

Ann Wheldon

Date of Trial:	14 March 1817
Where Tried:	Nottingham Town Assizes
Crime:	Highway robbery
Sentence:	14 years
Est YOB:	1797
Stated Age on Arrival:	21
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Country Servant
Alias/AKA:	Ann Welding/Wildon, Ann Gregory (m)
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	A prostitute (not insolent)
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

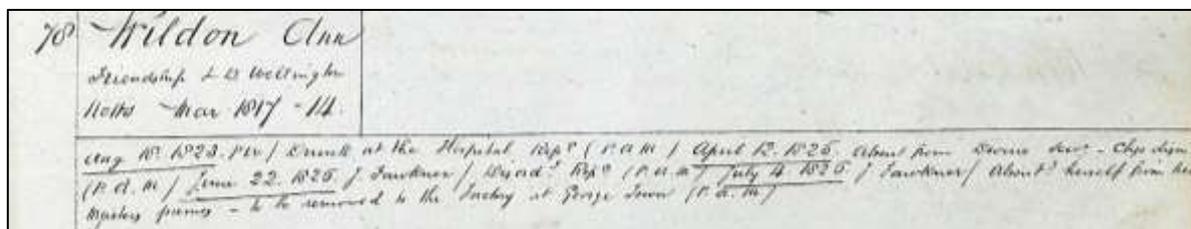
Ann Wheldon, for robbing Samuel Trueman of £37 16s in gold, in the public street, on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> September last – *Guilty, Death*.<sup>1</sup>

Thus was described, albeit briefly, the crime of highway robbery for which 21 year old Ann Wheldon was tried at the Nottingham Town Lent Assizes in March 1817 and sentenced to death, later respited to fourteen years transportation. What the news item does not tell us is that two people, charged with being accessories to the crime – Sarah Griffin and Thomas Towle – were acquitted. Subsequently Sarah Griffin was found guilty of another crime which earned her a berth, with Ann, on the convict vessel *Friendship*.<sup>2</sup>

Following the verdict Ann Wheldon was taken to the Nottingham Town Gaol but she did not have long to wait there before, as reported in the *Nottingham Review*, in late May she was removed to Deptford and put on board the *Friendship*.<sup>3</sup> She was another of his charges described by Surgeon Cosgreave as a prostitute but he did concede that at least she was not insolent.

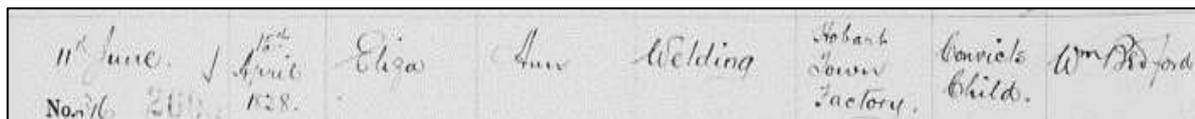
Having endured the long sea voyage Ann was one of the women who had a bit further to travel when the *Friendship* arrived at Port Jackson on 14 January 1818. She was one of the fifty-three who were embarked on the *Duke of Wellington* bound for Hobart Town which reached its destination on 20 February 1818.<sup>4</sup> And, as Ann was mustered at Port Dalrymple in 1820 and 1821, she would have been among the contingent who were subsequently removed to the northern district of the Island.<sup>5</sup>

It is from the conduct record of Ann Wildon [sic] that we can chart her movements over the next five years.<sup>6</sup>

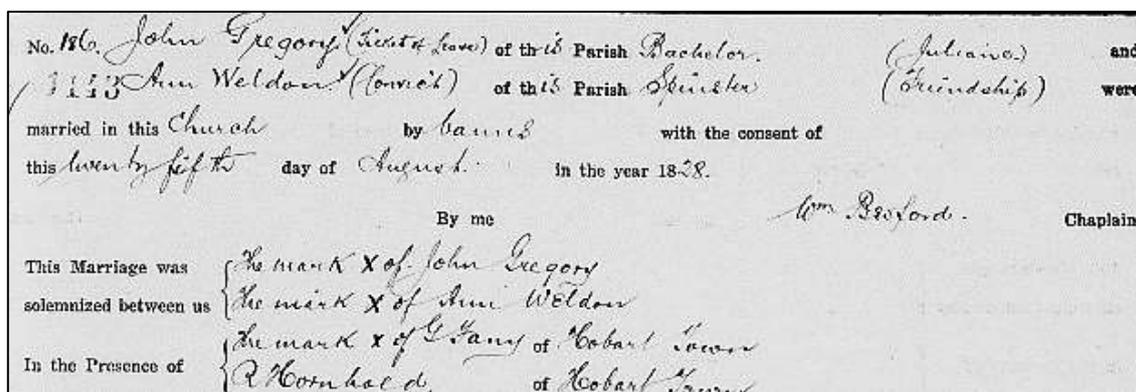


The first entry is for 18 August 1823 when she was charged with having been drunk at the Hospital, and for which she was reprimanded by Magistrate Peter Mulgrave. It is likely that Ann was employed at the hospital at the time. On 12 April 1825 a charge of having been absent from Divine Service was dismissed. By 1826 she had been assigned to J. Fawcner – John Fawcner, licencee of the Cornwall Hotel - and it was he who brought her before the magistrate in June 1826 for having been disorderly, for which she received another reprimand. However she returned to Fawcner's service and was there for just over a year before absenting herself from her master's premises.<sup>7</sup> This time Magistrate Mulgrave ordered her to be removed to the Factory at George Town – but for how long is not specified.

