

Baptism	16 April 1826, Alnwick, Northumberland
Parents	George Richardson and Elizabeth Jobson
Parent's marriage	25 October 1824, Alnwick
Siblings	Margaret Swanson (1827), Elizabeth (1829-1832), Mary Ann (1831-1841), John (1833), Charles (1835), William (1837), Robert (1839), Dinah (1841), Mary Ann (1843)
Wife	Catherine McGrath
Married	29 November 1856, St Patrick, Adelaide
Children	Margaret (1857) John (1859) Denis (1862)

The father, George Richardson, was a husbandman, labourer or agricultural labourer on various records. The family lived at Canongate, Alnwick, and on the 1841 census:

George Richardson 40, ag lab; Elizabeth 40; Margaret 13; Mary 10; John 8; Charles 5, William 4; Robert 2; and Dina 9 months. Son George has not been positively identified on the 1841 census.

Little is known about young George until he appears in a newspaper report of his trial. Poaching case at Cheeseburn Grange.

Alexander Clouton (42), Wm. Ramshaw (43) and David Ridley (36) were severally charged with having, at the parish Stamfordham, on 2 November, feloniously wounded with intent to maim and disable John Roddam and thereby prevent the lawful apprehension of the said Alex. Clouton.

On the night of 1 November, John Roddam, gamekeeper to Mr Riddell of Cheeseburn Grange, and his assistant Currie were doing their rounds. On reaching the Low Fell Plantation, Roddam heard the discharge of an air gun; he requested Currie to lie in wait while he went for further assistance. During Roddam's absence, Currie saw the three prisoners; two had guns in their hands, and the other a bludgeon; he came out of the plantation and concealed himself to see their movements.

Roddam returned with seven men, including Mr Riddell, who stayed at Bog plantation whilst the others went another direction. Riddell heard the poachers in the wood and called back some of the party, and Roddam and another returned. They confronted the poachers, and Riddell was struck with a gun and fell into a dyke. When he got up, Clouton pointed a gun and threatened to blow his brains out, at the same time cocking it. Roddam said, "it is of no use; I have a gun as well as you." Clouton struck Roddam, knocking him down, and the other men beat him about the head. Riddell was again attacked, and Roddam tried to come to his assistance but was knocked down again. A general conflict then ensued, and both sides fired guns before the poachers were captured.

Mr Surtees, a surgeon of Stamfordham, said he examined Riddell's wounds after the affray and found seventy-four small shot wounds in his left leg and six in his right leg. He carefully examined John Roddam and found him suffering from wounds in the back part of the head, neck, and ear. He saw the prisoners; Ridley had a wound in his left eye, Clouton was severely wounded at the back of the thigh, and Ramshaw was severely wounded at the back of the leg.

George Richardson (23) and Thomas Orange (36) were charged with aiding and abetting certain unknown persons and shooting at John Smith with intent to him some grievous bodily harm.

**Sentence** of the Cheeseburn Grange Poachers.

Geo. Richardson, Thos. Orange, Wm. Ramshaw, David Ridley, and Alex. Clouton, were then placed at the bar. His Lordship, addressing them, said:—"You have all been found guilty of a charge of desperate shooting whilst engaged in the unlawful occupation of night poaching. This offence of night poaching is one which, under any circumstances, is liable to punishment of great severity, but you have to receive a sentence now for an act of cruelty, connected with somewhat of cowardice, which must have been revolting to the feelings of all who heard the transactions of those two nights.

In the case of Richardson and Orange, there is a greater degree of ferocity; at the distance of a few yards, you levelled your guns and pulled the trigger in order to murder the gamekeeper; by the Providence of God, one gun did not go off, and the other passed within an inch of his head and struck off his cap. If such crimes as these are not visited with severe punishment, the laws would become a laughing stock. Clouton knows, as well as I know, that there is conclusive proof that he was the man who shot Mr Riddell and put up his gun with the deliberate intention of murdering the master of the gamekeepers. The others did not actually pull the gun, but I can make no distinction; the only attention I can pay to the recommendation of the Jury on the case of Clouton—considering the injuries he has received—is to pass the same sentence upon him as the others."

