Talking Tees Valley Activity Pack

Crime and Punishment

Tees Valley Museums

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Tees Valley Museums

Welcome to another edition of the Talking Tees Valley Activity Pack

Each month we will use objects from one of our museums in the Tees Valley to take a closer look at the lives and stories from people in our area.

In this month's newsletter we are looking at the history of crime and punishment. In our collections we hold many different objects that chart this history locally, from the creation of the police force on the early railways to the use of photography to capture 'mug shots' of criminals.

People in the past have had very different ideas about how criminals should be punished, leading to many different forms of punishments, from the death penalty to transportation. The past could be a grisly place for those who broke the law.

Peelers

A uniformed police force like the one we know today began life on the early Railways.

In 1826 policemen were being employed by the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company. Unlike our modern policemen these police constables were responsible for other railway jobs as well as ensuring no rules were broken or crimes committed.

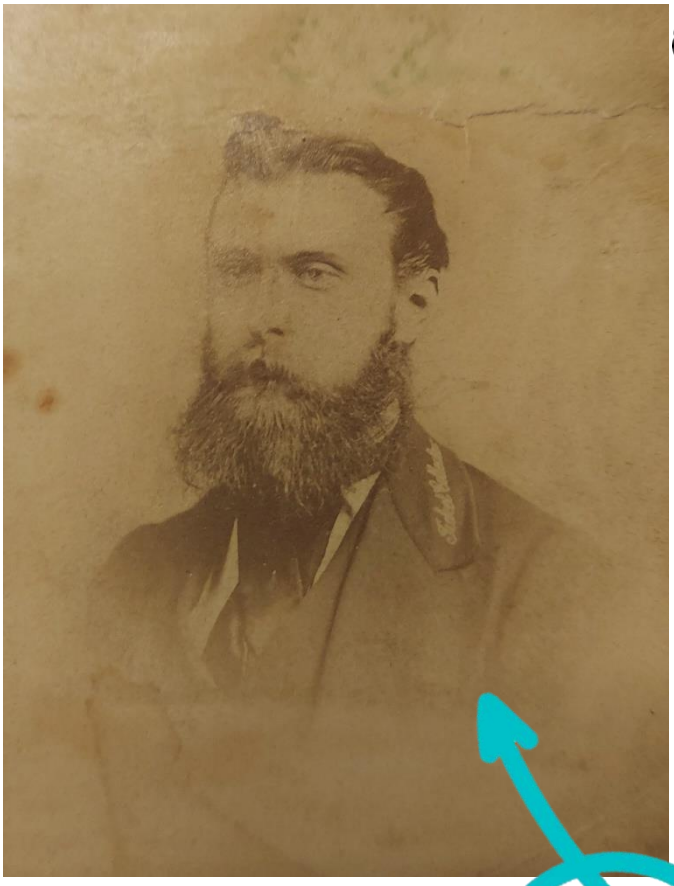
By 1829, the Metropolitan Police Force had been created by Prime Minister Robert Peel. This centralized new force was given powers to stop criminals and uphold the law.

These new policemen had to be age between 20 and 27, at least 5'7 feet tall, be physically fit and have a good education. For protection they carried a truncheon, a wooden bat that was capable of "cracking a man's skull like a walnut."

Boys in Blue

Copper

Bobbies



This is Robert Henry Brown, Superintendent of Police on the Stockton and Darlington Railway and one of the first ever uniformed policemen!

Rozzers

The Fuzz

Did you know…

Because Robert Peel was the one who created the modern police force the public nicknamed them 'Peelers'?

Can you think of any other nicknames for the police?

Hint: We have put some slang terms for police around this page! See if you can spot them all!

Plod

Criminals

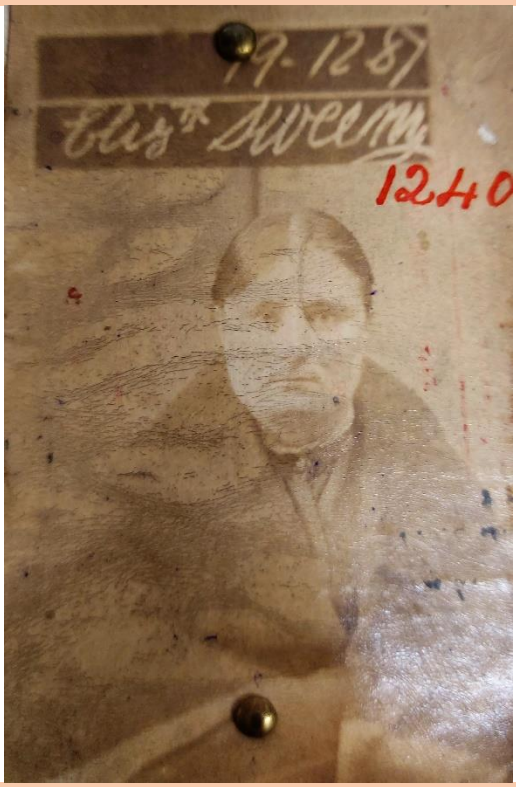
Did you know…

As early as the 1840s police were using photography in their investigations as a tool to help them solve crimes! They called them mugshots because ‘mug’ is slang for the face.

