

There are several people called John Bird, all born around the same time, in Warwickshire. The following is **possibly** the family of convict John Bird.

On 7 April 1828, at St Nicholas, Warwick, Richard Bird married Mary Ann Hawkins by Banns. Witnesses were John Bird and Sarah Hawkins.

Their first child, John, was baptised on 18 July 1829, at St Nicholas, Warwick. The family resided in St John's Place; his father was a tailor. There were three more children born to the couple:

William, 1831, living at Crompton Street, St Mary, Warwick

Edward Joseph, 1833, Crompton Street, St Mary's

Mary Ann, 1835, Brook Street, St Mary's

Six months after his daughter was baptised, a newspaper reported:

A person by the name of Richard Bird, a tailor, who for many years past had been employed by Mr Pickett, Swan-street, Warwick, fell down in a fit of apoplexy and shortly afterwards died.¹

Richard Bird, buried 13 December 1835, aged 34, from Brook Street, St Mary

Mary Ann Bird was left with four young children. She married again:

Daniel Douras, full age, widower, labourer, residing at Much Park Street, St Michael, Coventry and

Mary Ann Bird née Hawkins, full age, widow, residing at the same place, married 8 February 1838.

Their first child, Daniel Douras, was born a few months later. The couple had two more children,

George Felix, 1840 and Mary Eliza, 1842.

1841 census, Wharf Street, St Thomas, Birmingham, Warwickshire:²

Daniel Douras, 35, glass smith; Mary, 35; Daniel, 2, George, 1; John Bird, 12, Wm Bird, 10, Ed Bird, 8, Mary Bird, 5.

On the 1851 census, all the children live at home, except John Bird.³

At Court Great Francis Street, Aston near Birmingham, Aston, Warwickshire:

Daniel Douras, 47, Ag lab; Mary Ann, 49; Daniel, 12, George, 10, Eliza, 8; William Bird, 20, son in law, silversmith journeyman; Edward, 18, son in law, ag lab; Ann, daughter in law, coach lace weaver.

The first definite record of John Bird was at the Worcestershire Lent Assizes, on 6 March 1844: Burglary at Kingsnorton.

John Bird, 16, can't read or write, brickmaker, was charged with breaking into the dwelling house of Thomas Brettan at Kingsnorton on the night of the 13 January last, and stealing therein a gown and other articles, the property of the said Thomas Brettan.

Mr Selfe conducted the prosecution and Mr Allen the defence.

Thomas Brettan, the prosecutor, said - I live at Kingsnorton, at a place called Little Poole Lane. I went to bed at twelve on the night of the robbery. Between two and three in the morning I was disturbed by a noise and on going down I found that the window had been broken open, and on examining the house I missed a table, a sheet, two pair of new shoes, a beaver hat, a dress in a wet state, and other property. I saw the dress hung up in the kitchen before I went to bed, and subsequently saw it in the possession of the constable.

P.C. Brown of Birmingham - I apprehended the prisoner in Banbury Street, Birmingham, about half past six o'clock in the morning of the 14 January, and found a dress on him, which he said belonged to his mother, and he had fetched it for her from a house in Fazeley Street. It was in his pocket. I advised him to go with me to the house in Fazeley Street, which he refused to do, as he said he could not remember the house.

¹ Coventry Herald, 11 December 1835, p4

² The National Archives (TNA) UK; HO107/1147/3

³ TNA: HO107/2061

Cross-examined by Mr Allen - The gown belongs to Mr Cooper's servant girl. She is not here, but is still engaged at Mr Cooper's. We have a great many things sent to wash.

Mr Allen addressed the jury for the defence, laying great stress on the non-production of Mrs Brettan, who he said would have been a much more proper person to provide the identity of the property, of which they must be satisfied beyond a doubt. It was likewise necessary, to make the property that of Mr Brettan, to prove that the gown did really belong to the servant girl of Mr Cooper. He then animadverted rather strongly on the conduct of the policeman in not making enquiries of the prisoner's mother after being directed to her residence by prisoner. These several points received their due weight from the eloquence of the learned Counsel, who spoke at some length. The facts, having been recapitulated by his Lordship with great impartiality, the jury returned a verdict of Guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy, and he received an excellent character from his employer. Before passing sentence, the Learned Judge called the policeman from Birmingham, who stated that he had seen him many times within the past 12 months in company with reputed thieves. One year's imprisonment, with the last week in solitary confinement.⁴

Then, at the Birmingham Borough Sessions, on 2 March 1849:

Stealing a Leg of Mutton. John Bird, charged with stealing a leg of mutton from Richard Power, was found guilty and sentenced to seven years' transportation.⁵

The Prison Registers show John Bird, 23, single, brickmaker, convicted on 2 March 1849 at Birmingham Sessions of stealing a leg of mutton, and was sentenced to 7 years. He was transferred to Northampton Prison on 2 May 1849. Almost a year later, he was removed to Portland Prison on 5 April 1850. He boarded the *Pyrenees* on 13 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia.⁶

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, John was assigned number 497, issued with a Ticket of Leave, and a description taken of him.

497. John Bird, 22, 5'4", has dark brown hair, hazel eyes, a long face, a sallow complexion, is stout, has no marks, is a brickmaker, and is single.⁷

The Superintendent's Journal notes:

12 July 1851. The following men will this day be received at the prison from the *Pyrenees*, including 497 John Bird.

15 July 1851. The following ten men will be in readiness first thing tomorrow morning to proceed on Ticket of Leave to Mr Henry Gray, Peninsular, Perth, including 497 John Bird. They will be taken up to Mount Eliza Station and provided with a pair blankets, bed, smock and belt (bottom of page unreadable), see that each man in leaving the Establishment is searched, together with his box etc. No pens, knife, spoon or hammock are allowed to be pass out with them.

18 July 1851. Pass Holders, John Bird (497), James Salisbury (402) and William Dudley (460) from the Mount Eliza Station, will proceed to Henry Gray, Peninsular Farm, Perth.⁸

BRICKS! BRICKS!!
HENRY GRAY respectfully informs his numerous friends, and the Colonists generally, that he has entered into very extensive arrangements in the **Brickmaking Business**, and will be enabled as, early as the season will permit, to supply and deliver in Perth or Fremantle, or on the banks of either rivers, any number of a superior description and on the lowest and most liberal terms.
Apply to Mr. G. SHENTON, Perth; or HENRY GRAY, Peninsula.

⁴ Worcester Journal, 14 March 1844, p4

⁵ Birmingham Journal, 3 March 1849, p8

⁶ The National Archives UK (TNA); PCOM2/383; HO23/8

⁷ SROWA, Acc 128/40-43

⁸ SROWA, Superintendent Orders, 1850 - 1854 (So1 - So3), p56, p59, p60, p64

John was still working for Henry Gray of Perth on 21 October 1851.

A Conditional Pardon was granted in March 1854, and his sentence expired in March 1856.

There is a possible reference to John in the Riverina Herald newspaper. At a court case in Echuca in 1878, there was a witness J. Bird, brickmaker.¹⁰

However, there are numerous people called John Bird in the Eastern States.

Note: He is not the John Bird who died in 1869. This man was also born in Birmingham, but he was an Enrolled Pensioner Guard.¹¹

⁹ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 15 August 1851, p1

¹⁰ The Riverine Herald, 2 Dec 1878, p3

¹¹ <https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/b/bird-john/>