

John said his father was John Richards and he lived at Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan. There is a family on the 1841 census that appears to be the Richards family.

1841 census, Cyfarthfa Lane, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, Wales. ¹

John Richards 45, collier; Mary 45; Benjamin 20, collier, Cicelia(*sic*) 15; John 15, Haulier; Mary 12; Elizabeth 7, all born in the county.

In the 1840s, a "haulier" in a mine was typically a young person, often a boy aged 14-17, responsible for guiding horses or ponies that pulled carts of coal (known as tubs or corves) from the coal face to the mine shaft. These hauliers played a vital role in the transportation of coal within the mine.

The first Court record found was the Glamorgan County Sessions on 4 February 1847:

John Richards, 19, imp, larceny, 3 months. Later records show he stole a watch.²

Then at the Glamorgan County Sessions, on 4 April 1848:

John Richards, 20, can't read or write, larceny from the person, not guilty.³

Merthyr Police Court, 13 January 1849.

George Lyndon, of the Plymouth Arms Inn, Merthyr, was charged by Superintendent Wrenn with keeping this house open before one o'clock on Sunday, 7 January 1849. The defendant pleaded guilty. It appeared that several persons were drinking in the house, one of whom, John Griffiths, was robbed of three sovereigns by John Richards, who had been committed for trial at the adjourned sessions. Mr Bruce considered it a bad case against Lyndon, and fined him 40s and costs. Paid.⁴

At the Adjourned Quarter Sessions for Glamorganshire were held in the Town-hall, Cardiff, on 21 February 1849:

John Richards, charged with having on 7 January last, feloniously stolen from the person of John Griffiths, of Merthyr, three sovereigns, his property, and Thomas Davies, aged 25, labourer, with having feloniously received these sovereigns of the said John Richards, well knowing the same to be stolen. Mr Benson addressed the jury for the prosecution and called evidence.

John Griffiths said he was drinking in company with the prisoner; he fell asleep in the privy about eleven o'clock in the morning, and on awaking, he found the money missing. He was sure that he had not given it to the prisoner to keep. Other evidence was called to prove that the prosecutor and the prisoner had been seen drinking together, and that John Richards was observed to give three sovereigns to Thomas Davies at the Plymouth Arms public house. It was also given in evidence that both prisoners were seen in the privy with the prosecutor, and that after being taken into custody, the prisoner Richards had asked the policeman to be admitted to bail, and that he would return the money in the morning, that he had £2 by him then, but a sovereign was missing. Mr T Allen ingeniously addressed the jury for the defence, but did not call any evidence. The Chairman then went over the evidence very minutely, and the jury, after retiring for a few minutes, brought in a verdict of guilty. Richards had been previously convicted of stealing a silver watch and had been imprisoned in 1847 for that offence in Swansea house of correction for three calendar months. He, therefore, was sentenced to seven years' transportation, and Davies to three calendar months' hard labour in the house of correction at Swansea.⁵

The Prison Registers show that John Richards, 20, was committed on 9 January 1849 for stealing from the person, convicted at Cardiff on 21 February 1849 and sentenced to seven years'.

¹ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/1415/5

² TNA, HO 27/81, p308

³ TNA, HO 27/84, p337

⁴ The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette, 20 January 1849, p3

⁵ Swansea and Glamorgan Herald, 28 February 1849, p4

John, 20, single, can't read or write, collier, was received at Millbank Prison on 8 November 1849 from Cardiff. He had been convicted before and was from Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan. A note on the Register says "This convict assisted Warder Barr when he was attacked by prisoner Haywood on 19 January 1850 at Millbank". John was of the Independent Church. He was removed to *Warrior* hulk on 26 July 1850, where he was healthy and very well behaved. He boarded the *Pyrenees* on 5 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia.⁶

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, John was assigned number 430, issued with a Ticket of leave, and a physical description was recorded.

430. John Richards, 23, 5'5½", dark brown hair, dark brown eyes, oval face, dark complexion, A.F.G.H.F, star on right arm, D on back of right wrist, scar on right arm, cut on left arm, burn on left side, scar on right and left legs, puddler, single.⁷

The Superintendent's Journal shows:

1 July 1851. The following 50 men, from the *Warrior* hulk on board the ship *Pyrenees* will be received and located in Division No.3, including 430. John Richards.

3 July 1851. The following men holding passes will be detached from the Establishment and proceed to North Fremantle Station tomorrow, 4 July. They will be arranged in the following order of Messes, with a boatman to each. Mess No 4, included 430 John Richards, the boatman, an orderly and five other convicts, all from the *Pyrenees*.⁸

The newspapers advertised Ticket-of-Leave-Men at North Fremantle Station; these men were available for hire. 430, John Richards, Iron Pounder's Laborer.⁹

Ticket of Leave, Perth District.¹⁰

John Richards, 430, age 23, *Pyrenees*.