The prisoners were then severally sentenced to ten years transportation.<sup>1</sup>

### **Petition**

George, his parents, and members of Alnwick, petitioned for his release or a reduction in his sentence six times between 1851 and 1853. 70-100 signatures appear on some of the petitions.<sup>2</sup> The essence of the petitions was that:

*The subject of this petition belonged in this town and was well known to your humble petitioners as a quiet inoffensive young man; of good moral habits industrious in his business and not addicted to poaching or vice of any kind; and we have good reason also to believe that it was his first attempt to violate the laws of his country.*

In his Petition, George claimed he was led astray by the older men, plus he did not fire his gun.

His former employers, Robert Davison and David McKinlay, stonemasons wrote a testimonial in 1850 and a follow up in 1853:

*"Copy of testimonial; of character, Alnwick, 26 August 1850.*

*This is to certify that George Richardson served his apprenticeship five years with us, which terminated about twelve months previous to this offence for which he is now suffering and during his apprenticeship he was an industrious, sober and obedient servant, not guilty of poaching, or rioting but diligent in his service to us.*

*Robert Davison and David McKinlay"*

In 1853:

*We trust your Lordship will not deem it presumptuous in us to add to the testimony of character we have before given of the young man whose case is now presented for your Lordship's merciful consideration, that should be restored to liberty, we would not only be willing but most anxious to receive him again into our employ.*

*We are, My Lord, your Lordship's most humble servants, Robert Davison and David McKinlay, builders.*

*Howick Street, Alnwick February 1853*

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<sup>1</sup> Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury, 02 March 1850, p5 and p8

<sup>2</sup> HO18/295

George Richardson, 24, single, could read and write imperfectly, a mason, was received at Millbank Prison on 16 April 1850 from Morpeth gaol. On 31 October he was transferred to Dartmoor Prison, number 32, one of the first prisoners there.

### Regulations

*Convict Establishment,  
Dartmoor, Devon.*

*Convicts are permitted to write one Letter on reception and another at the end of every three months. They may also receive one Letter every three months during their stay. Events of importance to Convicts may be communicated by Letter (pre-paid) to the Governor or Chaplain, who will inform the Convict thereof if expedient.*

*In case of misconduct the privilege of receiving or writing a Letter will be forfeited.*

*All Letters of an improper or idle tendency either to or from Convicts, or containing slang or other objectionable expressions will be suppressed. As all Letters are read by the Governor or Chaplain they must be legibly written and not crossed. The permission to write and receive Letters is given to the Convicts for the purpose of enabling them to keep up a connection with their respectable Friends, and not that they may hear the news of the day.*

*Neither clothes nor any other articles are allowed to be received at the Prison for the use of Convicts, until they are about to be removed to the Colonies, due notice of which will be given to the Prisoners that they may write to their Friends.*

George was permitted to write a letter to his parents before he boarded the Sea Park.

5 December 1853. Devon, 246 miles from London.

My dearest parents

I avail myself of the privilege granted to us poor unfortunates of writing my monthly epistle assuring you of my existence and in pretty good health, till within the last few days I had been anxiously awaiting the anticipated expectation of being summoned before the good Governor to hear from him welcome tidings and that her Most Gracious Majesty had consented thro her Ministers that I should be permitted to go at large on a letter of License and once more enjoy the infinite pleasure of society among my dear relatives and friends, but to my surprise on Thursday last that summons was to announce the probability of myself and others being sent to Western Australia many thousand miles from those I hold most dear, should it be to (which God avert) I hope to be permitted to write to you again with full particulars, but I still hope as I have used my utmost to obey the rules, orders and regulations since I have unfortunately been in prison that such a serious punishment will not be inflicted on me having already undergone so long a term of my sentence. Should we meet again shortly believe me my dear Parents that I will do all in my power to retrieve my lost character, and to compensate you all for the pain and anxiety my wicked course of conduct brought upon you. The affliction has been thru God's Mercy the means of bringing me to think seriously on the ways of wickedness and led me to ask forgiveness of the "Giver of all Good" which he has promised to all those who repent of their evil ways. I hurt my left hand at work which caused me to be sent to the Infirmary, but am now better. Twice have I written to you -yet aa answer to either letter has reached me which has pained my feeling greatly, fearing some of you may be unwell, or other afflictions you do not like to let me know of - do for Heaven's sake let me hear from you as early as possible after you receive this to soothe the anguish of a heart already borne down with grief sorrow and shame.

