

HULK

Worn out vessels were transformed into floating prisons known as hulks as a cost effective way of alleviating congested prisons. The first Van Diemonian hulk was the 61-ton *Sophia*. She accommodated the Hobart Town boat crew and then later the town chain gang, and was used until the early 1840s. The second was the *Anson*, a 1,742-ton 72-gun man-of-war that arrived in Hobart Town in October 1843 after a voyage of 126 days. The *Anson* was designed to house newly arrived female convicts for six months probation. The first 370 women boarded the hulk in April 1844. By January the next year it was estimated that 600 women were on board. Their manner and appearance was reportedly a vast improvement on convicts in the other depots. However, they were in dire need of fresh air and exercise, having only been allowed on the upper deck for one hour twice a day. The *Anson* was devised to keep new arrivals free from the unsavoury influence of 'old hands', but the governor and the comptroller of convicts declared it a 'total failure' and claimed the *Anson* probationers reoffended at the same rate as any other women. It was estimated that between April 1844 and August 1846, 531 of the 1141 probationers reoffended. In July 1849 the *Anson* was towed into Hobart Town, and in February 1851 her fittings were put up for auction.

Margaret Burke

Margaret Burke was transported for seven years for stealing clothes. She arrived in Van Diemen's Land in September 1849 at the age of 10 and was lodged in the *Anson*. In February 1854, she married Benjamin Collard with whom she would have three children. She gained her freedom in December 1855.



Security

The women on the *Anson* were divided into three classes to reflect their behaviour. They were segregated and lodged in wards on the three decks. Hatchways and portholes were fitted with bars to prevent escapes. The toilets, located at the bow, were securely boxed in. As the *Anson* was not required to sail, her masts

were sold. After 1844 the number of women on board at any one time never exceeded 400. In 1849 *Anson* had 21 staff, including 11 female warders, lodged in the officers' quarters and the captain's 'great cabin'.

The Daily Routine

The women were woken by the ship's bell at sunrise. Their bedding was aired and the wards were cleaned. Between 8 am and 9 am they attended school, observed prayers and ate breakfast. The women then laboured at various duties including washing, sewing and knitting. Lunch was at noon, followed by more work, an evening meal and prayers. They were mustered at 7 pm in winter and 8 pm in summer.

Heads and Tails

Timber from decommissioned ships was usually recycled. It was reported that in the chancel of St Matthew's Church in Rokeby, sat an elaborately carved chair made by Whitesides and Son from oak taken from the *Anson*.

Hard Labours

Mary Russell was transported for stealing two shirts and arrived at Hobart Town in September 1849 to serve a seven-year term. In May 1850 she absconded while assigned to the *Anson's* assistant superintendent, Susannah Holditch. She was caught and sentenced to six months' hard labour. Eight months later, Russell gave birth to a stillborn child at the Cascades Female Factory. In September 1852 she had another baby, Elizabeth. In January 1855 Russell applied to marry Joseph Purcell but as she had not gone six months without committing an offence, the application was refused. They wed in April and in July Russell gave birth to William. After receiving her freedom in March 1857 she had two more sons.



Hiring Depots

The *Anson* operated as a hiring depot as well as a prison. Probationers could be hired out for private service. In 1847 female hiring depots were also located at Launceston and New Town, and male hiring depots were at Fingal, Westbury, Oatlands, Jerusalem, Brown's River and New Norfolk.

Mooring

To stay safely moored, the *Anson* had a series of iron swivels, shackles, chain cables and anchors.

Ruby Ring

In May 1848 Bridget Cashman, an *Anson* probationer, was charged with stealing a diamond and ruby ring and sentenced to six months' hard labour.



Rowe Your Boat

The *Anson* was located 4 miles from Hobart Town and convicts were landed at the Risdon Ferry jetty. Thomas Rowe worked as a boatman from 1844 to 1849. He rowed the women to and from the hulk and charged 1s a piece.

Matron and Superintendent.

