

George Wroe or Roe is a common name in Lancashire.

Prison records show that George had been convicted once previously of larceny, once for misdemeanour and three times summarily. There are two possible entries in the Criminal Registers:

Lancaster July Sessions, 1825. George Wroe, larceny, 3 months and whipped. He would have been about 15 years old.

George Wroe and George Montieth, November 1844. Witnesses and the prosecutor (James Whitehead) travelled between Oldham and Manchester by rail, a distance of about 15km.

George Wroe and George Montieth were convicted at Salford of felony, 4 months' hard labour.

Marriage: At St. John's Manchester, on 24 September 1835, George Wroe, an upholsterer, of this town, married Catherine Sheen by banns. George signed the Register, and Catherine made her mark.

On the 1841 census, Ayres Court, Manchester:

George Wroe, 30, paper hanger, born in Lancashire; Catherine, 25, born in Ireland.

Catherine appears to have died in 1842, aged 29. ¹

Bolton General Quarter Sessions, 4 April 1850

George Wroe, 40, pleaded guilty to stealing, on 20 March, two moulding planes, &c., belonging to his master, Thomas Graham. Sentenced to 7 years' transportation. ²

The Prison Registers show that George Wroe, 40, married, with no children, an upholsterer, was convicted on 4 April 1850 at Bolton of larceny and sentenced to 7 years. He was received at Leicester Prison on 15 April 1850 from Salford and had been previously convicted of larceny, once for a misdemeanour, and three times summarily. On 29 April 1850, George was transferred to the *Warrior* hulk at Woolwich. He was healthy and well-behaved.

While he was at Woolwich, the 1851 census was taken in March. It shows:

G. Wroe, convict, widower, 42, upholsterer, born Manchester, Lancashire.

George boarded the *Pyrenees II* for the voyage to Western Australia on 22 December 1852. ³

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 30 April 1853, George was assigned number 1737, issued a Ticket of Leave on 1 May 1853, with a physical description recorded.

1737. George Wroe, 42, 5'5", grey hair, dark grey eyes, long face, sallow complexion, slight build, mark on lip, upholsterer, widower. ⁴

The only brush with the law found was at Perth Court on 27 June 1853:

Thomas Higham and George Wroe, each fined 5s and costs for being drunk. ⁵

His Conditional Pardon was granted on 27 June 1854, and George left Western Australia.

The *City of Hobart* arrived at King George's Sound on 25 June, where she was detained coaling until 3 July. On that day, she left under canvas and steam, which continued until she arrived in Hobart Town on 9 July 1854, at 6 a.m.

¹ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/569/10. Death: GRO Reference: 1842 March Quarter, The Salford Union, Vol 20, Page 662.

² Bolton Chronicle, 06 April 1850, p5

³ TNA, HO23/4; HO8/105; HO8/114; HO107/1588

⁴ SROWA, Acc 128/1-32

⁵ Inquirer, 13 July 1853, p2

Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company steamer *City of Hobart*, 618 tons, 100 horsepower, from London on 2 April 1854, with general cargo and passengers from London, Cape of Good Hope and King George's Sound.

From King George's Sound, steerage passengers were Messrs. Steven Aveling, John Roper, Joseph Andrews, William Gilbert, John Rea, John Cluckie, Thomas Man Jones, John Shepherd, Richard Clipper, Daniel Chapman, Henry Bowles, William Cotterill, Ashing Chinaman, John McCrechin, John Wilson, Francisco Martin, Mrs. Condren and three children, Messrs. **George Wroe**, Charles Oldenburg, Thomas Neil, William Robinson, George Blaney.⁶

Four convicts appear to be on the ship: Steven Aveling [1195], Thomas Man Jones [410], George Wroe [1737], George Blaney [1186].

Other possible convict - William Cotterill [918]

George was soon in trouble in Hobart.

Quarter Sessions, 26 September 1854. A ticket-of-leave holder, named George Wroe, was charged by John Wilson, an apprentice in the service of Mr Whitesides, builder, with stealing a two-foot rule and some other articles.

Constable Bailey deposed to the apprehension of the prisoner, and also to the finding of the articles in the establishment of Mr Sergeant, the respected pawnbroker.

The prisoner, who did not deny the theft, was sentenced to six months in prison.⁷

Then in June 1855 at Launceston. George Wroe, a late arrival from Hobart Town, employed in the service of Mrs Brown & Son, cabinet makers, St. John Street, was also committed on a charge of stealing some gimp, tools, &c., from the workshop.⁸

He was tried on 26 June 1855 at the Launceston Quarter Sessions for stealing 30 yards of gimp and a pair of shears, the property of James Brown, his master. Sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

George may have been sent to Port Arthur. The indent says he arrived in the *City of Hobart*. As he was Free to the Colony, he was chargeable on Colonial Funds. George was discharged on 5 January 1857.⁹

His imprisonment in Tasmania prompted a letter to the W.A. authorities enquiring about George Wroe. The reply:

18 December 1854, No 954

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 14th instant No C3/132 - transmitting copy of the communication from the Deputy Comptroller General of Convicts in V.D. Land, requesting to be furnished with any information that could be supplied regarding a supposed absconder from this Colony named "Geo Wroe".

I have the honor to acquaint you that Geo Wroe, Late Reg. No. 1737 arrived in W.A. on 1 May 1853, obtained a Ticket of Leave on landing and received his Conditional Pardon on 27 June 1854, which fully entitled him to leave the Colony.

The description forwarded coincides with the description kept in this Office.