The festive season of Christmas is fast approaching which will being the fourth year of my tribulation so to end - fondly did I anticipate to be with you by then - but alas! I now fear such a felicity is not destined for me - but to the God of Mercy I must resign myself - hoping He will do with me what he thinks best, and that which will ultimately prove of the greatest benefit to your unhappy Son. May these imperfect lines find you all in the enjoyment of health, happiness and prosperity - may you my dearly loved Father and Mother yet be spared to see your Son a reformed and happy Son - may you never more be pained by your Children's ingratitude or misdeeds - and may you be last taken to that blissful abode where Sin and sorrow are not known - is the sincere wish and prayer of your sorrowing and repentant son. George Richardson.

P.S. give my love to all brothers and sisters, George Richardson

To: Mr George Richardson, Cannongate Street, Alnwick, Northumberland

George boarded the *Sea Park* on 27 December 1853 for the voyage to Western Australia. Wm Ramshaw and David Ridley, two of his co-accused, also came on the same ship.<sup>3</sup> On arrival at Fremantle, He was described as:

2858. George Richardson, 28, 5'8¼", sandy hair, hazel eyes, an oval face, brown complexion, slight build, no marks, a stonemason and single.

After receiving his Conditional Pardon in August 1855, George left Fremantle on 27 April 1856 per *Guyon* for Adelaide, arriving on 9 May.

### **South Australia**

Later in the year, on 29 November 1856, at St Patrick church, Adelaide, George (26) married Catherine McGrath (19)<sup>4</sup>, the daughter of Denis McGrath.

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<sup>3</sup> Quarterly Prison returns, HO8/118

They had three children:

Margaret was born on 29 September 1857 at New Glenelg

John was born on 28 April 1859 at Glenelg.

Dennis was born on 2 August 1862 at New Glenelg.

Georg appears five times in the Adelaide Prison records:

In August 1858, at the Police Court, Adelaide:

George Richardson was charged with deserting his wife and child on the 26 July last at Glenelg. Mr Wigley appeared in support. Catherine Richardson deposed that she was the wife of the prisoner, and had been married about two years; had lived with him until recently; she left him because he ill-used her; there was a summons issued against the prisoner three months ago for the same offence. She was induced to go back to him and did not appear on that occasion; the night she returned, he struck her and broke up the child's cradle, saying he wished she and the child were dead. By the Bench: Would you be satisfied with an allowance of £1 per week?

George, in answer to the charge, said that she had left him on two occasions to go to the Port and had come back at 2 o'clock in the morning with another man. She said she had been with her brother. He told her it was false. She then threatened to go again. She stopped out for a whole fortnight after this and came back and sold all the things. He never hit her.

Ordered to pay 15s a week for her support and 25s costs. The Bench remarked that judging from her manner, she most likely had provoked the prisoner and had acted improperly.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Prison Record**

12 August 1858. Geo Richardson, deserting his wife Catherine, convicted at Police Court on 12 August, 15s fine and 25s costs or imprisonment, 32, can read and write, married, CofE, stonemason, arrived in the colony in 1855 from South(?), discharged 20 September 1858.

#### **Prison record**

22 May 1860. George Richardson, breaking into the tent of John Wahfen(?) at Mudla Wirra on 17 May, was convicted at Gawler on 22 May 1860, 7 days, 28. can read and write, married, CofE, mason, arrived 1858 from Swan River, discharged 28 May 1860.

Police Court, November 1861.

George Richardson appeared to the information of Edward Fulkes, publican, for assaulting him at Glenelg on Saturday, 2 November. It was shown that the defendant went into the complainant's house and struck him in the mouth. His Worship said he might have received some provocation from some person. He was fined 5s and costs and ordered to find one surety of £10 for his good behaviour for the next six months.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Prison record**

6 November 1861. Geo Richardson, assaulting and beating Edwd Fulkes at Glenelg on 2 November, convicted at Police Court on 6 November, 32, read and write, married, CofE, mason, arrived 1855 from Swan River, and he was bailed on 3 January 1862.

