

PENSIONS

Beer Money! The Enrolled Pensioner Guards (EPGs) were retired soldiers receiving a pension between ½ to 1½ shillings per day following their military service. It sounds a lot of money but was worth about \$5,000 p.a. in today's value. It was a subsistence pension – in the 1850s one shilling bought a pint of beer or ½ a loaf of bread or 500g of soap or 300g of butter.

The EPGs were “worn out” soldiers, considered by authorities as suitable for Government service e.g., supervising convicts. A pensioner working as a prison warder might earn \$10,000 p.a. in today's value, working fulltime, long hours and under trying conditions ... the working poor. Many tried their hand at other occupations such as farming.

The EPG Group has identified three EPGs who were “on pension” for over 60 years! All fought in war, were injured as young soldiers, discharged the army and then married in the UK.

They were courageous and pioneering, between them they and their wives had over 20 children born in the UK and WA:

- Tipperary Irishman **John McMahon** 1833-1922 was on pension 66 Years after only 4 years in the Army following the Crimean War, shot in the shoulder and carrying that bullet until his death. Arriving on the Sultana 1859 he was stationed at Fremantle and Perth for 10 years, then Northam, where he later retired on his land grant. His medals are at the Fremantle Army Museum.
- Wicklow Irishman **Owen Griffin** 1824-1910 on pension 63 years after his army service of 4 years ended with a bang following a gunshot wound inflicted in India. Arriving on the 1853 Dudbrook, he worked as a Warder for 35 years including 16 at the Fremantle Asylum. He and his family initially occupied what is now the Gimlet Bar at Warders Hotel!
- Suffolk Englishman **John Watkins** 1817-1902, on pension 61 years after his army service of 8 years was cut short after his little finger was chopped off by ‘natives who attacked him’ in India. Arriving on the 1850 Scindian he was awarded land in South Perth which he soon gave up as being too isolated ... no Narrows Bridge! He died on the North side of the river at the Mt Eliza Depot with the old Swan Brewery in view.

Check these EPGs out at:

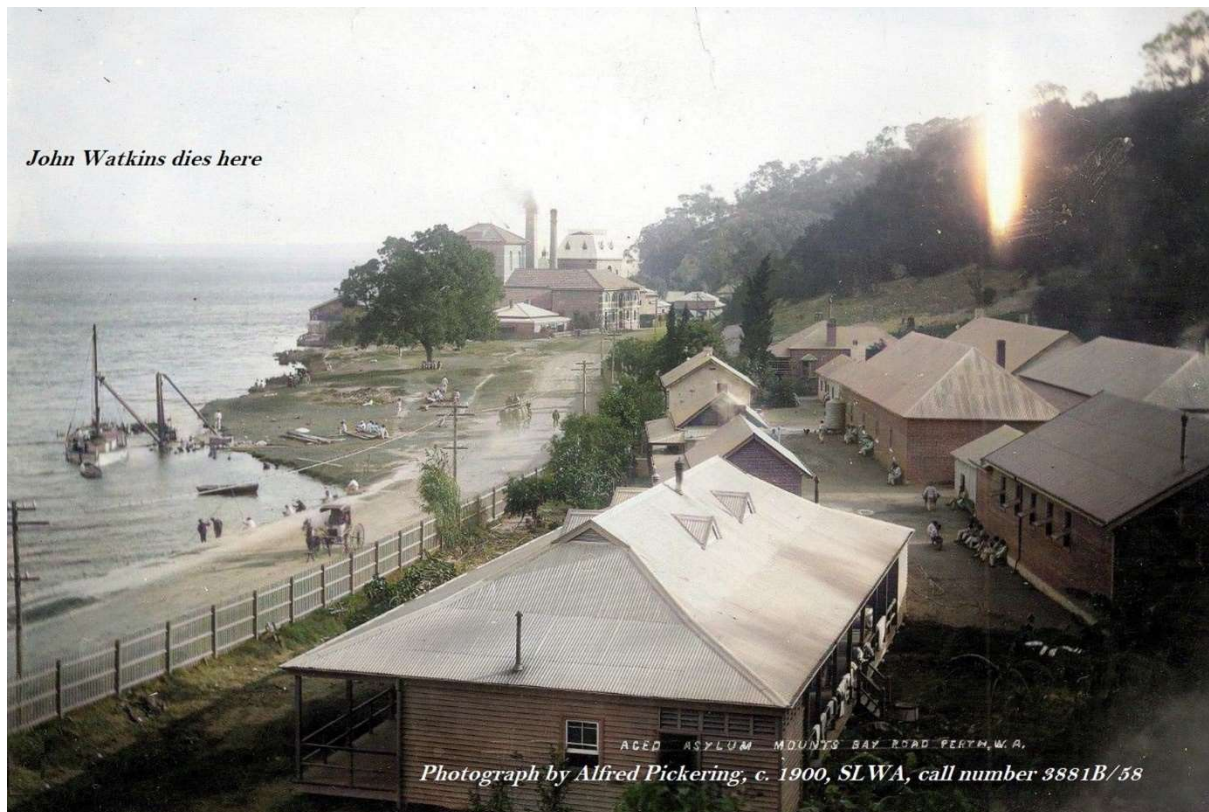
<https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/mac-mc/mcmahon-john-47th-regiment/>