Hired by Pedro de Silva, boatman, 30 October 1851

Wages were £2 per month

His appointment appears to have been very short.

There are several convicts named Richards. These entries in and out of the prison may be John.

12 November 1851. Richards received at the prison

22 November 1851. Richards was discharged to North Fremantle Station.

4 December 1841. No. 430 John Richards from the North Fremantle Station was admitted into the Hospital on Medical recommendation. He was discharged on 15 December 1851.¹¹

By the end of December 1852, John had repaid £7 of his passage money and received an allowance of 10/-.¹²

A Conditional Pardon was granted on 23 April 1853.

John Richards was back in Wales by 1859.

Stealing Boots at Merthyr. John Richards, 32, was charged with stealing a pair of boots, the property of Daniel Jones, Merthyr, on 24 September 1859. Mr T Allen prosecuted. The prosecutor kept a stall at Merthyr market. The prisoner came there and asked to see a pair of boots. While the prosecutor

⁶ TNA, HO8/107, PCOM2/30

⁷ SROWA, Acc 128/32

⁸ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p45-6, p47

⁹ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 25 July 1851, p2

¹⁰ SROWA, Perth TOL Register Cons 1386/1 1851 - Aug 1854, p352

¹¹ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p114.

¹² TNA, CO18/69, Half Year Return 31.12.1852

turned around, the prisoner ran away with the boots. Verdict - guilty. A previous conviction was proved. Sentenced to three years' penal servitude.¹³

The Prison Registers show that John Richards, 32, single, puddler, can't read or write, Church of England, was convicted 20 October 1859 at Cardiff Michaelmas Quarter Sessions for stealing a pair of boots and sentenced to 3 years P.S. He was received at Millbank Prison from Cardiff on 18 January 1860. His previous record - transported 7 years in 1849 and once convicted. He was sent to Portland Prison on 20 July 1860, a 1st class prisoner. John made tolerable progress at the prison school. His behaviour was generally very good and occasionally exemplary. While in prison, he earned £6.6.0. In 1860, his address was Dowlais near Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. Although his sentence expired on 19 October 1862, John was discharged on Licence No. 10881 from Portland on 21 April 1862.¹⁴

In August 1862, John was back in Cardiff Gaol, a reconvicted licence holder.

John Richards, 35, puddler, can't read or write, convicted on 16 August 1862, stealing a pair of quarter boots, the property of William Hodges, at Aberdare, on 23 August 1862, pleaded guilty of larceny after a former conviction, sentenced to three years penal servitude, being his second conviction.¹⁵

The Prison Registers show that John Richards, 35, single, illiterate, puddler, was convicted on 16 October 1862 at Cardiff of larceny and sentenced to 3 years penal servitude. He was received at Millbank Prison on 11 April 1862 from Cardiff. Here he worked as a tailor and made progress at school. He said his brother John(sic) Richards lived at Llandaff. John was transferred to Portsmouth Prison on 28 September 1863, where he laboured. His final disposal was from Millbank per Licence No. 16138 on 21 March 1865.¹⁶

Over the years, there have been one or two other records that could be John Richards being found not guilty.

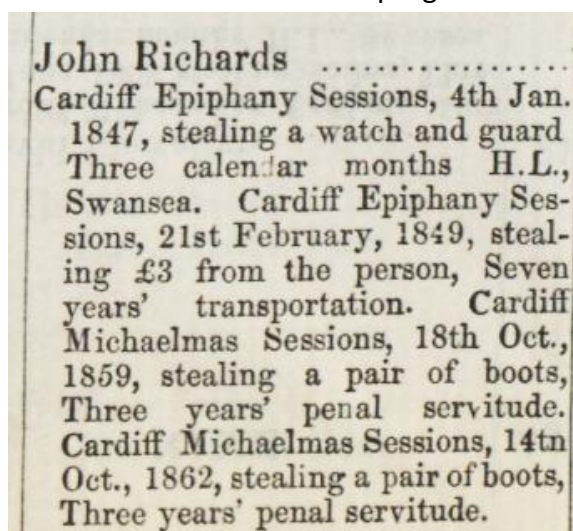
He was in trouble again in 1870.

Robbery from an Outfitter's. John Richards, 35, puddler, who has been previously convicted, was indicted for stealing a pair of trousers, the property of John Copeland, outfitter, at Merthyr Tydfil, on 2 May 1870. Sentenced to seven years' penal servitude and seven years' police supervision.¹⁷

The Prison Register shows that John Richards, 35, was an iron puddler and was married. His age is wrong, as he was about 42. He was sentenced to 7 years transportation on 28 June 1870 at Cardiff Sessions, and 7 years police supervision. John was transferred to Pentonville Prison on 10 January 1871 from Cardiff, and on 7 March 1871 sent to Portland.¹⁸

Portland Prison.¹⁹

John Richards, 35, married, Iron puddler, can't read or write, Church of England.