#### **Prison record**

22 March 1864. George Richardson, rioting at Hamilton on 3 March, convicted Kapunda on 21 March, one calendar month, 36, can read and write, married, CofE, mason, arrived 1857 from W. Aust, discharged 20 April 1864.

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine was possibly baptized on 27 May 1833, in the parish of Galbally and Aherlow, Limerick. Parents were Dennis McGrath and Ellon Hanrahan. Catherine McGrath, 20, and Honor/Hannah McGrath, 22, arrived per *Sir Edward Parry* on 25 March 1854. They were farm servants from Limerick.

<sup>5</sup> The South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), 14 August 1858, Page 3

<sup>6</sup> South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), Thu 7 Nov 1861, Page 3

In February 1866, George's violence towards Catherine resulted in her pressing charges. The newspapers reported the case tried at the Supreme Court:

George Richardson was charged with assaulting his wife, Catherine Richardson, at Glenelg, with intent to do her grievous bodily harm. Other counts charged him with assault, intent to disfigure, and unlawful wounding.

The Crown Solicitor stated the circumstances of the assault. The man had assaulted his wife while in bed from illness by striking her with a billet of wood and stunning her. She then escaped to the house of her sister, and he followed her and accused her of infidelity.

He called Catherine Richardson, the wife of the prisoner. On 16 February, I was at my house at night, in a weak state of health. Had been attended by Dr Montgomery. My husband came in at 9 o'clock at night to go to bed. I was in bed at the time. He undressed, sat down, lighted his pipe, and began to smoke.

He said, "I'll knock your brains out."

I said, "George, you'll knock my brains out? I can't believe you would serve me like that."

He said, "You see if I don't some of these odd times."

I said no more but felt very much frightened. I said, "George, come to bed, I have no more light, and I might want that through the night."

He got up, did not speak, and came to bed smoking his pipe. In a little while he gave me a punch in the eye with his fist.

I said, "George, you have hurt my eye very much; you know I'm in a weak state to bear a blow like that." Soon he moved, and I asked him if he wanted a light for his pipe, and he said yes, and I struck him a light. After that, he was quiet for half-an-hour, and all at once, he got out of bed, and I asked him what he wanted; he did not answer. I began striking a light and saw him striking at me with a piece of wood. I put up my hands, and it first hit my hands and then on my forehead. I called out to the child, "Oh, I am killed." He was using both hands on the piece of wood. I jumped out of bed, and he pushed me back and went into another room. I was nearly insensible. I rushed outside as soon as I got a little better. He called me back three times. I went to my sister, Mrs. Cosgrove's. I was covered with blood. There were two children in the bedroom. I remained at my sister's, and Dr Montgomery came soon after and attended me for more than a week. I kept no firewood in my bedroom; there was some in the next room of the same kind as the piece produced. The prisoner came home on the 12 December last, after four years absence. I never heard from him during that time, and don't know where he was. After I went to my sister's, I did not see him till I saw him at the Police-Office.

The prisoner examined the witness in a rambling manner as to the paternity of her children, her general conduct, and his supplies of money to her, but did not elicit anything damaging to her character. It appeared he had been absent from home three years at a time, and afterwards four years, and that he had been several times in gaol.

Catherine's sister, Hannah Cosgrove, and her husband William Cosgrove confirmed that she came to their house about 10 o'clock covered in blood. Dr Montgomery came to dress the wounds.

Prisoner questioned William Cosgrove as to his wife's conduct, and received replies to the effect that his wife's conduct was virtuous and industrious, and that he had done next to nothing to support her.

George Percy Badman, constable, Glenelg—Remembered on the night of the 16 February going to prisoner's house about a quarter-past 10. Found the doors locked. People were keeping guard. I got a warrant and asked Richardson to open the door. After a time he did. I arrested and cautioned him. He said that a boy told him that he caught Barney with his wife. I asked him what boy he meant, and he gave me no answer. There was no boy there, and I do not know what boy he referred to. From a description I had received, I found the piece of wood produced. It has stains



still; they were fresh then. There were other pieces of wood; this one was concealed. There were marks of blood on the back door. The next morning I took prisoner some food, and he asked if I thought his wife would prosecute. I said I thought she would. He said, "It's all that d\_d fellow Barney; I would not have done it if it hadn't been for Barney." Dr Montgomery was killed in an accident on 1 March. I was at the inquest. I was present when Dr Montgomery was examined on this case, and the prisoner had an opportunity of cross-examining him. By prisoner—I know that your wife did not live with other men.