Elizabeth Sweeney

One story we hold is that of Elizabeth Sweeney. In 1888 she was convicted for her fifth crime at only 24 years old. Her convictions take place in Sheffield, Leeds, Wakefield, and Middlesbrough indicating that she moved around a lot.

Not only this but she also used five false names and was arrested under the names of Eliza Gleeson and Elizabeth McNulty. The crimes she committed included stealing money and prostitution. Its likely that as a prostitute she would steal from her customers and that’s how she made her living.



James William Liddle

James was 14 years old when he was convicted of stealing in 1887. His mother was a shopkeeper, and this was his first offence. As such he was sent to a reform school for 5 years.

This school was a punishment for children and aimed to provide them with a trade to keep them out of crime as they grew up.

James was apprenticed to a cabinet maker and grew up to become one. He was never arrested again.

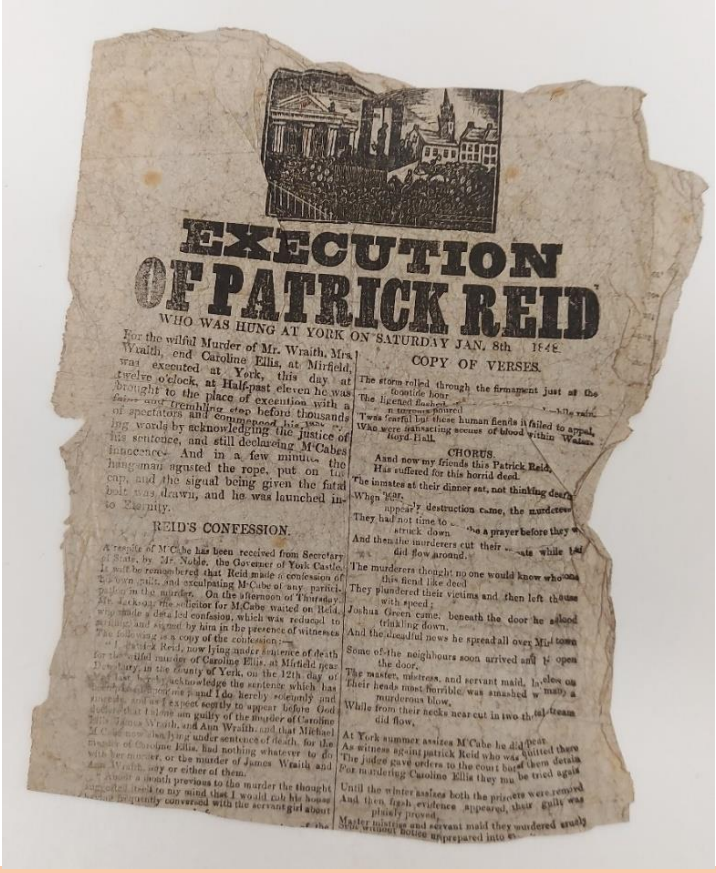
Punishment

For breaking the law in Victorian England, the punishments could be severe. From fines and imprisonment to deportation to one of the British Colonies (usually Australia) and even the death penalty.

Did you know…

In the early 1800s Thomas Cook ran trips to see executions which were seen as a form of public entertainment!

Net-making



EXECUTION OF PATRICK REID

WHO WAS HUNG AT YORK ON SATURDAY JAN. 8th 1848

COPY OF VERSES.

The storm rolled through the firmament just at the
The lightning flashed
Twas fearful lar these human fiends it failed to appal,
Who were abhorring accurs of blood within
Boyd Hall.

CHORUS.

And now my friends this Patrick Reid,
Has suffered for this horrid deed.