John Richards
Cardiff Epiphany Sessions, 4th Jan.
1847, stealing a watch and guard
Three calendar months H.L.,
Swansea. Cardiff Epiphany Ses-
sions, 21st February, 1849, steal-
ing £3 from the person, Seven
years' transportation. Cardiff
Michaelmas Sessions, 18th Oct.,
1859, stealing a pair of boots,
Three years' penal servitude.
Cardiff Michaelmas Sessions, 14th
Oct., 1862, stealing a pair of boots,
Three years' penal servitude.

¹³ Cardiff Times, 22 October 1859, p8

¹⁴ TNA, PCOM2/42; PCOM2/371

¹⁵ Swansea and Glamorgan Herald, 22 October 1862, p8

¹⁶ TNA, HO24/9, PCOM2/47; PCOM2/110; PCOM2/388

¹⁷ Cardiff Times, 02 July 1870, p8

¹⁸ TNA, HO24/18; PCOM2/73; HO140/9

¹⁹ TNA, PCOM3/430

Although John is recorded as married, his next of kin is Betsy Richards, sister, College Lock Works, Llandaff, Glamorgan.

His physical description adds a few more injuries. Marks include a burn on the left abdomen, scar centre of back, small scars about neck, burn left thigh, Star, A.F.E.F.J.F on right arm, bracelet D.R. on the same wrist, top off his 1st finger on right hand.

A summary of his confinement on his way to Portland Prison:

Cardiff Prison. 4 May 1870, separate confinement, good conduct, picking oakum

Pentonville Prison. 10 January 1871, separate confinement, good conduct, very little progress at school, tailor

Portland Prison. 7 March 1871, public works, no progress at school, quarrying

Medical History.

John Richards, date of birth unknown, born Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire.

Place of abode is Merthyr Tydfil

Former trade Iron Puddler

Has the prisoner suffered from Typhus, Scarlet Fever, Small Pox, Rheumatism, or Epilepsy: No

Injuries or other diseases: burn on the left thigh

Has he been vaccinated: slight ... on left

Syphilis: Yes

Hereditary tendencies: brother died in an Asylum.²⁰

At Pentonville Prison, he weighed 140 lbs and was never in hospital.

At Portland Prison, he weighed 137 lbs. He had two carbuncles lasting 12 and 63 days; an abscess lasting 7 days; three Contusions lasting 11, 14 and 43 days; and an abscess under the right eye.

While in Portland, John's conduct seems to have deteriorated.

He was admonished or forfeited gratuity marks for:

Idleness on the public works; laughing and talking at school; Wilfully injuring one of the P.C. Prison blankets by tearing a large piece out of the corner; Talking on the public works or road; General idleness on public works; General idleness on the public works again and deprived of his bed; Talking in his cell; Having his loaf unnecessarily weighed; entering another prisoners cell and taking some bread from it; Wilfully injuring a stone wagon on the public works by disobeying orders given him; Irreverent conduct in the Protestant Chapel during afternoon service; Fighting on the public works; Having a small piece of brick concealed in his cleaning bag; Idleness on the public works; Having a pill in his possession; Highly improper conduct during Divine Service; Having a piece of lead pencil in his cell; Making signals to Soldiers on the Verne.

6 November 1873. Gratuity forfeited on demotion to 2nd class.

Medical reports:

6 June 1874. John Richards injured his head when pulling a water cart by a rope. It broke, and he fell down a bank about 2:30 pm today.

7 January 1874, John Richards met with an accident while in the act of turning over a stone; he slipped and jammed his finger.

27 June 1875. Promotion to 1st class was refused because he was unable to read and write.

30 May 1876. Prisoner complaint.

The prisoner states that defective eyesight is the cause of his inability to qualify himself for promotion to the first class. The Medical Officer said, "This prisoner's eyesight is very defective, which I believe renders him unable to learn." The Chaplain thought John made no improvement, made no effort to learn, and he complained of bad sight and wears spectacles.

²⁰ Possible Benjamin Richards, 50, died 9 November 1868 in Glamorgan Asylum, of general paralysis.

7 January 1876. John was sent to ... Party to be tested as a Smith, says he is not a Smith and refused to be tested as such.

On 31 May 1876, he was granted a licence, and he was released on License on 14 June 1876.

Conditions of Licence.

1. The Holder shall preserve his Licence and produce it when called upon to do so by a Magistrate or Police Officer.
 2. He shall abstain from any violation of the law.
 3. He shall not habitually associate with notoriously bad Characters, such as reputed thieves or prostitutes.
 4. He shall not lead an idle and dissolute life without visible means of obtaining an honest livelihood.
- If his Licence is forfeited or revoked in consequence of a conviction for any offence, he will be liable to undergo a Term of Penal Servitude equal to the portion of his term of seven years which remained unexpired when his Licence was granted, viz, the term of one year and one month.

What happened after 1876 to John, who was now around 50 years old, is unknown.