In 1843 Doctor Edmund Bowden, a qualified chemist and surgeon, and his wife Philippa, matron of Hanwell Asylum, were selected to run a new female penitentiary in Hobart Town. Their joint wage was £500 per year, with a further £300 allocated to Edmund to also act as medical inspector. The penitentiary, however, was never built and they were instead appointed to run the *Anson*. In September 1847, Edmund died and Philippa succeeded him on a reduced salary of £400. Soon after, she applied for leave to visit her dying brother in England. During her absence it was decreed that the *Anson* be abandoned. In November 1850 the *Launceston Examiner* printed a long letter in which Philippa Hanson defended her administration of the *Anson*.



Deaths on Board

In May 1847 Mary Gilligan died aboard the *Anson*, followed the next month by Hannah Jones. Inquests returned verdicts of 'death by fever' and 'visitation from God'. The death rate on the *Anson* was quite low. Superintendent Bowden estimated that the number of sick in the hospital never exceeded three per cent of the total population.

JUVENILE

The term juvenile usually described people between 10 and 18 years old. Several thousand juveniles were transported to Van Diemen's Land. Some were accompanying their convict parents, while others had resorted to stealing or had joined child crime gangs. Governor Arthur described them as 'entirely useless' and 'the dread of every family'. By the early 1830s the number of unwanted children was beyond the capabilities of the Assignment Board. Juvenile convicts were viewed as a burden and suffered abuse and corruption. Many remained separated from their families for the rest of their lives.



Walter Paisley

In 1832 Walter Paisley was done for burglary. The 15-year-old arrived in Van Diemen's Land to serve seven years. He was one of the first boys sent to Point Puer and was considered one of the most troublesome. His first offence was for insubordination, which netted him seven days on bread and water in solitary confinement. He copped another seven days for reciting an obscene story. His other offences included plundering turnips, stealing and killing chickens and striking the schoolmaster. By 1838 he had committed 45 offences, and in September 1839 he was sentenced to ten more years. He finally received a conditional pardon in March 1847. He did, however, master a trade. In October 1859 it was reported that 'the celebrated woodman Walter Paisley' lectured in Launceston. In 1872 a wooden dinghy he made was given to Dinah and John Wilson as a wedding present. The dingy still exists, and is a testament to his fine workmanship.

Point Puer Boys' Establishment

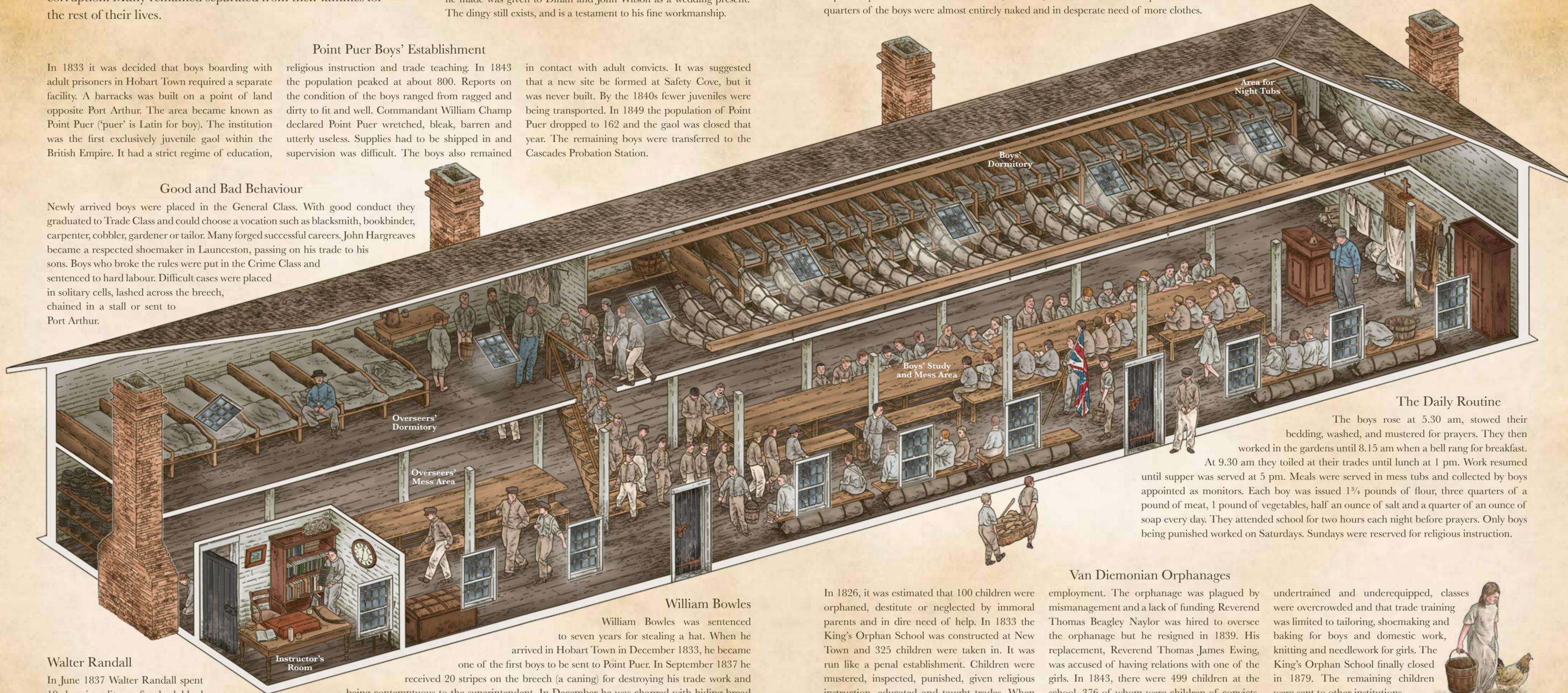
In 1833 it was decided that boys boarding with adult prisoners in Hobart Town required a separate facility. A barracks was built on a point of land opposite Port Arthur. The area became known as Point Puer ('puer' is Latin for boy). The institution was the first exclusively juvenile gaol within the British Empire. It had a strict regime of education,

