

Edward Fawcett, 263, *Mermaid*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Correct name: Edwin.

Baptism	4 March 1823, Warmfield, Yorkshire
Parents	William Fawsit/Fawcett and Hannah Hesslegrave
Parent's marriage	28 March 1819, Warmfield, Yorkshire, by banns
Siblings	Frederick (1821), William (1825), Mary Ann (1827), Mark (1829-1830), George (1831), Dorothy Ann (1834), Sarah Jane (1837)
Wife	Ann Bramham
Married	24 July 1847, Wakefield
Children	Sophia (1848-1848), Mary Ann (1849-1849)

Edwin Fawcett was the second son of William and Hannah Fawcett. His father was recorded on various records as a carpenter, joiner or wheelwright.

1841 census, South Street, Wakefield.¹

Wm Fawcett, 40, wheelwright

Hannah, 40

Fredk 20, wheelwright; Edwin 15, labourer; William 15, labourer; Mary Ann 11; George 10; Dorothy 5; Jane 4.

The Leeds Intelligencer reported: Saturday last (24 July) at Wakefield, Mr Edward Fawcett, wheelwright, Kirkgate, to Miss Ann Bramham, Southgate.²

The Marriage took place on 24 July 1847, at the parish church in Wakefield, by Banns.

Edwin Fawcett, full age, bachelor, wheelwright, resides at Kirkgate, father is William Fawcett, a wheelwright.

Ann Bramham, minor, spinster, servant, resides at Southgate, father is Robert Bramham, a farmer. Both Edwin and Ann made their marks.

Their daughter, Sophia, was buried 16 January 1848, aged 3 weeks old. Her father was named Edwin, and the residence was Kirkgate.

Edward was in trouble in January 1849.

The late Highway robbery at Kirkgate. At the Courthouse, on Monday (15 January 1849), Edward Fawcett was remanded on suspicion of being concerned in the robbery of a money bag from a clerk of Messrs Horner and Son, containing between 100 and 200 pounds. The clerk was proceeding up Union Square to the house of one of his masters at a little after eight on Wednesday last, when one man attacked him, held fast, and two others wrested the bag containing the money from him, and then made off. A second man has been apprehended in Manchester, and a third is said to be well known but has as yet escaped detection.³

Yorkshire Assizes, March 1849.

William Greaves, 30, Edward Fawcett, 23, William Wright, 31, and John Broomhead, 21, were charged with having on 10 January last, at Wakefield, violently assaulted William Banks, and stolen from his person £172.13.8, in promissory and bank notes, and gold and silver coin, the property of Joseph Horner and others.

¹ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/1272/2

² Leeds Intelligencer, 31 July 1847, p5

³ Bradford Observer, 18 January 1849

The court records itemise the money as: £85 in bank notes, forty sovereigns, thirty half-sovereigns, sixty crowns, forty-six half-crowns, two hundred shillings, two hundred sixpences and sixty-four penny pieces.

Mr Price and Mr Martin defended Broomhead and Fawcett; Mr Matthews defended Wright; Greaves was undefended.

The prosecutors are extensive corn millers and factors, and carry on business in Wakefield. Every evening, when their premises are closed, the cash is counted up and placed in small leather bags; notes are put in one bag, the gold in another, and the silver in a third. The three bags are then placed into a large canvas bag, which Mr Owen, the establishment's cashier, properly fastens. A trustworthy person then carries the money to the house of Mr Joseph Horner jun, one of the partners in the firm, who lives in Union Terrace, a short distance from the mill. The bag remains in Mr Horner's overnight custody, and the following morning a clerk returns it to the mill.

In Union Terrace, there is no thoroughfare, but there is a gate connecting to Red Lion yard. This gate is kept constantly locked, and the occupants of the houses in Union Square each have a key.

The four prisoners resided in Wakefield. Greaves lodged at a beer-house, kept by a man called Redding; Fawcett is the son of a wheelwright, living in Thorn's lane; Wright is a dyer on his own account, and resided in Union Square; Broomhead's father is a sailmaker, and lived close to the mill of the prosecutors.

The prisoners were well aware that a clerk conveyed cash to Mr Horner's house every night about eight o'clock, and they agreed together that, when a favourable opportunity presented itself, they should waylay the clerk and rob him of the money. Two or three attempts were made, the first on a Friday night, another on the Saturday night and the third on Tuesday night. On Wednesday night, the 10 January, the prisoners effected their purpose. One of them stationed himself a short distance from the mill, and the others lay in wait in Union Square. On the approach of Banks, the clerk, the first man gave a signal, and the others seized Banks, knocked him down, snatched the bag and then ran off through the gate into Red Lion yard. The suddenness of the attack and the fact that it was dusk meant Banks was unable to recognise any of his attackers.

A young man, Redding, son of a beerhouse keeper where Greaves lodged, was concerned in the robbery, and, from information he gave, was admitted as evidence for the Crown. It appears the robbery was first planned by Wright about a week or ten days earlier, and that two men from Morley were to come to Wakefield and take part. After Banks was robbed, Redding, the prisoners, and the two men from Morley, Foster and Bromley, met at his father's house. It was agreed that the following morning they would all meet at Morley and divide the spoils. Redding went to Morley, but no division of the booty took place, and all he got was 10 from Broomhead at Leeds. He spent part of the money at Leeds, went to York for a day or two, and then to Lincolnshire where he was apprehended.

