

William Davis, 512, *Pyrenees*

Researched by Marcia Watson

His real name is Isaac Dix.

Baptism	25 July 1824, Bitton Hamlet of Oldland, Gloucestershire, when 3 months old
Parents	Isaac Dix and Nancy Bane
Parent's marriage	1 June 1823, Bitton, by Banns
Siblings	George (1826), Ann (~ 1834), William (1837)
Wife	
Married	
Children	

Isaac Dix, the son of Isaac and Nancy, of Cowhorn Hill, was baptised on 25 July 1824 at Bitton Hamlet of Oldland, aged 3 months old. His father was a coal miner.

Oldland Common is a village on the outskirts of Bristol. It is in the civil parish of Bitton; the greater area is called Oldland. The village was involved in the coal mining industry and had its own pit on Cowhorn Hill during the 1800s.

Isaac's mother, Ann Dyx, of Oldland, was buried on 22 January 1837, aged 32, at Bitton.

The following year, on 3 June 1838, Isaac Dix, full age, widower, collier, resides Oldland common, father William a spelter man, married Mary Hopes, full age, spinster, resides Oldland common. Both made their marks. The witness was Charles Dix.

His father, Isaac Dix, Oldland Common, was buried 24 May 1841, aged 39, at Bitton.

On the 1841 census, Oldland Common, parish of Bitton, Gloucestershire.¹

Mary Dix, 40, charwoman; Isaac Dix, 15, coal miner; George Dix, 13, coal miner; Ann Dix, 7; William Dix, 5; Hannah Hopes, 65, charwoman.

The children were her step-children and Hannah Hopes was her mother.

At the Gloucestershire Epiphany Sessions, 3 January 1843.²

Isaac Dix, 16, pleaded guilty to stealing at Siston, on 10 December last, thirty pounds weight of spelter, the property of G. M. Davidson. Four calendar months' hard labour in the Penitentiary. W

The Prison Register shows that Isaac Dix, 16, 4'4", brown hair, dark blue eyes, round face, common complexion, collier, can't read or write, from the parish of Bitton, was committed 18 December 1842 charged on the oath of Alfred Davidson on suspicion of stealing at Siston on 10 December 1842, thirty pounds weight of spelter, the property of George Madgwick Davidson. Convicted at Epiphany Sessions 3 January 1843 and sentenced to 4 calendar months, discharged to the Penitentiary on 6 January 1843. He was orderly in prison.³

The Penitentiary Register shows Isaac Dix, 16, was committed at Lawford Gate, discharged 3 May 1843, labourer, orderly in prison. He was sent to the Philanthropic Society, St George's Fields, London, by the Chaplain.⁴

The Philanthropic Society, established in 1788 at St. George's Fields, was an institution focused on preventing crime and reforming the lives of children of convicts and those convicted of crimes. It provided apprenticeships, training, and a "Reform" for boys and girls, later establishing separate institutions for each. Isaac was taught tailoring.

¹ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/361/14

² Cheltenham Chronicle, 12 January 1843, p4

³ Gloucestershire Archives; Reference: Q/Gc/5/7; Cheltenham Chronicle, 12 January 1843, p4

⁴ Gloucestershire Archives; Reference: Q/Gc/7/1

In 1848, now calling himself William Davis, he was charged with stealing about seven yards of collar cloth, the property of Mr James Walwyn, draper, of Cheltenham. It appeared that a person named Mary Cranscombe, living at 12 Pittville-parade, was passing Mr Walwyn's shop about eight o'clock on the previous evening when she observed the prisoner take the cloth in question from the place where it was standing, near the shop door, and put it under his arm. Observing that the occupants of the shop were at the back part of the premises, she thought it best to follow the prisoner; she accordingly did so, and meeting P.C. George Wathen, near Winchcomb-street, informed him of the circumstances. The policeman went in pursuit, and having secured the prisoner took the cloth to Mr Walwyn, when the property was identified, and matched with a piece that was in the shop. These facts having been adduced in evidence, the prisoner was fully committed for trial at the Sessions. [crease across printed page] ⁵

The Gloucester Gaol Register shows he was admitted on 12 October 1848.

William Davis, 22, read and write well, tailor from Bristol, 5'4½", dark brown hair, grey eyes, round face, common complexion, anchor and **I.D. imperfectly inside lower left arm**, large scar from disease calf of right leg, charged with feloniously stealing at Cheltenham on the 11 October 1848, seven yards of Collar Cloth, the property of James Walwyn. Found guilty at Michaelmas Sessions on 17 October 1848, and transported for seven years. Removed on 10 January 1849.

William was a native of Bristol, single, worked last for James Reynolds of Cowbridge in Glamorganshire, before that Mr Bell, he is "Church". He was orderly in gaol.

Previously convicted at Epiphany Session 1843, stealing Spelter⁶ at Siston, the property of Mr Davidson, 4 months in Penitentiary. ⁷

The Prison Registers show that William Davis, 22, single, read and write well, tailor, was convicted 17 October 1848 at Gloucester Sessions, sentenced to 7 years, larceny after previous conviction. He was received at Millbank Prison on 10 January 1849 from Gloucester, and transferred to *Wye* hulk at Woolwich on 22 June 1849. He was Anglican.

