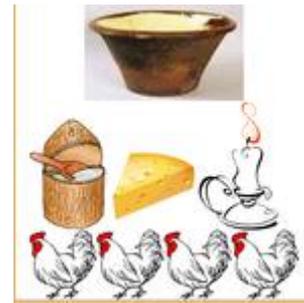


John Close of Bourne - a rogue who made a fresh start in Australia -

born	1816	Bourne, Lincolnshire
married	16 Nov 1835	Esther SMITH, Bourne, Lincolnshire
married	21 Jul 1848	Sophia SMALL, Camden, NSW
died	19 Apr 1873	Bob's Range, Camden, NSW

John Close, labourer, of Bourne, Lincolnshire, was **tried** at the Kesteven Sessions, Bourne, on 3 April 1838, aged 23. [England & Wales Criminal Registers, 1838, County of Lincoln, F559] He was accused of three offences:

- stealing one earthen pancheon, the property of John Phillips [listed in 1841 as a grocer] of Bourne;
- breaking and entering the shop of William Watson of Bourne and stealing 5 loaves of bread, a pound's weight each of cheese, tobacco, tea, sugar, candles, "and other articles";
- stealing 13 fowls, the property of John Osborn [Probably the farmer living at Austerby, Bourne, in 1841]



and **convicted of 'burglary, simple'**. [England & Wales Criminal Registers, 1838, County of Lincoln, F559.] He was sentenced to 10 years' transportation.



He was held awaiting transportation in the prison hulk *Ganymede* [prison hulk: a decommissioned ship used as a floating prison - see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prison_ship]. This was originally the French frigate *Hébé*, captured in 1809, converted into a prison hulk in 1819 and broken up shortly after John was moved on in 1838. The *Ganymede* hulk records state that John was 'received from the gaol at Lincoln on 3 May 1838, having been convicted of stealing 'soap, candles etc.'. It was noted that he was a labourer, had a wife and one child, and could read, although there was no indication that he could write. The 'gaoler's report' describes him as having been "several times convicted of poaching, character very bad, connections very indifferent."

It is believed that John's wife, Esther, died [GRO Death Index 1838 Q3 Bourn 14 163 - Esther CLOSE] while he was awaiting transportation. The child was possibly Louisa CLOSE, b 1835, recorded in the 1841 census [HO107/615/21 F47 P35] living with William and Ann SMITH and family, who may have been Esther's parents.

John was **transported to New South Wales** on the convict ship *John Barry*, which set sail on 12 November 1838. [Australian Convict Transportation Register 1837-1838 HO11/11 F192] It was a 520-ton sailing ship, on its 4th voyage as a convict transport, captained by Mr John Robson. It arrived at Sydney Cove, NSW (located between the present-day Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge) on 22 March 1839.

Things seem to have looked up once he reached Australia. Convicts who stayed out of trouble could be eligible for Tickets of Leave, similar to today's parole or probation

arrangements. John received a **ticket of leave** [44/1134 and 45/1396] to remain in the Camden district of New South Wales.

On 21 July 1848, at the age of 32, having completed his 10-year sentence, he **married** 16-year-old Sophia SMALL at St John's, Camden, New South Wales, who presented him over the next 22 years with 11 children, 10 of whom survived into adulthood and married. As a result John and his descendants have made a substantial contribution to populating New South Wales.



John died on 19 April 1873 at Bob's Range, Camden, New South Wales, aged 57. The CLOSE one-name study has records of 127 of John's descendants in Australia named CLOSE - and undoubtedly his five daughters and many granddaughters will have added even more branches with other surnames to the family tree.