religious instruction and trade teaching. In 1843 the population peaked at about 800. Reports on the condition of the boys ranged from ragged and dirty to fit and well. Commandant William Champ declared Point Puer wretched, bleak, barren and utterly useless. Supplies had to be shipped in and supervision was difficult. The boys also remained

in contact with adult convicts. It was suggested that a new site be formed at Safety Cove, but it was never built. By the 1840s fewer juveniles were being transported. In 1849 the population of Point Puer dropped to 162 and the gaol was closed that year. The remaining boys were transferred to the Cascades Probation Station.

Good and Bad Behaviour

Newly arrived boys were placed in the General Class. With good conduct they graduated to Trade Class and could choose a vocation such as blacksmith, bookbinder, carpenter, cobbler, gardener or tailor. Many forged successful careers. John Hargreaves became a respected shoemaker in Launceston, passing on his trade to his sons. Boys who broke the rules were put in the Crime Class and sentenced to hard labour. Difficult cases were placed in solitary cells, lashed across the breech, chained in a stall or sent to Port Arthur.



Walter Randall

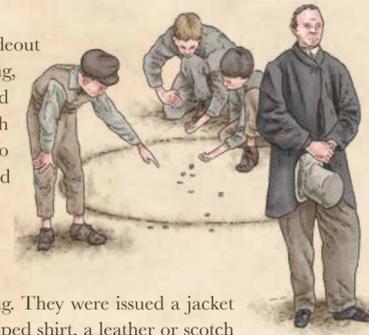
In June 1837 Walter Randall spent 10 days in solitary after he lobbed half a brick at an overseer.

William Bowles

William Bowles was sentenced to seven years for stealing a hat. When he arrived in Hobart Town in December 1833, he became one of the first boys to be sent to Point Puer. In September 1837 he received 20 stripes on the breech (a caning) for destroying his trade work and being contemptuous to the superintendent. In December he was charged with hiding bread and punished with a four-day stint in solitary. Bowles finally received his freedom in 1846.

Leisure

An area along the coastline known as the Rocks was a hideout where the boys spent time fishing, catching crayfish, climbing, concealing little treasures or eating stolen food. One group used the Rocks as a place to worship. The boys played games with marbles and buttons. Buttons were a form of currency, used to obtain tobacco, food or other luxuries. The boys were searched regularly to prevent gambling and trafficking.