I have &c.¹⁰

After being discharged from prison in 1857, George returned to Hobart, where in 1860 he was fined 10s for drunkenness.¹¹

⁶ Colonial Times, Tue 11 July 1854, p2

⁷ The Tasmanian Colonist, 21 September 1854, p2; The Hobart Town Advertiser, 4 October 1854, p3

⁸ The Cornwall Chronicle, 9 June 1855, p5

⁹ <https://libraries.tas.gov.au/Digital/CON37-1-8>; Colonial Times, 29 June 1855, p3

¹⁰ SROWA, Comptroller-General to the Colonial Secretary (C19-C21), No 954

¹¹ The Hobart Town Advertiser, 6 June 1860, p3

He appeared in court again later in the year, on 18 December 1860, at Launceston.

George Wroe was brought up on remand, charged with having stolen two egg caps and one salt cellar, the property of Rose Ann Delaney, of Patterson Street.

From the evidence of the prosecutrix, it appears that the prisoner, who had been lodging at the house for several days, came in on the evening of the 12th instant, apparently the worse for liquor, and demanded some money from the witness, who refused to grant his request. The prisoner then drew a knife and used threatening language to the witness, who fled into another room, and looking through a window, saw the prisoner take the articles mentioned from off the mantelpiece.

The Bench sentenced the prisoner to six months' imprisonment with hard labour.¹²

Oatlands Police Court, 17 November 1863.

George Wroe, painter, was placed at the bar, he having been arrested by the Superintendent Exton, by virtue of the Tasmanian crime report, and was now charged upon information and belief with having stolen on the 11th instant, four yards of hair cloth, at Green Ponds, the property of John Donnally.

The Superintendent, therefore, prayed for a remand. Remanded to Green Ponds for examination accordingly.¹³ No prison time seems to have resulted.

Hobart Supreme Court, 26 July 1864.

Henry Chipps and George Wroe were charged with stealing, on 20 June, an iron scraper, the property of John Turner, of Harrington Street. In a second count, the prisoners were charged with feloniously receiving the same.

Mr Turner proved the loss of the scraper, and evidence was adduced to show that Wroe went to the shop of Mrs Brown, in Liverpool Street, the other prisoner standing outside. One of the men asked 2s. for the scraper, but the shopman refused to purchase it, surmising, from the low price, that it was not honestly obtained. The men then went away, leaving the scraper, and did not come back again. The scraper was handed over to the police, and the prisoners were eventually apprehended. The evidence in the case was very fully given in our Police Court report. The jury returned a verdict of guilty against both prisoners, and they were severally sentenced to be imprisoned for four years.¹⁴

After being released from prison in 1868, George found himself destitute and was admitted to the Brickfield Invalid Depot in Hobart. George Wroe, 66, received 28 January 1869, discharged 11 February 1869, received again on 21 May 1869, and discharged 3 August 1869. He was again received on 19 November 1870.

He moved back to Launceston, where at the Police Court on 18 June 1873:

LARCENY.—George Wroe, on remand from the 18th instant, charged by the Superintendent of Police with having, on 17 June, stolen an iron scraper, the property of James Robertson, was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.¹⁵

Out of prison in June 1874, George was admitted to the Cascades Invalid Depot in Hobart.

George Wroe arrived per *City of Hobart*, admitted from Hobart on 29 September 1874, discharged 15 September 1874 at own request, able to work.

Over the next few years, George was in and out of the Invalid Depots. All records say he arrived in Hobart on the *City of Hobart*.

¹² Launceston Examiner, 20 December 1860, p3

¹³ The Mercury, 19 November 1863, p2

¹⁴ The Mercury, 27 July 1864, p3

¹⁵ Cornwall Advertiser, 24 June 1873, p6

Brickfields Invalid Depot. (Hobart)

George Roe, admitted on 24 September 1875 and discharged on 28 December 1875 at his own request, able to work.

George Wroe, admitted on 3 March 1876, discharged 13 October 1876 on pass and did not return.

George Wroe, admitted on 31 January 1877, discharged 6 March 1877, able to pick hops.

George Wroe, admitted on 22 October 1877, discharged 24 September 1878, able to do light work.

George Wroe, admitted on 1 October 1878, discharged 18 February 1879, able to work.

Invalid Depot (Launceston).

George Wroe, admitted on 25 May 1877, discharged 25 September 1877 at own request, able to work.

New Town Invalid Depot. (Hobart)

George Wroe, admitted on 19 February 1879, discharged 14 October 1879, on pass, unable to work.

George Wroe, admitted on 31 December 1879, discharged 27 February 1880, hop picking.

George Wroe, admitted on 12 April 1880, discharged 6 September 1880, at own request, refusing to work.

By the time of his last appearance at the Hobart City Police Court, on 15 September 1880, George had spent 8 years in prison in Tasmania.

George Wroe, convicted of stealing a pair of trousers and a vest from Mr W. J. Jarvis' establishment on Murray Street, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.¹⁶ Discharged in December.

New Town Invalid Depot (Hobart)

George Wroe, admitted from Launceston on 15 January 1881, discharged 25 February 1881, hop picking.

George Wroe, 76, upholsterer, died on 4 September 1881 at the New Town Pauper Establishment of senilis. The Register says he was born in England; however, the burial form says it was in Ireland.

George was buried at Cornelian Bay Cemetery, Hobart, on 7 September 1881, in a pauper grave in the Church of England section. Grave 350A.

¹⁶ The Mercury, 16 September 1880, p2