There is then a gap in the records for Ann Wheldon until 1828 and so we do not know how and where she had been assigned in the interim, or when she arrived back at Hobart. Under the name Welding she was registered as the mother of a daughter, Eliza, born at the Hobart Town Factory in April 1828 and baptised two months later.<sup>8</sup>



No father is recorded, but he has been identified from another source.<sup>9</sup> By instruction from Lieutenant- Governor George Arthur to the Colonial Secretary dated 23 June 1828, the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, John Lakeland, was to report on whether the purported fathers of two children born recently in the Female Factory had the means of providing child maintenance and, if so, they were to be compelled to do so. One of the fathers referred to was John Gregory, convict, holding a ticket-of-leave, and alleged father of the child born in the Factory on 15 April to Ann Wilding [sic]. In his response of 16 July 1828, John Lakeland not only confirmed that John Gregory had the means of supporting his illegitimate daughter, but he had also sent in an application to marry the mother and further, if the application was not approved, he was still willing to maintain his child. The application was approved and the marriage took place on 25 August 1828 at Hobart, almost ten years after Ann had arrived in the colony.<sup>10</sup>



As recorded in the marriage register, John Gregory had come to the colony on board the *Juliana* which had arrived in Hobart on 29 December 1820. Referred to as John Gregory alias Faux, he had been tried at the Devon Lent Assizes where he had been found guilty of stealing a bay gelding and sentenced to death.<sup>11</sup> He was initially held in the Devon County Gaol where the prison register confirmed that he was under sentence of death. He was then transferred to the hulk *Laurel*. However, the hulk's register shows that 20 year old John Gregory's sentence had been respited to fourteen years, a reprieve that a letter from the Admiralty to John Linton Simmons, Esq, of Keynsham, near Bristol, dated 30 August 1820, may have had some bearing.

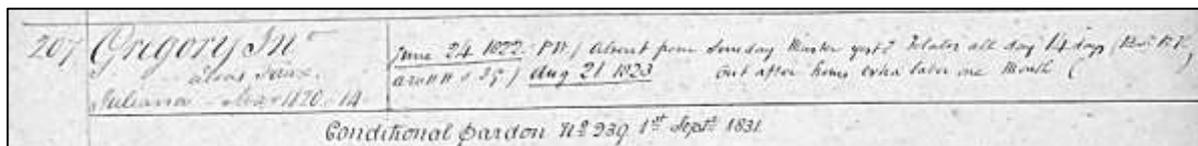
Sir

I am directed by Lord Sidmouth to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter accompanied with one written by John Gregory and George Faux, two convicts under Sentence of Transportation and also a Memorial of the Inhabitants of the Hundred of Keynsham relative to the Character of those Prisoners; and I am to acquaint you for the information of those Gentleman who have signed the Memorial, that the Convicts in question have within these few days been embarked in a Ship, which is on the point of Sailing for New South Wales.<sup>12</sup>

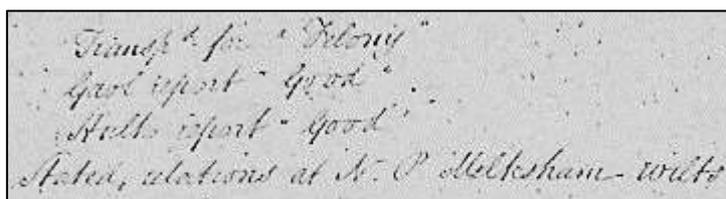
The letter refers to two convicts, but in fact there was only one - John Gregory alias Faux. But had John petitioned, and been supported by the Keynsham memorialists, for a reduction in his sentence, or even for a revocation of any transportation sentence? Regardless, notwithstanding his crime, John Gregory must have been well regarded. The *Juliana* departed England on 3 September with 160 convicts, only one of whom died during the voyage of 116 days.<sup>13</sup>

The musters 1821-1826 list John Gregory as being employed on public works, and for the 1830 records that he had by then obtained a ticket of leave.<sup>14</sup> He had in fact obtained this ticket in August 1827, a year before his

marriage to Ann. His conditional pardon was granted in September 1831 and advice of his certificate of freedom was announced in March 1834.<sup>15</sup> Apart from a couple of minor infringements blotting his conduct record – absence from Sunday muster and out after hours - it is apparent that John Gregory was no trouble to the authorities and had just buckled down and worked off his sentence in the minimum of time.<sup>16</sup>



Written along the bottom of the conduct sheet is the following notation. Confirming John's general behaviour the reports of his conduct at both the Gaol and on the Hulk was described as 'Good'. It also states some of his relations were living at Melksham, Wiltshire, John's native place.<sup>17</sup>



Only three more definite records have been located for Ann following her marriage to John Gregory. While John was perhaps celebrating his conditional pardon and then his status as a free man, his wife was to be found in the House of Correction. She is listed as such in the 1832, 1833 and 1835 convict musters.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately the muster lists do not indicate which House of Correction, and why Ann Wildon [sic] was there. Had she committed some offence/s? Was she permanently incapacitated or in between assignments? Or was she one the House of Correction's staff complement?

