

JANE GOULD

(*Barretto Junior*, 1850)

by

Don Bradmore

Although the story of convict Jane GOULD (or GOLD) is a cheerless and depressing one, it is difficult not to feel some sympathy for the woman herself. She seems to have been endowed with very few of the natural female advantages and her long life was one of poverty, ill-fortune, and sadness.¹

Although she was referred to in a local newspaper as ‘an Irish woman’ at the time of her trial and conviction at the Old Bailey, London, in 1848, this is probably incorrect; no record of her birth has been located in Ireland. It is more likely that she was born – in 1826 - the daughter of John and Mary GOULD/GOLD at North Molton, Devonshire, England, the ‘native place’ that appears on her convict documents. She had a brother, who was also named John, and a sister, Susannah.²

Nothing is known about Jane’s childhood. She was twenty-two when she had her first brush with the law. On 27 November 1848, she stood trial at the Old Bailey – under the name ‘Jane GOLD’ - charged with stealing a shawl, valued at six shillings and nine pence. She pleaded guilty to the offence and was sentenced to imprisonment for three months. And then, on 9 April 1849 - now twenty-three years old and with the surname ‘GOULD’ - she was tried again at the Old Bailey, this time on the far more serious charge of arson. Once more she pleaded guilty. This time she was sentenced to transportation for seven years.³

Although both of these trials are listed on the website of the Old Bailey, full transcripts of them do not seem to have survived. However, the wording of the arson charge makes it clear that her crime was a very serious one. It reads: ‘Feloniously setting fire to a stack of oats, *with intent to*

¹ www.oldbaileyonline.org: , FCRC ID: 2569.

² Conduct record: CON40-1-27, Image 58; Indent:CON15-1-6, Image 186; Description List: CON19/1/8, Image 187; newspaper: *The Era* (London), 8 April 1849. Jane’s birth year is calculated from Old Bailey records, see www.oldbaileyonline.org.

³ www.oldbaileyonline.org: case reference t18481127-179 and t18490409-860.

⁴ Old Bailey, 9 April 1849, t18490409-860.

injure John MEACOCK (the owner)'. In view of Jane's evil intention, some might consider that her seven year sentence was a lenient one.⁴

After her arson trial, Jane spent a year in an English gaol awaiting transportation. It is not clear why she was kept in England for such a long time but the probable reason was that, for some of that year, she was pregnant! The name of the father is unknown – as are the circumstances in which she conceived the child. However, when she was put aboard *Barretto Junior* for the long voyage to Van Diemen's Land (VDL) – which sailed on 13 April 1850 - she was carrying a baby daughter, whom she had named Sarah GOULD.⁵

Sadly, the baby did not survive the voyage. The medical journal of Dr. R. Whitmore CLARKE, the ship's surgeon, records that two children died on the way out. Clarke's hand-written notes are difficult to read but the following excerpts which provide some details of baby Sarah's death are most distressing:

Sarah Gould, about 7 months.

June 9th – 12th [1850), At sea.

9 June - Was brought to me with diarrhoea. Tongue dry and brown ... skin cool, practically insensible ... Does not suck well ... To have some preserved milk occasionally ...

4pm: Has rather improved but its condition is unsatisfactory ...

8pm: Tongue moist ... vital powers very low...

10.30pm: Very feeble ...continue with warm cloths to feet to restore heat. Nurses sitting up with the child, the mother being sick and at all times incapable or unwilling to pay proper attention to it.

10 June – The child passed a restless night ... gums very red, skin warm ... there is irregularity of respiration ... has slept during the afternoon and seemed improving.

At night visit: ... cold and insensible ...

11June – Passed a bad night ... restless and throwing arms about and rolling its head ... breathing bad, tongue dry ...

10.30am: When taken out of the bath, fainted – eyes glazed ...

PM: The infant is dying. Lingers through the night.

12 June – 7.20am. Departed this life.⁶

There is no record of the way Jane reacted.

⁵ CON40-1-27, Image 58; <https://www.convictrecords.com.au/convicts/gould/jane/13661>.