Uniform

The boys washed once a day in the ocean, weather permitting. They were issued a jacket and trousers of tanned sheepskin, a grey cloth waistcoat, a striped shirt, a leather or scotch cap and a pair of boots. In October 1836, however, Commandant Booth reported that three quarters of the boys were almost entirely naked and in desperate need of more clothes.

John Allen Manton

John Allen Manton was born in England in August 1807 and began preaching while still in his teens. He was the first chaplain at Port Arthur. Manton's duties included conducting lessons for the first batch of boys at Point Puer. He later established a Wesleyan school for boys in Campbell Town. He died in September 1864.

Surveillance

A small military force and civil officers kept watch over the boys. Some were reported to carry whips as they did their rounds.

The Daily Routine

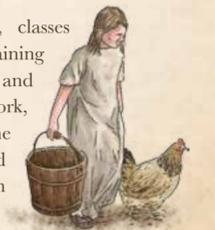
The boys rose at 5.30 am, stowed their bedding, washed, and mustered for prayers. They then worked in the gardens until 8.15 am when a bell rang for breakfast. At 9.30 am they toiled at their trades until lunch at 1 pm. Work resumed until supper was served at 5 pm. Meals were served in mess tubs and collected by boys appointed as monitors. Each boy was issued 1 3/4 pounds of flour, three quarters of a pound of meat, 1 pound of vegetables, half an ounce of salt and a quarter of an ounce of soap every day. They attended school for two hours each night before prayers. Only boys being punished worked on Saturdays. Sundays were reserved for religious instruction.

Van Diemonian Orphanages

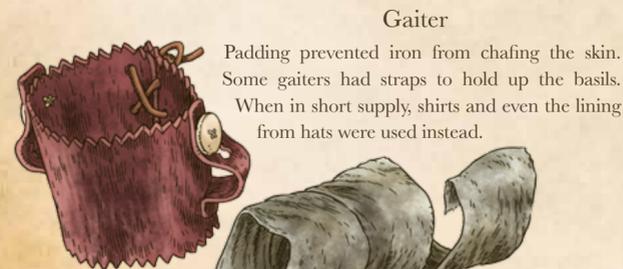
In 1826, it was estimated that 100 children were orphaned, destitute or neglected by immoral parents and in dire need of help. In 1833 the King's Orphan School was constructed at New Town and 325 children were taken in. It was run like a penal establishment. Children were mustered, inspected, punished, given religious instruction, educated and taught trades. When they turned 14 or 15 they were placed in

employment. The orphanage was plagued by mismanagement and a lack of funding. Reverend Thomas Beagley Naylor was hired to oversee the orphanage but he resigned in 1839. His replacement, Reverend Thomas James Ewing, was accused of having relations with one of the girls. In 1843, there were 499 children at the school, 376 of whom were children of convicts. In 1848 a report stated that teachers were

undertrained and under-equipped, classes were overcrowded and that trade training was limited to tailoring, shoemaking and baking for boys and domestic work, knitting and needlework for girls. The King's Orphan School finally closed in 1879. The remaining children were sent to other institutions.

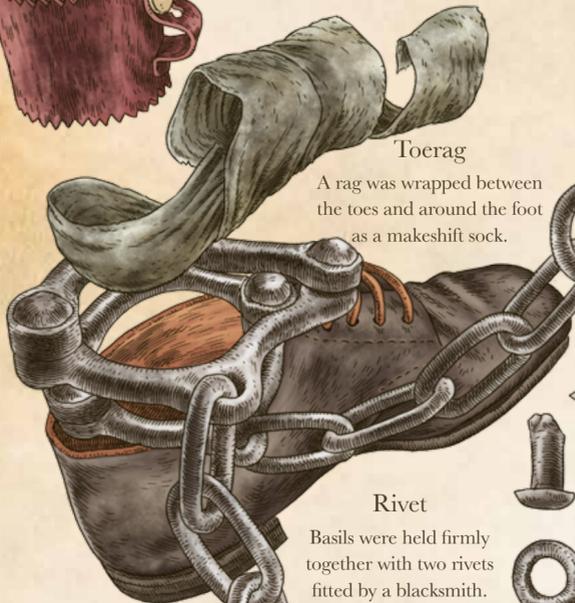


LEG IRONS



Gaiter

Padding prevented iron from chafing the skin. Some gaiters had straps to hold up the basils. When in short supply, shirts and even the lining from hats were used instead.