The prisoner, in his defence, simply said that his wife had lived an improper life, and he disapproved of it.

His Honor summed up, and the Jury returned a verdict of guilty of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm without leaving the box. The prisoner pleaded guilty to a previous conviction for felony.

His Honor then, addressing the prisoner, said that he was a disgrace to humanity, and his calumnies against his wife were an aggravation of his offence. If those accusations were just they would be no defence of his violence, as the law gave everyman whose wife was unfaithful cheap redress. Such men must be taught that they could not with impunity fell their wives like oxen. Besides his conviction for felony, he had been punished for deserting his wife. He had frequently been punished at the inferior Courts for crimes of violence. He must be kept in goal for some time, in order to save the country the expense of these perpetual prosecutions. The sentence of the Court was that he be imprisoned for a term of seven years, with hard labor.

#### **Prison Record**

17 February 1866. Geo Richardson, assaulting his wife at Glenelg on 16th, convicted at Supreme Court on 8 May 1866, 7 years hard labour, 39, can read and write, married, Cof E, mason, arrived 1857 from Swan River, discharged 14 May 1866 to Dry Creek prison.<sup>7</sup>

George was received at Yatala Prison on 14 May 1866 from Adelaide Gaol. He was from Northumberland, arrived from the Swan River per Guy Anne (sic), had no previous convictions in the colony, was working for himself, his wife resided at Somerton, was Cof E, could read and write and was a quarryman. His description was 42 years old, 5'7", weighed 10stone 8 pounds, was stout, sallow complexion, a long oval face, light brown hair, receding forehead, bluish grey eyes, the nose was small, pointed and broken, had a medium mouth, his teeth were irregular, discoloured and pipe worn, had a pointed chin, sandy whiskers, his expression was sharp resolute, had hair on his chest and moles on back, he had a scar on the right shoulder blade, scar on the right shin and a mole on the nape of the neck. George was discharged on 2 June 1870 - removed to Lunatic Asylum by order of His Excellency the Governor.

George may have been at a different institution before entering the Parkside Lunatic Asylum, as the admission date is 6 November 1878. He died on 7 July 1893 at Parkside Lunatic Asylum, aged 69, and is buried at West Terrace Cemetery. The specific location of the burial site within the general cemetery grounds is unknown.

#### **Catherine Richardson.**

Catherine was destitute and, in April 1863, made a personal application to the Destitute Board for outdoor relief and rations were ordered. She appears to have been on rations from the Board for several years. In June 1865, she was granted 1½ rations until the end of September.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Adelaide Express (SA : 1863 - 1866), 9 May 1866, p2

<sup>8</sup> South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), 2 May 1863, p3; The South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1889), 4 September 1863, p3; South Australian Weekly Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1858 - 1867), 5 December 1863, p3, 7 April 1864, p3; Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), 9 July 1864, p7; South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), 23 June 1865, p3

Then in 1870, at Glenelg, Raymond Royals, a fisherman, was charged by Mrs Catherine Richardson with assault on John and Margaret Richardson, two of her children, on 12 April at Glenelg. He pleaded guilty and was fined 5s and 12s costs.<sup>9</sup>

As the children got older, and George was in prison, her life improved. She appears to have had several cows as she was fined 15s and 10s costs for allowing three cows to stray in Pier-street, Glenelg in 1874.<sup>10</sup>

Catherine Richardson, a widow, died 29 December 1902, aged 67, at New Glenelg, wife of deceased George Richardson.

The friends of the late Mrs Catherine Richardson are respectfully informed that her funeral will leave her late residence, Touquay-street, New Glenelg, for the Catholic Cemetery, West Terrace Cemetery, at 2:30 pm (31 December 1902).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), 23 April 1870, p7

<sup>10</sup> Adelaide Observer (SA : 1843 - 1904), 30 May 1874, p6

<sup>11</sup> The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), 31 December 1902, p2