During the July-September quarter of 1849, he was transferred to the *Justitia* hulk. He was sick during this quarter. For 6 months, he was healthy, and then for 6 months, he was sick.

He boarded the *Pyrenees* on 5 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia. ⁸

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, William was assigned number 512, issued with a Ticket of Leave and a physical description was recorded.

512. William Davis, 24, 5'4½", dark brown hair, blue eyes, round face, sallow complexion, slight, marks - cupping on back, two large scars on right leg, tailor, and single. The cupping was possibly administered during his periods of sickness on the *Justitia* hulk. ⁹

The Superintendent's Journal records:

14 July 1851. Forty-four men from the ship *Pyrenees* will be received and located in Division No. 3, including 512. William Davis.

15 July 1851. The Steward will provide beds, blankets, knives, spoons, plates, rations, etc., for the following 40 men proceeding to North Fremantle Station tomorrow with the tools undermentioned. The list included 512. William Davis. ¹⁰

Ticket-of-Leave-Men at North Fremantle Station, available for hire, included 512, William Davis, Tailor. ¹¹

⁵ Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly Gazette, 16 October 1848, p2

⁶ Spelter is a zinc-lead alloy that ages to resemble bronze, but is softer and has a lower melting point. The name can also refer to a copper-zinc alloy (a brass) used for brazing, or to pure zinc.

⁷ Gloucestershire Archives; Reference: Q/Gc/6/1

⁸ TNA, HO24/4; PCOM2/29; HO8/101-107

⁹ SROWA, Acc 128/32

¹⁰ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p58, p60

Perth District, Ticket of Leave Register.¹²

William Davis, 512, 24 years, *Pyrenees*, on 15 September 1851.

William was hired by William Shepherd, Perth.

Rate of Wages: £1 per month with board, lodging and washing.

Wm Davis reports on 5 December that he left ... on 20 November and has since been with Thomas Farmer, Perth], wages £1 per month. [Tailor in Hay Street, Perth

Left Perth for Fremantle

2 December working for myself.

He returned to Perth.

Working with Rd Bryant, Tailor - Jobbing

This Register records that William was granted a Conditional Pardon 20 February 1853. The General Register, 1850 -1868 (R21b) says the date of receipt was 23 April 1853.

William was doing well, as by 31 December 1852, he had repaid £6.15, with an allowance of 15/-, of his passage money.¹³

He left for Adelaide, arriving on 6 August 1854, on the *Anna Dixon*. The 188-ton brig left Fremantle on 26 July with passengers: Mrs Jury and 2 children, Mrs Sampson and 3 children, Miss Molloy, Messrs Harris, Corthorp, **Davis**, and Sampson, in the cabin; and 51 in the steerage.¹⁴

Alleged Convict Illegally at Large.

William Davis, described as a tailor, was charged with being a prisoner of the crown illegally at large, at Adelaide, on 25 November.

Police-constable Foley¹⁵ deposed that he had known the prisoner at Fremantle, Swan River, where he had been seen by a witness working in irons, and that he knew him to be a rogue and a robber. Prisoner was either a seven or a ten years' man. Had seen his ticket-of-leave and had been informed by him that he came to Swan River in the convict ship *Pyrenees*. Witness was certain the prisoner's sentence had not expired. Prisoner arrived per *Anna Dixon* a few days since. That vessel came from the Swan River, and had the prisoner on board as a passenger.

In answer to the Magistrate, the prisoner said he had brought his conditional pardon with him, and had it on board the *Anna Dixon*. The constable refused to go with him to see it, although he offered to pay his expenses to the port in order that he might do so.

Foley, with a Hibernian accent, exclaimed with much emphasis, "Your Worship, he's a grate bla'gard" (Laughter)

The worthy Magistrate directed the prisoner to be taken in custody to the port, where he could produce his conditional pardon; and if found to be correct by a Magistrate there, he would be discharged.¹⁶

Local Court—Port Adelaide. One of the witnesses may be William Davis, although called Davies.

Wilson v. Nelson.—This was an action brought to recover the sum of two pounds, balance of the purchase money for a gold lever watch, sold by the plaintiff to the defendant for £7, of which only £5 had been received by the plaintiff.

J. Wilson, the plaintiff being sworn, said, I took the watch in question to the defendant's house. After some bargaining, he agreed to give me £7 for the watch for which I had asked him £9. He made an agreement to the effect that all the money was to be paid in seven weeks at £1 per week. I have received £5 in instalments at various times.

¹¹ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 25 July 1851, p2

¹² SROWA, Perth TOL Register Cons 1386/1 1851 - Aug 1854, p110

¹³ TNA, CO18/69

¹⁴ Adelaide Times, 8 August 1854, p3

¹⁵ Foley is probably John Foley, pensioner guard, who arrived on the *William Jardine* in 1852.

¹⁶ Adelaide Times, 27 November 1854, p3

William Davies, tailor, Port Adelaide, said he was at the defendant's house when the plaintiff sold the watch to Nelson, for the sum of £7.

After the evidence was heard, the verdict was for the plaintiff.¹⁷

There are numerous people called William Davis. What happened to him is unknown.

¹⁷ Adelaide Times, 18 January 1855, p3