Toerag

A rag was wrapped between the toes and around the foot as a makeshift sock.

Rivet

Basils were held firmly together with two rivets fitted by a blacksmith.

Sound Advice

Leg irons emitted a loud jangling sound as convicts moved. When William Derrincourt escaped the Penitentiary Chapel, his clanking leg irons attracted the law.

Link

Usually two lengths of chain connected the basils. Each length was about 8 inches long and usually had four links. Some convicts were ordered to wear irons connected with just one link, which forced the wearer to shuffle.



Bribing the Blacksmith

A blacksmith could make a set of leg irons in around seven hours. The vast majority of irons, however, were imported from England. Irons were riveted on in a matter of minutes. It was possible to bribe the blacksmith to grant special favours. In February 1834, William Leonard was caught making 'screw rivets' that allowed convicts to unscrew their irons. Blacksmith Henry Scarlett fitted irons on so loosely that convicts could simply slip them off.



Convicts were fitted with leg irons—also known as shackles, fetters, chains, 'old wives' or irons—to impair movement. Irons made life miserable. Most weighed approximately two kilograms, but some as much as 25 kilograms, yet convicts in irons still had to do manual labour. Convicts were responsible for keeping their irons in good condition and when 'mustering irons' was called each set was carefully inspected. Convicts in 'flash mobs' took pride in keeping them spotless. William Thompson claimed his looked like polished silver. When irons were removed the change in weight made convicts walk with high clumsy steps. After many years in leg irons, some convicts were left crippled.

Tackling

A piece of leather or rope, known as tackling, was fixed to the central ring and fastened around the waist to prevent the irons from dragging on the ground.

Top Irons

As a form of secondary punishment convicts were double ironed. Top irons were harder to oval, and by passing a chain through the extra loop a convict could be tethered.

Leg irons were commonly marked with the broad arrow and the initials B. O. to prevent the valuable iron being trafficked. It is thought that strokes indicated the number of times the one pair had been issued.

Ovalling

The basil could be beaten into an oval, which allowed it to be slipped over the heel. The process was known as ovalling. Detachable leg irons were handy. Convicts could exchange them for a lighter set or take them off to get a good night's sleep.

George Britton

George Britton arrived in Van Diemen's Land in December 1832 to serve seven years for stealing clothes. Britton was described as 'exceedingly bad', and he endured more than 16 years in leg irons.



Log and Chain

It is unlikely Van Diemonian convicts were subjected to the iconic ball and chain. They were, however, sometimes chained to logs of wood. George Wiggins, when bathing at Point Puer, got his irons, chain and log, tangled in kelp and drowned. He was just 19 years old.



LEISURE

Convicts laboured from dawn till dusk, but they could be granted an occasional holiday. Free time was spent labouring to earn cash, resting, or enjoying illegal forms of entertainment.



Games of Chance

Although it was strictly forbidden, convicts gambled on games of chance like dice, cards and dominoes. In May 1844 John Glanville was given 36 lashes for making cards cut from the pages of a Bible.

Bare-knuckle Boxing

Bare-knuckle pugilism, also known as boxing and prizefighting, was popular with convicts. In April 1842 at the Jerusalem Probation Station, Charles Evans and Patrick Kelly decided to settle a disagreement by belting it out. A crowd of convicts gathered around as the two men fought for 45 minutes. In the final round Evans was struck under his right ear and after reeling, complaining of pain and experiencing several fits, he died. Kelly was charged with manslaughter and two other convicts, Patrick Norey and William Cutts, were charged with aiding and abetting. Bare-knuckle fighting was declared assault in 1882 and the sport died out.



Blood Sports

A cockfight is a contest between two roosters, held in a ring called a cockpit. In August 1831 John Williams was punished with a two-month stint in the chain gang for skipping church service to engage in cockfighting. In 1857 the *Licensing Act* permitted bull baiting, cockfighting and dog fighting within public houses.