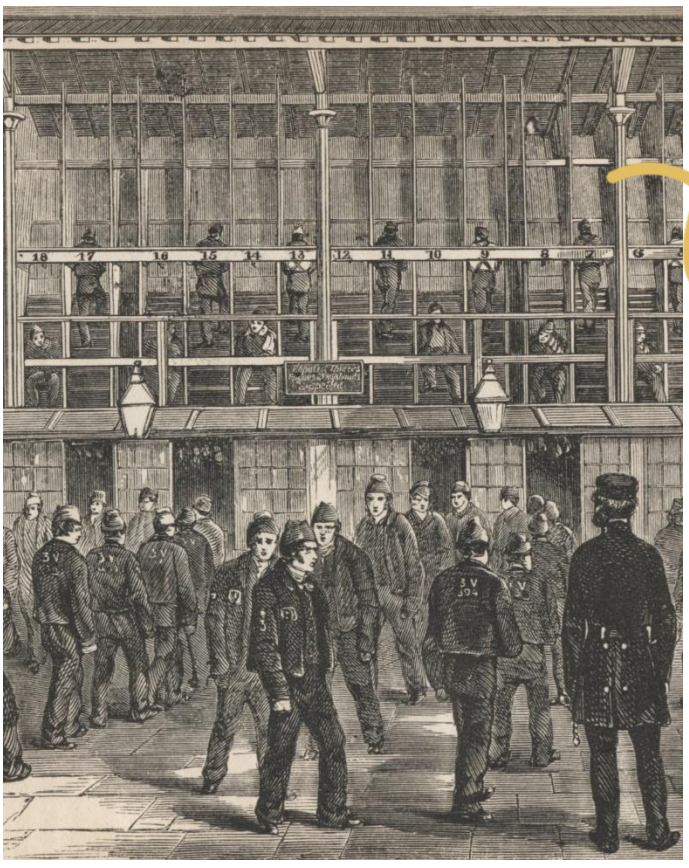
The inmates at their dinner sat, not thinking
When
appear'd destruction came, the murderers
They had not time to
struck down
And then the murderers cut their
did flow around.

The murderers thought no one would know
this fiend like deed
They plundered their victims and then left
with speed;
Joshua Green came, beneath the door he
drinking down.
And the dreadful news he spread all over
Some of the neighbours soon arrived and
the door.
The master, mistress, and servant maid,
Their heads most horrible was smashed
murderous blow.
While from their necks near cut in two
did flow.

At York summer assizes M'Cabe he did
As witness against patrick Reid who was
The judge gave orders to the court
For murdering Caroline Ellis they
Until the winter assizes both the prisoners were
And then fresh evidence appeared, their guilt was
plainly proved.

REID'S CONFESSION.

Rock-Breaking



Rope-beating

A common punishment was being sentenced to hard labour in prison. Prisoners were tasked with some awful jobs designed to break them mentally and physically. The most feared was the treadwheel.

This was a large treadmill like machine which prisoners climbed for up to 10 hours a day. In some prisons people could climb as much as 19,000 feet!

Weaving

Many prisoners would eat soap or a bag of salt to make them too ill to go on the treadwheel. Its wasn't uncommon for people to die on the treadwheel as exhaustion would cause people to faint and get crushed in the machine!

The machine was officially banned in UK prisons in 1895.

Blacksmithing

Can you guess what else prisoners had to do for 'hard labour'?

Hint: we have hidden some of them around this page! See if you can spot them all!

Have a Go…

Try your hand at our crime and punishment theme wordsearch!

H	V	D	C	E	M	U	M	Y	H	F	A	R	G	C
I	A	E	T	S	I	S	U	I	N	D	H	T	R	A
A	L	S	L	I	S	I	G	P	P	O	L	I	C	E
T	A	R	S	N	N	O	S	I	R	P	M	V	A	X
B	R	E	T	A	T	K	H	C	R	E	E	S	A	E
E	C	Z	S	L	R	K	O	K	E	E	H	T	R	C
H	E	Z	E	A	E	E	T	P	P	E	A	E	L	U
S	N	O	I	T	A	T	R	O	P	S	N	A	R	T
F	Y	R	B	T	D	O	U	C	O	R	D	L	G	I
U	D	S	B	D	W	T	N	K	C	E	C	I	R	O
M	O	M	O	A	H	N	C	E	M	L	U	N	E	N
I	N	L	B	E	E	O	H	T	N	E	F	G	N	T
B	P	A	F	A	E	S	E	I	I	E	F	C	W	N
N	R	T	T	I	L	H	O	N	E	P	S	H	L	A
D	A	O	O	B	E	E	N	G	E	O	R	T	E	F

BOBBIES
COPPER
CRIME
EXECUTION
HANDCUFFS
LARCENY
MUGSHOT
PEELERS
PICKPOCKETING
PLOD
POLICE
PRISON
ROZZERS
STEALING
THEFT
TRANSPORTATION
TREADWHEEL
TRUNCHEON

All images in this pack are courtesy of Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum, The Dorman Museum and Preston Park Museum and Grounds.

You can find all our Talking Tees Valley packs on our website here: https://teesvalleymuseums.org/news/

If you would like to share your stories or contact us about the packs, please e-mail teesvalleymuseums@stockton.gov.uk