Two newspaper items concerning an Ann Gregory may possibly relate to 'our' Ann but there is nothing to confirm this. The first comes from the *Colonial Times* of 10 January 1837, in its Hobart Town Police Report.

James Bales was fined 10s for ill-using Ann Gregory, and in default of payment was ordered 14 days to the roundabout.<sup>19</sup>

Eleven years later, in September 1848, *The Britannia and Trades' Advocate* reported on the trial of one John Williams, charged with having stolen 'bed ticks, value 20s; and six blankets, value 30s, the property of Her Majesty the Queen'.<sup>20</sup> Acting on information received, Constable Thomson deposed that he had gone to Davey Street where he saw Ann Gregory standing near the main gate of the military barracks holding an empty basket, and witnessed the prisoner bring out and place the blankets and bedticks into her basket. Ann Gregory deposed to having been in the habit of washing for the prisoner and she had received the bedding for the purpose of washing them. At the conclusion of the presentation of confused and confusing testimony the case was abandoned.

No records have been located to establish when and where Ann Gregory and John Gregory died. The fate of their daughter Eliza is also a mystery.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, 28 Mar 1817, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Bond of Friendship account of Sarah Griffin.

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry, England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892, Nottinghamshire, 1817. *Nottingham Review*, 30 May 1817.

<sup>4</sup> Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for Ann Wheldon.

<sup>5</sup> Female Convict Research Centre (FCRC), Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database, Convict ID : 3629.

<sup>6</sup> TAHO, Conduct Record, CON40/1/9 p.269.

<sup>7</sup> In 1826 the Cornwall Hotel, overlooking the river, was described as being 'new and very commodious, with 'Stabling for eight Horses; and a constant supply of Brandy, Rum, Wines, Ale, Porter, Beer etc'. *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser*, 13 Oct 1826, p.4. 'J.



Fawkner' was most likely John Fawkner, the son of a transported convict who, in turn, spent time in the penal settlement of Newcastle and who, by 1816 was resident in Hobart from which, following 'another period of personal and financial difficulty', he moved to Launceston. Much later he became a member of the Legislative Council of Victoria - Hugh Anderson, 'Fawkner, John Pascoe (1792–1869)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fawkner-john-pascoe-2037/text2517>, published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 5 May 2018.

<sup>8</sup> TAHO, Hobart births 1828, RGD32/1/1 no 2605.

<sup>9</sup> Lucy Frost notes concerning correspondence regarding maintenance of illegitimate children (CSO 1/288/6893 p.51) cited in Research Notes for the FCRC database entry for Ann Wildon [sic].

<sup>10</sup> TAHO, Hobart marriages 1828, RGD32/1/1 no 2605.

<sup>11</sup> *Exeter Flying Post*, 23 Mar 1820, p.2.

<sup>12</sup> Findmypast (FMP), England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Correspondence and Warrants.

<sup>13</sup> Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship Juliana 1820, [https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict\\_ship\\_juliana\\_1820.htm](https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict_ship_juliana_1820.htm).

<sup>14</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1826, and 1830.

<sup>15</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette*, 18 Aug 1827, p.1. *The Hobart Town Chronicle*, 23 Apr 1833, p.4. *The Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser*, 4 Mar 1834.

<sup>16</sup> TAHO, Conduct Register, CON31/1/15 p.69.

<sup>17</sup> Given that the Memorials referred to earlier had been from Keynsham, Somerset, is it possible that the native place recorded on the Conduct Record is incorrect, and should have been Keynsham. Regardless, an inspection of the 1841 England census returns shows that both Keynsham and Melksham were home to a bevy of Gregorys.

<sup>18</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, List of convicts (incomplete) 1832, 1833, 1835.

<sup>19</sup> *Colonial Times*, 10 Jan 1837, p.7.

<sup>20</sup> *The Britannia and Trades' Advocate*, 7 Sep 1848, p.2.



## SOURCES

### Genealogy Websites

#### Ancestry

England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892

New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849

#### Findmypast

England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935

### Other Websites

Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/>

Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), <http://www.bda-online.org.au/>

Female Convicts Research Centre, <https://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/>

Free Settler or Felon? <https://www.jenwillets.com/>

LINC Tasmania, <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/>

Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office, <https://www.libraries.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/>

### Online Newspapers

#### British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Cambridge Chronicle and Journal

Exeter Flying Post

Nottingham Review

#### TROVE

Colonial Times

Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser

Hobart Town Gazette

The Britannia and Trades' Advocate

The Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser

The Hobart Town Chronicle

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