treatment, the surgeon feared the fettered men were dying from their treatment and lack of food. They were released and the truth, or at least Porter's version of it, came out. Cheshire, 'the monster in human shape', was confined below for the rest of the voyage.

They reached Hobart in March 1837, 'when to the astonishment of all present I was known as one of the men that assisted in Capturing the Brig Frederick'. As they were taken off the ship, Porter managed to get close to the treacherous Cheshire. 'I seized him by the throat and hurled him over my hip and would have throttled him but was prevented by the police.'

The convicts, in heavy irons, were tried for piracy and found guilty. The sentence would have been death but they escaped on a technicality. Porter spent almost the next two years and a half in Hobart Gaol and was then sent to Norfolk Island, 'the Tyranny and Cruelty was in its vigour'. But under a new and reformist commandant, Captain Macarochie, Porter responded to the improved conditions on the island and vowed he would 'live in hopes by my good conduct to become once more a member of good Society'. He was later sent back to the mainland.

It was now twenty-four years after James Porter's original sentence of transportation. He had seen neither his English wife or son in that time. He suffered Macquarie Harbour, Norfolk Island, the Coal River and numerous other jails in Australia, England and Chile. He survived floggings, beatings, torture and hard labour in heavy irons. In May 1847, Porter made his final escape attempt as part of a group who absconded from Newcastle on the brig Sir John Byng. He was never seen again.

**The Great Escaper**

Of the many bushrangers celebrated in folk tradition, Western Australia's 'Moondyne Joe' is probably the least threatening. His clever escapes and non-violent career have given him a Robin Hood aura that is still strong today. But who was he?

The Glamorganshire ironworker Joseph Bolitho Johns was in his early twenties when he arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1853. He had a ten-year sentence for larceny but soon earned a conditional pardon in 1855. He took up the business of catching stray horses, returning them to their owners for the rewards offered on such valuable assets. Operating in the Toodyay area, 80 or 90 kilometres northeast of Perth, Joe was eventually arrested on suspicion of causing the horses to leave their rightful owners and then 'catching' them in his horse-traps at a place called Moondyne Springs.

Joe was imprisoned but while awaiting trial he escaped. Recaptured, the horse-stealing charges were dropped but he received three years imprisonment for jail-breaking. Released in 1864 he was returned to jail within a year, this time with a ten-year sentence. The charge was killing an ox with intent to steal the carcass and he was sentenced to hard labour in a working party. By now Joseph Johns was something of a legend among the convicts settlers, reflected in his nickname 'Moondyne Joe'. As if to prove his legend true, he soon escaped again.

When they caught him this time, the bushranger was given a further year in chains. Bound fast within a cell, Joe almost managed to escape yet again and so was placed in another, supposedly escape-proof cell in the prison's refectory. It was only a matter of days before he disappeared from here and enjoyed several months of freedom in his old stamping ground around Moondyne Springs. But in September 1866 he was recaptured and held in a specially constructed escape-proof cell in Fremantle Prison. According to the local paper:

> Mr Hampton is said to have told him, when he saw him put into the cell which had been specially prepared for him, that if he managed to make his escape again, he would forgive him. That cell was made wonderfully strong, as much so as iron and wood could make it, and in it Joe was kept chained to a ring in the floor or wall, allowing a movement of about one yard, in heavy irons, with one hour's exercise daily in one of the yards.
Here, in solitary confinement, on a bread and water diet and in an enclosed space with little light or air, he became so ill that the medical authorities said he would die.

For his health, Joe was taken out of his cell for most of the day and left in the corner of the prison yard by himself, watched closely by a guard and kept isolated from all contact. He was put to work breaking stones and eventually smashed a large pile of rubble behind which it was difficult for the guard to see what was happening. On 8 March 1867, all was normal; the guard watched Joe's pick rising and falling behind the pile of rubble, occasionally checking verbally that the convict was still there. He was.

But what the lazy guard could not see was that Joe's pick was not attacking rocks but a loose stone in the prison wall. As the heat of the day faded, the guard could see Joe's cap over the rubble but could not get an answer from his call—"Are you there, Joe?" Seeing the cap, the guard assumed Joe was having a break and neglected to walk over to check until knock-off time at five o'clock.

Of course, when the guard finally went to get Joe, he found the cap and a broad-arrow jacket propped up on a couple of picks and a large hole in the prison wall. Joe had breached the supposedly unbreakable stone barrier, left his prison clothes behind and wriggled into the garden of the prison superintendent's house. Then he simply strolled through the superintendent's front gate which, fortunately, happened to be open. The West Australian press described Joe's ingenuity in making this escape in delighted detail:

Joe then prepared for his exit, by sticking his hammer upright and with some umbrella wire he had got possession of, he formed a shape something of a man's shoulders and arms; upon the top he placed his cap and having slit up the sleeves of his jacket and shirt, managed to slip out of them and leave them upon the frame he had constructed, then having got rid of his irons, and divested himself of his trowsers, got through his hole in the wall, passed through Mr. Lefroy's yard and out at a side door to the front of the prison, whence to a person of Joe's practised sagacity a safe transit to the neighboring bush became an easy matter.

Pandemonium! Prison authorities and the police scrambled to catch the great escaper once again. Governor Hampton, who had called Joe an 'immense scoundrel' and publicly boasted of the escape-proof cell, was especially displeased, which only increased the pleasure of the broad community of settlers and convicts. For them, Joe had now added another triumphant chapter to his legend and they sang in the streets, to the tune of 'Pop Goes the Weasel':

The Governor's son has got the pip,
The Governor's got the measles.
Moondyne Joe has give 'em the slip
Pop, goes the weasel.

Moondyne Joe had become a local hero. Not exactly a bush Robin Hood or a Ned Kelly, but an affectionately respected deserter of colonial authority nevertheless.

After absconding from his 'escape-proof cell', Joe remained at large for another two years, and was eventually recaptured at a local vineyard on 25 February 1869, drunk according to some accounts. He served another lengthy sentence—without escaping this time—and mostly stayed out of trouble, working around the southwest and in Fremantle as a carpenter, shipwright and bush labourer. He even settled down to married domesticity with the widow Louisa Hearn (Braddock) in 1879. Louisa died in 1893 and Joe succumbed to increasing senility, passing out of life and further into legend seven years later.

Embellished versions of Moondyne Joe's adventures and escapes are still told today. His many unlikely escapes from various jails and hostels are favourites. So is his alleged crossing of what was then the new Fremantle bridge before the governor had a chance to officially open it in 1867.