Singing and Dancing

Song and dance empowered convicts by unifying them, celebrating their exploits and ridiculing authority. In June 1840 Ann Dixon and Dinah Baker were charged with dancing in a public house and received 14 days in solitary. In July 1843 James Doran copped 25 lashes for singing in his hut. Convict Francis MacNamara, known as Frank the Poet, was well known for contemptuous verse. He departed Van Diemen's Land with the words 'Land of lags and kangaroo, of possums and the scare emu, the farmer's pride but the prisoner's hell, land of bums - fare-thee-well!'



LIQUOR

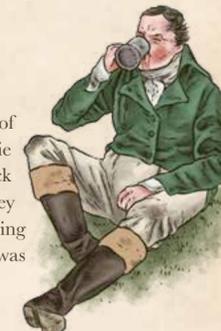


The most common alcohol in Van Diemen's Land was rum. Convicts could receive a small rum ration to increase their stamina, mark a celebration or as a reward. Publicans were forbidden to serve convicts, but liquor could be obtained from sly grog shops. In the early days, alcohol was more valuable than land. When a large amount of rum arrived in 1807, almost the whole colony got drunk. Preventing convicts from frequenting taverns was extremely difficult. Jorgen Jorgenson noted that pubs were filled with convicts night and day and it was often dangerous to walk the streets, even in the daytime. In 1831 James Ross estimated that 100,000 gallons of liquor was consumed annually, five gallons for every man, woman and child. Between 1830 and 1836, 62 colonists, 36 convicts and 38 people of uncertain status died from alcohol-related incidents. By the 1850s there was one pub for every 127 Van Diemonians and alcoholism was rife. Temperance societies failed to improve the situation despite massive public support. Taxes on alcohol were a major source of government income.

Thomas Davey

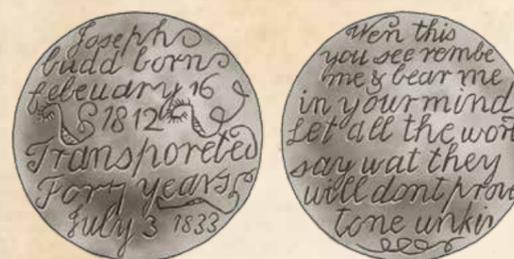
Thomas Davey was born in England in 1758. At 21, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marines. He served in America and the West Indies and in 1787 was made a volunteer guard and accompanied the First Fleet to New South Wales. He was appointed lieutenant governor of Van Diemen's Land in 1811. Davey soon earned a reputation for drunken behaviour. Edward Abbot claimed that he invented a particularly strong brew concocted

from two pints of boiling water, one pint of rum and half a pint of brandy. It was called Blow My Skull. In 1814 Governor Macquarie of New South Wales recommend he be dismissed due to his 'lack of manners and morals'. With limited resources, however, Davey did manage to build a gaol, commence a church and initiate shipping and trade. But this did not impress his superiors and in 1816 he was dismissed. He died in relative poverty in May 1823.



LOVE TOKEN

By smoothing down the faces of a coin, a convict could scratch or stipple upon it a farewell message and transform it into a love token, also known as a leaden heart. In July 1833, 21-year-old Joseph Budd left a love token. One face bore his name, date of birth and date of transportation and the other was inscribed, 'When this you see, remember me and bear me in your mind. Let all the world say what they will, don't prove to me unkind.'



PUNISHMENT

Punishments were harsh and usually involved inflicting physical pain. But if a punishment was too harsh, it could leave a convict unable to function. If it was too lenient, it was thought that it would breed insubordination. There was an effort to provide a standard punishment for each offence. By the 1830s there were nine categories: reprimand, treadwheel, hard labour by day and solitary confinement by night, solitary confinement on bread and water, hard labour on the roads, flogging, labouring in a chain gang, confinement at a penal station and execution. Convicts were also punished with privation of indulgences and demotion to a lower class and could have their sentences extended. By the 1840s, psychological torments like darkness, silence and isolation replaced physical punishments.