In the bag containing the notes, there was one of the Wakefield and Barnsley Bank, and it being the custom of Messrs Horner to make a private mark on all bank notes that came into their possession, the note in question was marked on the back with the figures 1666, a long stroke being put between the 1 and the first 6. The note was made a present of to a woman of infamous character in Leeds, by the prisoner Broomhead. Evidence was also adduced to prove that Broomhead and Redding were in York together on 15 January, where the former had a number of sovereigns wrapped up in a handkerchief. They hired a cab, visited several places, and spent a good deal of money. As soon as Broomhead and Fawcett learned that Redding had turned Queen's evidence, they at once delivered themselves up to the police, the former in Leeds and the latter in Wakefield.

At the conclusion of the case, it appeared that Wright had taken no part in the robbery. It was thought he was the planner, but he merely said it would be very easy for anyone to rob the Banks as he went to the prosecutor's house. He was found not guilty.

The other three prisoners, Broomhead, Fawcett and Greaves, were found Guilty. They were each sentenced to 20 years' transportation. The case occupied all day, and till 8 o'clock in the evening.⁴

After the conviction of Edward, their second daughter, Mary Ann Fawcett, was buried 23 September 1849, aged 3 months. The residence was Kirkgate, and the father was Edwin Fawcett.

The Prison Registers show that Edward Fawcett, 23, married (or married with 1 child), can read, wheelwright, was convicted 3 March 1849 at York of robbery with violence and sentenced to 20 years. On 11 April 1849 he was removed from York Castle and sent to Leicester Prison. Then, on 3 May 1850, he was sent to Portland Prison.⁵

Petition

Received 8 August 1850.⁶

To the Right Honble Sir Geo Grey, Bart, Secy of State for the Home Department.

Wakefield 7 August 1850

On the 10 January 1849 a robbery was committed upon the Clerk of Messrs Horner and Sons, Corn Merchants of this place for which Wm Graves, Edw Fawcett and John Broomhead were convicted at the following Assizes at York and each sentenced to be transported for 20 years.

Graves (*sic*), who was the actual perpetrator of the robbery, is a man of bad character, altho he had not previously been convicted of felony. Edw Fawcett and John Broomhead, both inhabitants of this Boro, are well known, and this is the first instance in which either of them has been known to break the Laws of this country. The above robbery and conviction having taken place during the period in which I had the Honor of being Mayor of this Borough, and having known the parents of both parties to be industrious tradesmen (the one a sailmaker and the other a carpenter). I have felt interested in ascertaining their conduct since their Trial and believe it to be very good. About the same period several similar instances of Street robbery had occurred in different parts of the Kingdom which caused the Judges to pass more severe sentences than might have been under a different state of things; and the prosecutors as well as the writer have thought that the end of Justice would not be improperly interfered with if the sentences passed upon Fawcett and Broomhead could be rather materially mitigated. Several requests have been made to me by their Parents and Friends that application might be made to the Government for such mitigation, which I have hitherto deferred under the impression that their case would receive a more favourable consideration, if during their probation in this country, their conduct was well reported of by the Governors and Chaplains under whose care they were placed.

Having received the enclosed letter from Broomhead a few days ago, I now take the liberty of urgently requesting a favourable consideration of their Case and a mitigation of their sentences.

I have the honor &c, Sir, your most obedient servant,

G.W. Harrison.

Answered 14 August 1850, No mitigation

A 4-page letter from John Broomhead was included, dated Portland Prison 29 July 1850.

Edward boarded *Mermaid* on 28 December 1850 for the voyage to Western Australia. The ship arrived at Fremantle, on 13 May 1851. Edward was assigned number 263 and described as: 263. Edward Fawcett, 25, 5'6", light brown hair, grey eyes, long face, fresh complexion, letters E.F. on left arm, a carpenter &c, married, no children.⁷

After being employed on Government Works, he received a Ticket of Leave on 11 June 1853 and worked for the following employers.

⁴ Sheffield Independent, 17 March 1849, p8; Evening Mail, 12 March 1849, p7

⁵ TNA UK, HO 23/4, PCOM2/383

⁶ TNA UK, HO18/284

⁷ State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA), Acc 128/1-32

20 August 1853. Worked for John Buckingham of Perth until 28 June 1854.⁸
1 June 18754. Worked for Richard Sewell, Clerk of Works.
1 February 1856. Worked for Richard Pary?
28 February 1857. Transferred to Swan District in service of A. O'Grady Lefroy.
In 1857, he was earning £4 a month.

He received his Conditional Pardon at Fremantle on 17 April 1858.

What became of him is unknown.

Back in England.

Robert Bramham and his wife, Sarah Brears, had eight children, of whom only five were alive when the 1841 census was taken. 1841 census, the family lived in the village of Beal, near Kellington, in Yorkshire where Robert was a hawker. Other records show him as a labourer.⁹

After Edward's conviction, Ann was still in Wakefield in 1851.

1851 census, King Street, Wakefield. Ann Fawcett, married, 22, was a Nurse servant to Edward G. Simpson and his family, including three children, aged 4, 2 and 11 months. Simpson was a wine and spirit merchant.¹⁰

No further trace of Ann has been found.

⁸ Family Search, Rica Ericson Collection

⁹ TNA UK, HO107/1307/4

¹⁰ TNA UK, HO107/2327