

Martha Ann BOND (1839-1895)

Martha was aged 18, single, literate, a needlewoman when migrating to Tasmania. She was sponsored by W G Elliston of Hobart Town. Martha was discharged from the Quarantine Station, Impression Bay on the evening of 11 May 1858 to be married. However, she did not marry until four months later, on 12 September 1858 at the Church of Holy Trinity in Hobart. Her spouse was George John Godwin (aka John George – 1833-1868). It was probable Martha knew her future husband before departing England in order to marry him in Tasmania, soon after her arrival.

Martha was born about 1839 in Ixworth, Suffolk to Richard (1806-1873) and Ann nee Nichols (1812-1853). Martha's mother died before she embarked on her journey to Tasmania. Ixworth is a small civil parish in the West Suffolk district of Suffolk, eastern England 6 miles (9.7 km) north east of Bury St Edmunds in the Thingoe district.

In the 1851 England Census Martha was living at Heath Road, Ixworth, Suffolk. She was aged 13 and a house servant for Jeremiah Balls, aged 64, an unmarried farmer of 25 acres, employing one man.

Martha and George moved to Victoria in about 1860. They had at least four children. The first-born child, Eva Harriet died, aged three, in 1863 in Victoria. A daughter born in 1865 was also named Eva Harriet.

George John Godwin Jun. was born on 21 March 1833 in Surrey, England, to George William (1798-1840) and Harriet nee Hayward (1802-). George Jun. died in 1868 at the age of 35. Martha and George had only been married ten years before George's sudden and unexpected death. An inquest found George died from the effects of a fall in a water-channel. Evidence provided on the night of 24 June deceased called into the Toorak Hotel in South Yarra and drank two pints of beer at the bar. He afterwards left the hotel at about 8.30pm, perfectly sober, and headed in the direction of Melbourne. On the morning of the 25th the body was found lying in the water-channel in Gardiner's Creek Road, near Toorak Road, quite cold and dead. There was a slight wound upon the scalp, such as might have resulted from a fall, but there were no marks of a struggle having occurred near the place. The post-mortem showed that death had been caused by the rupture of a blood vessel in the brain.

Martha lived for another 27 years. She died on 10 May 1894 at 21 George Street, Fitzroy, Victoria, aged 55.