Breaking Stone

Breaking stones was a punishment reserved for the most incorrigible men. At Port Arthur, men were chained while they laboured. In May 1841 members of the stone-breaking gang planned to escape by cutting their irons with a concealed file. The plot was discovered and Patrick Minnighan suspected James Travis of being an informant and bludgeoned him with a hammer. Travis died in the hospital and Minnighan was executed.

Iron Collar

Female convicts could be fitted with iron collars that had two long prongs which prevented the wearer from sitting or lying down comfortably. Iron collars remained in use until the 1820s. Mary Evers was subjected to one for 28 days for abusing the constabulary. Some weighed as much as three kilograms.



Gag

A gag was a wooden bar put between the teeth and kept in place by a strap around the head. In July 1843 Jane Eskett was gagged at the Cascades Female Factory for riotous behaviour. Some gags were fitted with a breathing hole and forced down the wearer's throat. Reverend Thomas Rogers reported that as convicts struggled to breathe they emitted a 'low indistinct whistle'.

Hair Cropping

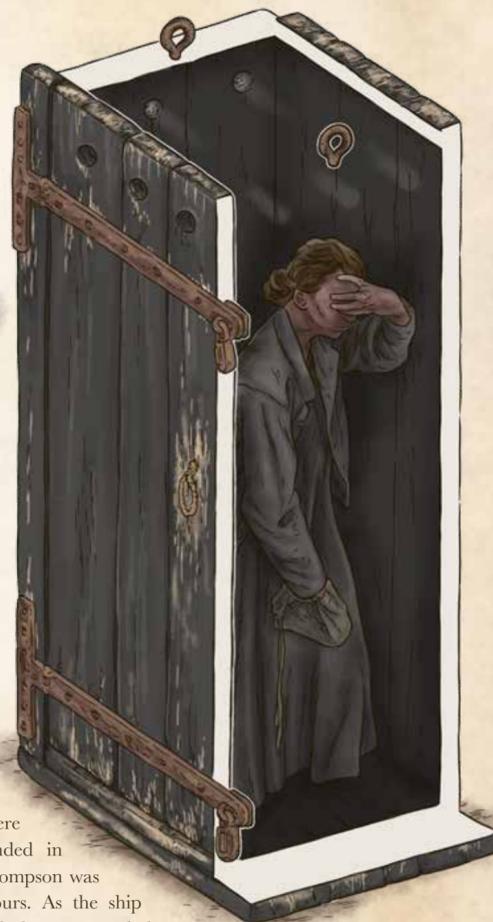
Female convicts could have their hair cut or their head shaved. Most women dreaded it but Ann Wilson said, 'I don't care if it is cut off fifty times!' The punishment was phased out when the authorities decided that defeminising women was not conducive to their reform. Punishing women while maintaining morality was a troubling problem for the authorities.

Stocks

Stocks were an adjustable wooden structure with holes for securing a person's feet. The aim was to publicly shame the victim and make their life miserable. In February 1840 Constable Jones copped 25 lashes for allowing a man in the stocks to puff on his pipe. The *Police Act* of 1837 ruled that a sentence in the stocks could not exceed eight hours. This was reduced to six hours in 1843. Stocks were used until the 1850s.

The Black Box

Convicts on transport ships could be confined to a small portable cell that was like a coffin. Stints in a 'black box', as it was known, ranged from a few hours to a few days. Offenders were forced to stand and at times were doused with water and suspended in midair. In 1841, William Thompson was suspended for three hours. As the ship rolled back and forth, he was tossed about and dunked in the ocean. Sailor John Montagu Smith reported that women were confined to the box on a daily basis. Smith himself was sent to the box for 12 hours. In the tropics, the heat was stifling and convicts could not be confined for more than four hours at a time.



