

## *John PRATT* *1806 - 1866*

By Betty Foster

John Pratt was born in Rathdowney, Queens County in 1806 (now called Co Laois). He was a weaver at Leeds in Yorkshire when he enlisted to the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment South Wales Borders at the age of 18 (birth dates make him 16) on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1824. Number 1504 with his height given as 5ft 4½ inches tall. He had a sallow complexion, hazel eyes and dark hair.

He was transferred to the 98<sup>th</sup> Regiment on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1838. His service was for twenty one years seventeen days. In this time 12½ years was spent at the Cape of Good Hope and 3½ years in Canada. His conduct was good, and at the age of thirty nine he was discharged at Limerick, Ireland on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1845. He spent time at the Chelsea Pensioners hospital London. He was recruited by the British to be an Enrolled Pensioner Guard to accompany convicts to Western Australia.

He married Catherine Carroll (often referred to as Cahill and other spellings) of Rathdowney and in 1849 had a daughter Anne. He arrived on the second convict ship to come to Western Australia the 'Hashemy' on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1850 with his wife and one year old daughter, who had to have medical treatment on board. Also on board was his father-in-law Patrick Carroll also a Pensioner Guard.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> May 1851 John requested permission to occupy barracks at Bunbury with his family until his cottage in Stirling Street could be completed. He was sent to Bunbury 21<sup>st</sup> May 1851, to help set up the convict hiring settlement there and arrange for the convicts to work in the surrounding districts. At the time there were only twenty people in the town. The convict hiring depot

was on the East side of Arthur Street, between Shirley and Stephan Street, Bunbury.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1851 he was allocated and occupied land at Bunbury for Military Service with the Enrolled Pensioner Force.

His family grew with the birth in 1851 of Mary, William 1851, Margaret 1853, John 1854, James 1856, Annie 185? and Thomas 1861.

John had converted to Catholicism and his name is to be found on the marriage details and his children on the baptismal records list of 1854 by Bishop Serra (one of the founders of New Norcia Monastery) following a visit by him to Bunbury. Only three of his children had issue.

The '*Perth Gazette and the WA Times*' dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 1866 states:

*'On Friday last (22 Aug 1866) a mounted policeman named J Spratt (actually Pratt) about 20 miles from Perth on the Albany Road by being thrown from his horse which had run away. The poor fellow fell on the back of his head and his neck was broken. He leaves a widow and a large family.'*

This cannot be confirmed as John Pratt to date.

Pratt Road from Australind to Dardanup is named after him.

Three months after John Pratt's death Catherine Pratt married John Milloy alias John Stewart on the 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 1866. I can find no births of children from this marriage. John Milloy is buried in the old Bunbury Cemetery, after drinking himself to death in one day at the Rose Hotel in Bunbury 1876. Catherine Milloy died 1875 (nee Pratt) and is also in the old Bunbury Cemetery.

There was great tragedy in the lives of three of his children.

**Annie Pratt**, Born 1849, (my great grandmother) married William Devenport Norrie 1875 Bunbury (he was a convict), and had five children

**William Pratt**, born 1851 Fremantle, died 1876 in a sawyer accident (in a saw pit at Williams) twelve months after he married in 1875 to Ann Lawlor – son John Pratt born 1875 Bunbury.

**Margaret Pratt**, born 1853 Bunbury, Married James Sloan and had nine children, Mary, Ada 1895, Eliza Catherine 1877, Margaret 1882, James Henry 1885, Eleanor 1887, Daniel Henry 1892.

**John Pratt**, born 1854 Bunbury died 1859, the sixth generation by that name, died in Bunbury from a fractured arm and shock. He was only five ½ years old.

**James Pratt**, born 1856 Bunbury married 1882 Mary Jane Thomas, Bunbury.

**Thomas Pratt**, born 1861 Bunbury, had six children.

**Katherine Pratt**, born 1864 Bunbury, orphaned at 12 and sent to the Catholic orphanage in Perth.

**Mary Pratt**, birth date unknown

Other descendants still to be confirmed.

Letter from Bruce Baskerville, Dip F H S

*John Pratt and John Baskerville were in the first group of Pensioners to go to Bunbury and began operation at the Depot there from which convicts were hired out to employers. If you would like to know more about this period would suggest you consult; The Nominal Roll Enrolled Pensioners Force in Western Australia by F H Broomehall, at the Battye Library.*

*This has notes relating to each member of the EPF as well as to various Depots and also gives details of the EPF in general, It was interesting to see that another of your ancestors William Norrie arrived on the 'Merchantman' in 1864. Another of my ancestors, a Thomas Anderson arrived on the same voyage as a Pensioner Guard.*

*(Editors Note) Betty has so far written a Family History which she is still updating on her ancestors Patrick Carroll, John Pratt (EPG's both to Bunbury) and her convict line of Norrie – it is only so far 55 pages ☺ so no doubt there will be another article from her family history in future editions of this gazette.*

Betty also supplied copies of photos which we are unable to print at this time due to space in the newsletter but she has some fantastic photos not only of the Perth Barracks only one of which has been published in this gazette to date.