# British Transportation Registers, 1787-1867

## Description

This dataset is an enhanced version of the British Transportation Registers Database, created by the State Library of Queensland. The transportation registers include convicts from England, Wales and Scotland, and cover the entire period of convict transportation to Australia from 1787 to 1867. The information given includes the name of the prisoner, date of transportation and ship, sentence and (less consistently) information about conviction.

## Background

This dataset was created as part of the Digital Panopticon project (www.digitalpanopticon.org). This project uses record linkage technologies to bring together existing and new genealogical, biometric and criminal justice datasets held by a range of organisations, in order to explore the impact of different types of punishments on the lives of c.100,000 people sentenced at the Old Bailey between 1780 and 1875.

The British Transportation registers constitute an index to almost all the convicts transported from Britain to the Australian colonies between 1787 and 1868. They are particularly useful for confirming whether prisoners who had been sentenced to transportation were in fact transported, as well as including information about those who died during the voyage, and to which colonies they were sent.

This dataset is one of a number to be released as open data by the project. It can be used for standalone research but additionally, the project will release record linkage data (known as 'life archives' data) which will enable researchers to reconstruct information about individuals from multiple datasets in ways that go beyond what is possible using the search facilities at www.digitalpanopticon.org.

DP dataset code: BTR

## Original records

The data is derived from the convict transportation registers held at The National Archives (UK). This dataset has been created from the index of the registers created by the State Library of Queensland.

* HO11 - Home Office: Convict Transportation Registers 1787-1867 (123888 rows of data)

The HO11 registers were compiled using data collected throughout a convict’s journey. They were organised by ship (or, sometimes, a group of ships that sailed together).

## Data creation and limitations

State Library of Queensland project volunteers transcribed the records from microfilms, and the transcriptions were entered into a database. The project took several years and the transcriptions appear to be generally accurate.

However, the information transcribed was only partially structured. The DP project enhanced this data by splitting parts of the information into more structured fields and normalising dates to facilitate record linkage. We have therefore decided to make this new version of the data available for re-use by researchers.

The registers contain limited amounts of personal information about convicts. They do not provide ages and less than half of the entries include a conviction date (although nearly all have the court of conviction). This can sometimes hamper record linkage for common names.

In total, about 37,000 (of c. 160,000) transported convicts are not included in the registers. However, it appears that the vast majority of these omissions were convicts from Ireland or other parts of the British Empire, and the registers constitute a near-complete record of transportation from the British mainland to the Australian colonies. Comparison with a master list of convict ships compiled by Deborah Oxley found only a small number of voyages from Britain (c. 20) that cannot be identified in the registers.

## Data

### dp\_btr\_20171218.csv

**dp\_id**

the prisoner's unique ID in the DP database.

**surname**

prisoner's family name(s)

**firstname**

prisoner's first name(s)

**aliases**

any aliases given for the prisoner

**date\_transported**

ship departure date ('dd month yyyy', though not always a complete date)

**transported\_day**

day of ship's departure

**transported\_month**

month of ship departure

**transported\_year**

year of ship departure

**ship**

name of ship

**convicted\_at**

court/location of conviction

**date\_convicted**

date of conviction ('dd month yyyy'; often not present)

**convicted\_day**

day of conviction

**convicted\_month**

month of conviction

**convicted\_year**

year of conviction

**sentence**

length of sentence

**sentence\_n**

length of sentence as a number

**sentence\_type**

additional information related to the sentence, eg 'ticket of leave', 'conditional pardon'

**sentence\_annotated**

a variety of further annotations or remarks

**fate**

usually indicates prisoners who died during the voyage or did not sail.

**relationship\_information**

most commonly gives the names of women's husbands

**total\_convicts\_aboard\_vessel**

number of convicts on board the ship

**ajcp\_tna**

Australian Joint Copying Project microfilm roll number and TNA reference.

## Further information

Digital Panopticon description of the dataset: https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/British\_Transportation\_Registers\_1787-1867

State Library of Queensland, The British Convict transportation registers 1787-1867 database: http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/convicts

The original version of the SLQ data (which may be a more recent version than that used by DP) can be downloaded from: https://data.gov.au/dataset/british-convict-transportation-registers

The National Archives online catalogue: http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C8875

Free PDF scans of the original registers can be downloaded from TNA's catalogue.

## Acknowledgments

The Arts and Humanities Research Council funded the DP project (2013-2017).

The State Library of Queensland created the British Convict transportation registers database as part of the Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP), and made it available as open data. The National Archives hold the original records.

Deborah Oxley, a Co-I on the DP project, carried out the work of splitting the original text into structured fields. Sharon Howard, project manager for the Digital Panopticon project, produced this version of the data and associated documentation for public release.

## Licence

The dataset is released under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY) licence: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0

Please contact the DP project if you wish to use the data for purposes that fall outside the terms of the licence, or if you're interested in future research collaborations: https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/Contact\_Us

## Citation

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