⁶ U.K. Royal Navy Medical Journals, Barretto Junior, 23 March-5 August 1850, via 'Ancestry, U.K.' at https://www.ancestry.co.uk/interactive/2318/31792_626640_0687-00000?backurl=&ssrc=&backlabel=Return#?imageId=31792_626640_0687-00007.

By 23 July 1850, Jane was at Hobart.

Upon arrival, she confessed that she had deliberately burnt John Meacock's stack of oats – its value was estimated at £88 - because she *wanted* to be transported. She made no mention of her intention to harm Meacock, or of her imprisonment in 1848 for the theft of the shawl. She did admit, however, to having had one prior conviction; she said that she had once been gaoled for a month in England for – curiously - 'insolence'.⁷

At Hobart, the description of Jane which the convict authorities provided is a most unflattering one. It states that she was twenty-four years old and single. She was five feet one and a half inches (abt. 155 cms) tall, with a large head, low forehead, thick nose and large mouth and chin. A final note adds that she had a 'defective intellect'. Although she stated her trade as 'country maid', the authorities declared her 'unfit for service'.⁸

As a consequence of being declared unsuitable for service, Jane spent most of her time as a prisoner at the Brickfields Hiring Depot and the Ross Female Factory. Her conduct record shows that she *was* assigned to settlers for short periods and that she was well-behaved during them.⁹

On the other hand, while she was at Brickfields and Ross she was troublesome. She was never violent in any way, but she was a nuisance. At Brickfields, soon after her arrival there in 1850, she was sentenced to four months hard labour for 'refusing to give up a petticoat and afterwards destroying the same'. Six months later, she was given another three months of hard labour for 'disobedience of orders'. In the following month, her existing sentence of hard labour was extended by three months for 'misconduct'. In 1851, she was ordered to spend time in the cells for 'wilfully destroying a government handkerchief'. While at Ross in 1853, she was sentenced to two months hard labour for being 'drunk'. Later that same year, still at Ross, she again received three months hard labour for 'having pieces of torn government clothing on her feet'.¹⁰

Eventually, however, Jane was free. On 9 April 1856, she had served her term as a convict and was free by servitude. On 14 April 1856, she was granted a certificate of freedom.¹¹

What Jane did immediately after her release is unknown – but, on 24 December 1861, she was married at Launceston. (Perhaps Jane had found work there?) Her husband was William ELLINGTON.¹²

⁷ CON40-1-1, Image 58.

⁸ CON19/1/8, Image 187.

⁹ CON40-1-27, Image 58

¹⁰ CON40-1-27, Image 58

¹¹ CON40-1-27, Image 58

¹² Marriage, Gould/Ellington: 37/623/1861, Launceston.

William was a former convict. He had been convicted of burglary in Leicestershire, England, in 1844 and sentenced to transportation for ten years. He was then twenty-two years old and single. He had departed England aboard the convict vessel *Agincourt* in July of that year and was disembarked at Norfolk Island in November. In December 1846, he had been transferred to VDL per *Lady Franklin*. In the colony, he had been granted a ticket of leave in 1857 and later worked as a wood-carter in Launceston.¹³

The wedding ceremony was conducted ‘in the dwelling of Mr. GRICE’ at Launceston by the prominent Baptist minister, Rev. Henry DOWLING. The marriage entry, which describes Jane as a ‘spinster’ and William as a ‘labourer’, shows that both were thirty-six years old. While that seems to be correct in Jane’s case, William was probably three or four years older.¹⁴

Jane and William had had two children together before they married – Mary ELLINGTON in 1858 and William ELLINGTON in 1859. After the marriage, there were three more children – Jane ELLINGTON in 1862, Ellen ELLINGTON in 1865 and Henry ELLINGTON in 1869.¹⁵

However, there are some indications that the marriage might not have been a happy one. Records show that on 2 November 1875 – just fourteen years after her marriage – Jane (using her maiden name of ‘Gould’) was admitted to the New Town Charitable Institution at Hobart, a home for paupers. Although her stay there was a relatively short one – she was discharged on 13 March the following year – she was obviously struggling. She was admitted to the Institution again on 8 April 1876 and remained there until 10 July that year.¹⁶

