

# WHY THE HERTFORDSHIRE TRANSPORTEES?

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The Society's publication "Transported Beyond the Seas" by Ken Griffin is the result of his research into the court records of St. Albans and Hertford at the time when transportation to British colonies for felonies and misdemeanours was accepted as an appropriate punishment. The following is Ken Griffin's introduction to his research publication.

## TRANSPORTED BEYOND THE SEAS - AN INTRODUCTION

This publication sets out to record all criminals prosecuted in Hertfordshire who received transportation sentences from the five Hertfordshire courts, namely Hertfordshire Assizes, Hertfordshire Quarter Sessions, Liberty of St. Albans Quarter Sessions, Hertford Borough Sessions and the St Albans Borough Sessions. The period these events cover is from 1784 to 1866 inclusive. Out of the 1,915 convicts recorded, there are over 1,400 convict names that have never been the subject of publication in either the books on the Herts Quarter Sessions or the Liberty of St. Albans Sessions.

It records their basic details of when and where they were tried, their age, if known, their sentence, what happened to them, the detail of what they were accused of and their victims. It is primarily intended for Family Historians who, like me, may find a relative at the courts, either as a victim or as a criminal, and wish to delve further into the records surrounding the case and pursue this through other records held, both in England and in Australia. Additionally, it is also intended to assist Local Historians to identify the cases in their locality and to assess the effect of these crimes on the people and place at that time. It is clear that, in some instances, where the breadwinner of the family is sent to Australia, then the family did become a charge on the parish.

This book is also a personal thank you by me to all the people in the past who have recorded the history of the time for posterity, both in the county and nationally, without realising how important to future generations such records could be.

What this book is unable to do is to identify those Hertfordshire Criminals whose deeds took them over the borders into other counties and who received transportation sentences from those counties for their misdemeanours. However, the book does identify 200 instances where either the criminal or victim came from outside the county. These can be easily found from the Place Index. These villains or victims came from as far afield as Dublin, Renfrew, Scotland and Denbighshire. Those identified in Hertfordshire came from all parishes except three, although even the smallest parish, Broadfield, is mentioned.

The cases were heard either at the Town Hall, St Albans or at the Shire Hall, Hertford. Both Courts can be seen today almost in their former glory, though Shire Hall has recently been renovated. This was almost to its original specification. The accused were held before trial in the Gaols at St Albans and Hertford. The crimes that they committed are identified in the main convict index by a shortened reference and are summarised as totals in the statistics section. Most crimes were either larceny or breaking into dwelling house with intent. Some 427 convicts should have been hanged as they received the sentence of death but, fortunately for them, this sentence was reduced to transportation.