good behaviour, CofE, gaoler's report good, sent to Chatham 25 August 1862.¹⁹

5010, Godfrey Woolnough, Spilsby, 7 years, received at Chatham on 25 August 1862, description of convict.²⁰ Chatham Prison, Governor's journal notes:

25 August 1862, 80 prisoners were received from Pentonville.

11 December 1862, 5010 George Woolnough, degraded to 2nd class

20 December 1862, I heard reports and awarded – 5010 Godfrey Woolnough, degraded from 2nd to 3rd class and 1 day bread and water.

Note: Godfrey's misdemeanor must have been reasonably serious. Lesser punishments were 1-3 days bread and water or suspension from class for 28 days.

6 February 1862, 121 prisoners were warned for embarkation in the ship *Clyde* for Western Australia and were permitted to write to their friends in the afternoon.

¹⁴ Monmouthshire Merlin, 31 Dec 1859, p2

¹⁵ Star of Gwent, 31 Mar 1860, p8; HO27/126, p265

¹⁶ Lincolnshire Chronicle, 10 Jan 1862, p7

¹⁷ PCOM2/311; HO27/132, p149

¹⁸ HO24/9, PCOM2/45

¹⁹ HO24/17; PCOM2/69

²⁰ PCOM2/2

26 February 1862, The prisoners warned for embarkation in the ship *Clyde* for Western Australia were inspected by Mr Crawford, the Surgeon Superintendent of that ship had two of the number were rejected by him as unfit for removal to that colony, the remainder of them were detained in prison during the day for the purpose of being clothed, writing their farewell letters etc.

27 February 1863, In consequence of the 118 Convicts who had been inspected yesterday by the Medical Superintendent of the ship *Clyde* having required to embark on board that ship at an early hour this morning for removal to Western Australia, the 1st bell was rung at 4:15am.

The above-named 188 Convicts left the prison at 6:20am and were placed on board the steamer *Adder* for conveyance to the ship *Clyde* at the Nore.

The conduct of these prisoners since they were warned for embarkation was been extremely good.

Warder Lloyd accompanied these prisoners and is ordered to remain with them till the *Clyde* finally leaves the British Channel.²¹

Godfrey was back at Fremantle, arriving on the *Clyde* on 29 May 1863. His description varies between the various institutions and years. Neither description taken at Fremantle mentions the flogging marks.

	1851 (No 271)	Chatham 1862	1863 (No 7301)
Age	39	49	51
Height	5'9¾,	5'9"	5'9"
Hair	Dark brown	Dark brown	Dark brown
Eyes	Grey	Grey	Grey
Visage	Long		Long
Complexion	Sallow	Swarthy	Sallow
Appearance		Medium build, eyes and cheek sunk	Middling stout
Marks	Right-arm: Nelson's tomb, banners of war, weeping willow; Left-arm: crucifix and our Saviour	Scar right side of forehead, scar on left cheek, scar on belly and has several scars on his back from flogging; marks with blue viz. Right-arm: The banners of war, Nelson's tomb and weeping willow, ring on 2nd finger of the right hand; Left-arm: crucifix, sun and moon	Right-arm: coat of arms, tombstone; Left-arm: crucifix, sun and moon
Trade	Plasterer	Bricklayer and plasterer	Plasterer

He appears several times in the prison records:

4 May 1864. Gross insubordination, etc., 3 months in stringent discipline class per magisterial sentence.²²

12 September 1864. Discharged to North Fremantle depot.²³

27 March 1866, G Woolnogh (sic), impaired vision, given spectacles.²⁴

He was eligible for a Ticket of leave on 4 March 1865.

²¹ PCOM2/428, Chatham Prison, Governor's journal.

²² SROWA ACC 1156/SO9-11, p54, Superintendent Orders, 1864 - 1872

²³ SROWA ACC 1156/R&D3-R&D4

²⁴ Convict Establishment, Fremantle Casual Sick, SROWA ACC 1156/CS13

1. 3. 65 L. E. to York. 25. 3. 65 York Depot. 1. 4. 65 - do
 2. 6. 65 York L. E. - do. 2 Aug. 1866. Laidyng Depot.
 5th Sep. 1866. Laidyng Depot. 26 January 1867. Laidyng Depot
 18 February 1867. Laidyng Depot. 13 April 1867. Laidyng to
 York. 15 May 1867. York Depot. 30th June 1867. York Depot.
 17 October 1867. York Depot. 28 Nov^r 1867. York Depot.
 30 Nov^r 67 York Depot. 7 January 1868. York Depot. 28. 3. 68 D^r.
 31. 3. 68 York Depot.