Perhaps a further indication that there were difficulties in the marriage is that Mary ELLINGTON, the eldest child, had left home at the age of fifteen in 1873 and was working as a prostitute in Launceston. In 1876, now referring to herself as ‘Mary Ann’, she was living in a well-known Launceston brothel. With her, she had a daughter who was nearly three years old. The father of the child, if ever known, had deserted her and she had been completely abandoned by both parents. On 7 August of that year, unsupported, unprotected, alone, fearful, and vulnerable, she carried her child to an isolated spot on the banks of the Tamar River and drowned it. There was no doubt that she had done it and, at her trial for murder, she was found guilty, as expected, and sentenced to death. Newspapers of the day made no mention of her parents and it seems obvious that they did not attend the trial.

¹³ William Ellington: CON33-1-83, Image 74. See also:

https://libriestas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/search/results?qu=NI_NAME%3DWilliam&qu=NI_NAME%3DEllington&qf=NI_INDEX%09Record+type%09Convicts%09Convicts

¹⁴ Marriage entry: <https://stors.tas.gov.au/RGD37-1-20>, page 332j2k (Image 332).

¹⁵ Marriage: 37/623/1861, Launceston (via Digger); Births: William (baptism), 32/5577/1860, Launceston; Jane: 33/329/1862, Launceston; Ellen: birth not located; Henry (registered as ALLINGTON): 33/359/1868, Launceston.

¹⁶ http://www.orphanschool.org.au/showntci.php?ntci_ID=4778

Later, Mary Ann's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. After serving only ten years, she was released, the remainder of the sentence having been remitted. She was still only twenty-eight years old. She had had no contact with either of her parents since she had left home nearly fifteen years earlier.¹⁷

In 1885, the year before Mary Ann was released from gaol. William Ellington, Jane's husband, died. A few days before he passed away he had made a will. In it, he left his entire assets – valued at about £100 - to be shared equally between his two younger daughters, Jane and Ellen. Neither his wife, Jane, nor his elder daughter, Mary Ann, was mentioned in the will. It is obvious that Jane – like Mary Ann – had been abandoned years before.¹⁸

On 12 January 1886 - the year following William's death - Jane remarried at Launceston. She was now sixty. Her new husband was James HENDERSON, described on the marriage entry as a sixty-three year-old 'blind beggar'.¹⁹ It seems to have been a strange choice of husband for a person in her circumstances to have made.

Like Jane's first husband, James was a former convict. In October 1843, he had been convicted of house-breaking at the Perth Court of Justiciary in his native Scotland and sentenced to transportation for ten years. Taken first to Norfolk Island per *Blundell* in 1844, he was transferred to VDL in 1847. By October 1849, he had been granted a ticket of leave and in October 1853 he was free by servitude and granted his certificate of freedom.²⁰

Nothing is known about the way in which Jane and James Henderson lived after their marriage. It seems that they lived quietly but it is unlikely that they lived well.

The death of James Henderson has not been located.

In her later years, Jane (Gould/Gold/Ellington) HENDERSON was once again admitted to the New Town Charitable Institution and died in care there on 12 July 1903. She was about seventy-seven years old.²¹

¹⁷ *Launceston Examiner*, 12 August 1876, p.2; 15 August 1876, p.2; *The Mercury (Hobart)*, 14 August 1876, p.2.

¹⁸ Death: 35/246/1885, Launceston; Will: No:3021 – <https://stors.tas.gov.au/905685>

¹⁹ Marriage, Ellington/Henderson: 37/678/1886; see also [https://www.ancestry.com.au/mediaui-viewer/tree25749062/person/26904036479/media/...](https://www.ancestry.com.au/mediaui-viewer/tree25749062/person/26904036479/media/) James Henderson, CON33.1.78, Image 94.

²⁰ CON33.1.78, Image 94.

²¹ http://www.orphanschool.org.au/showntci.php?ntci_ID=5585; Jane Henderson, death: Tas. Reg: 371/1903. Hobart (via Tasmanian Federation Index).