<https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/g/griffin-owen-9th-regiment/>

<https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/w/watkins-john-94th-regiment/>

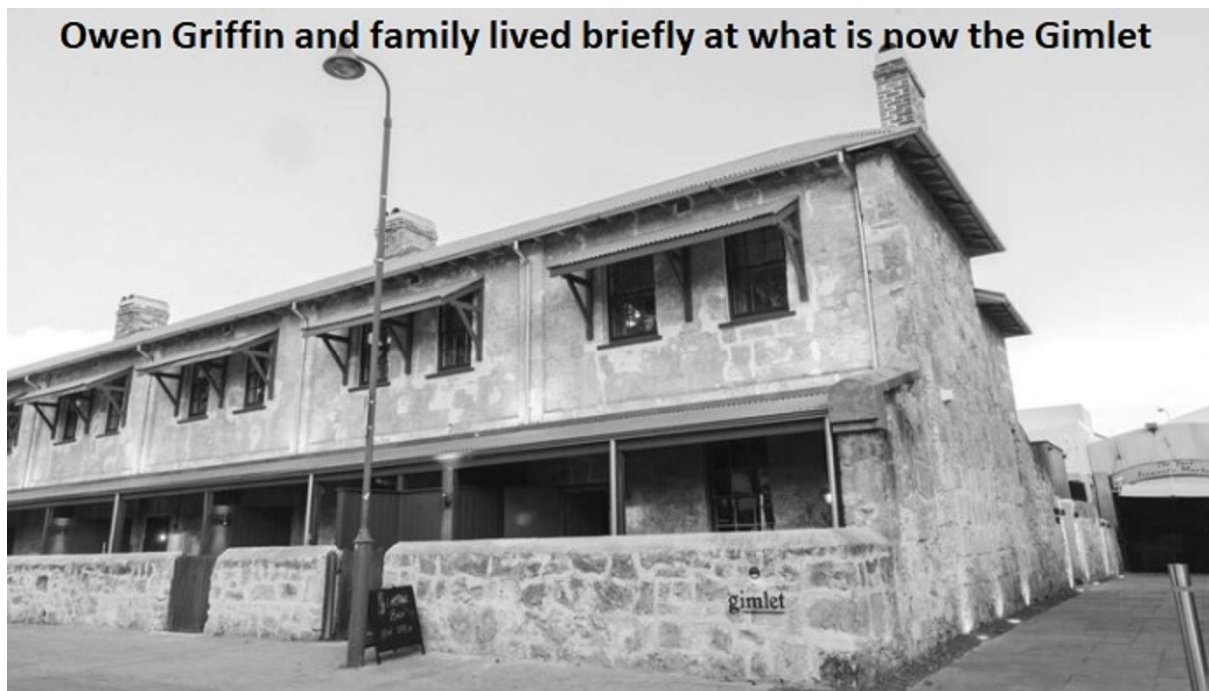


John Watkins dies here



Photograph by Alfred Pickering, c. 1900, SLWA, call number 3881B/58

Owen Griffin and family lived briefly at what is now the Gimlet



King's Birthday Review 1909 John McMahon circled



Arrival of the "Scindian" with Convicts.

The arrival of the *Scindian* with the first batch of convicts and the staff of officers for the formation of the Penal Establishment, took place on Saturday last, the 22nd anniversary of the foundation of the colony—a curious coincidence and a very fit day for the commencement of the new order of things. She has had a quick passage of 88 days from Portsmouth, which she left on the 4th March. The number of passengers is 277, of which seven are cabin, including Dr. Gibson, R.N., Surgeon Superintendent, Capt. Henderson, R.E., Superintendent of the Convict Establishment, lady and child, Mr. and Mrs. Dickson and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Manning and two children; steerage, 75 convicts, 54 pensioners with wives and families and 14 emigrant young women.

The *Scindian* is the first of four vessels taken up by the Home Government for the conveyance of convicts hither, one to sail each month during the three following months.