Date of Engagement.	Occupation.	Rate of Wages.	District.	Employer.	Residence.
1. 3. 65	Same labour	30/- p. week	Beverley	J. Seabrook	Brookton
28. 3. 65	labourer	10/- p. week	York	B. Gaylor	York.
10. 4. 65	"	30/- p. week	"	J. Scott	York
20 th May 65	Depot	30/-	Laidyng	Gentle	"
30 th June				J. Abbotts	Laidyng
10 th Oct ^r				W. Curney	Newentle
2 nd Dec ^r 1866	Labourer	Piece work	do.	The Cook	Laidyng
11 Dec ^r "	do.	do.	do.	do.	do.
9 February 1867	do.	30/- p. week	do.	B. Chapman	Newcastle
12 April "	Genl Servt.	35/- p. week	Beverley	The Mead	Springhill
5 Aug. "	do.	25/- p. week	York	W. Barton	York.
15 October "	Labourer	3/4 - p. week	do.	W. Cowan	do.
18 October "	Piece work	25/- p. week	do.	W. Barton	York
4 November "	Genl Servt.	30/- p. week	Beverley	A. Edgar	York.
12 Dec ^r 1867	Reaping	13/- p. acre	York	D. Wadsworth	do.
27 Dec ^r "	Genl Servt.	30/- p. week	do.	The Reynolds	do.
31 Dec ^r "	Labourer	30/- p. week	do.	do.	do.
7 January 1868	"	do.	do.	J. Davis	Green Valley
12 February "	Genl Servt.	do.	do.	W. Morris	Elgarney
25 "	Labourer	do.	Beverley	W. Barton	Beverley
2 April "	Genl Servt.	do.	York	M. Hall	York.

Godfrey worked as a labourer or general servant at 22 places between 10 March 1865 and 2 April 1868; the longest he stayed anywhere was four months.²⁵

Between 1868-1871, he made his way back to England again, probably as a sailor.

1871 census: Union Workhouse, Nacton, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England.
 Godfrey Woolnough, 58, unmarried, sailor, born Grundisburgh, Suffolk.²⁶

Godfrey Woolnough, warder of the Workhouse at Nacton, was mentioned in an inquest:

²⁵ SROWA Acc 1156R/29

²⁶ RG10/1758/164/p20

Apoplexy. —An inquest was held in the above parish, before C. C. Brooke, Esq, Thursday, on the body of George Hubbard. From the evidence, the deceased had been accustomed to sleeping in the stable belonging to the Bush Inn, Waldringfield. Saturday week, he was in the stable when four of his fellow coprolite raisers came in and hoisted him up to a beam by a rope fastened around his chest. After leaving him suspended for about two minutes, they lowered him, and then they all went into the Bush together and had some beer. Hubbard went to work on the following Monday and Tuesday, but not being well on Wednesday morning, he could not work, and on Friday was taken to Union. On Saturday deceased was put under the care of Godfrey Woolnough, warder of the Workhouse, by whom was found in the receiving ward yard lying in the sun and was taken in. Woolnough had charge of him for about five hours, during which time he was insensible and could not take anything. Deceased had a rattling in his throat and shortness of breathing. Dr Young Kingston of Walton saw the deceased on Saturday last and prescribed for him, and according to his evidence deceased died from apoplexy, arising from natural causes. His death took place on Sunday morning at about eight o'clock. The Jury returned a verdict "That deceased died from apoplexy, arising from natural causes."²⁷

He was still in the Woodbridge Union Workhouse, Nacton, Woodbridge, Suffolk
Godfrey Woolnough, 71, pauper, unmarried, seaman, born Grundisburgh, Suffolk.²⁸

Godfrey died in 1887, aged 74.²⁹ There was a cemetery attached to the Workhouse.

²⁷ The Ipswich Journal , 23 June 1877, p5

²⁸ RG11/1881/176/p22

²⁹ Woodbridge, 1887, Sep, Vol 4A, p446, aged 74