Flogging

The first flogging in Van Diemen's Land took place in May 1803 when a marine named Edward Westwood received 24 lashes for dozing off at his post. Common sentences for male convicts were between 12 and 100 lashes for crimes such as insolence, drunkenness, neglect of duty and absconding. The maximum that could be awarded by a magistrate was 100 lashes, but an offence could be broken up into separate charges to increase the quantity. In December 1827 Robert Hansler was sentenced to 100 lashes

for absconding, another 100 for stealing the boat in which he escaped and a further 100 for the provisions he took. Female convicts were also flogged. In 1806, Elizabeth Murphy was given 25 lashes for writing an impudent letter. Juveniles received strokes across their buttocks and thighs, which was termed the breech. Regulating a flogging was difficult. Mark Jeffrey claimed to have received such a light flogging that it barely broke his skin. Thomas Berry bled after the second stroke and after the fourth, blood

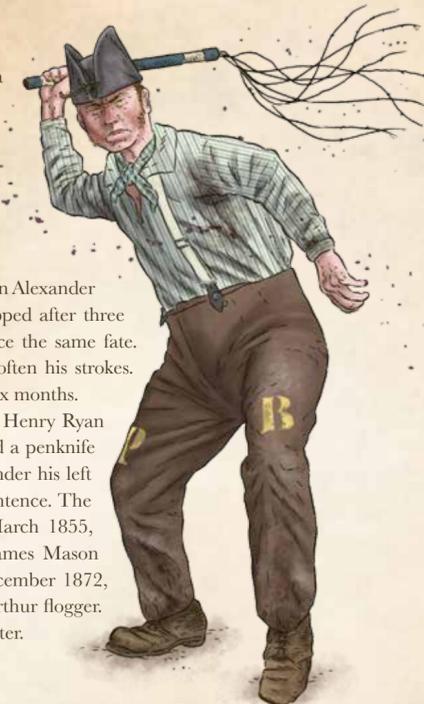
streamed into his shoes. If the wounds were not treated they could become infected, so salt, lard, lemon and bluestone were sometimes rubbed over the victim's back. Flogging could leave a person scarred for life. Some convicts bore the marks with pride, others with shame. Over time the punishment was phased out. The flogging of women ceased in 1820 and at Port Arthur flogging ended in 1848. But flogging was not officially outlawed in Australia until 1957.

The Flagellator

Flagellators were responsible for inflicting a flogging. They were selected from serving convicts of solid build, preferably with a military background. Flagellators differed in attitude and style. Alexander Fraser, known as Big Sandy, made a hole in the ground to keep his heel from slipping. Thomas Jeffries curled the thongs around his victims to tear at the flesh on the chest.

A flagellator could lighten the punishment. When Alexander Fraser flogged 13-year-old William Gates he stopped after three strokes but was ordered to continue or experience the same fate. In May 1834 John Hearn accepted a bribe to soften his strokes. He was flogged and confined to the barracks for six months.

Flagellators were, as a rule, unpopular. When Henry Ryan was about to be tied to the triangles, he produced a penknife and stabbed Alexander Adams, the flagellator, under his left eye. Adams recovered and Ryan received a life sentence. The term 'flagellator' was viewed as an insult. In March 1855, Benjamin Marsh was fined £2 for assaulting James Mason after he falsely called him a flagellator. In December 1872, James Hunt referred to Mark Jeffries as a Port Arthur flogger. Jeffries beat Hunt so badly that he died six days later.



The Triangle

A flogging frame, commonly called a triangle, was made from three pieces of scantling joined at the top to form a tripod. Victims were stripped to the waist or denuded completely and securely tied. Their limbs were splayed to keep the flesh on their back taut. Triangles were placed in the muster yard and positioned to ensure that all the convicts had a good view. The triangle was a dreaded object; William Derrincourt carted one to a kiln and incinerated it.

Cat o' Nine Tails

Traditionally a piece of plaited rope was unpicked to leave three strands, which were in turn unravelled to form a nine-tailed whipping device. Due to the parallel wounds inflicted it was likened to a cat's scratches and known as a 'cat o' nine tails', or simply a 'cat'. The handle of a standard military issue cat was made of wood and covered in blue fabric bound with whipcord. Embedded in the top were nine thongs. Each thong was 30 inches long and had a knot at the end. Cats at penal stations were more severe and known as 'thief's cats'. On Sarah Island, the cat was three times the thickness of the one in Hobart Town, and the flagellator dragged it through sand and dipped it in salt water after every fifth stroke. Sometimes the knots were strengthened with wire or wax, or lead was woven into the thongs. In 1832, following an inquiry into convict discipline, a 'regulation cat' was decided upon and made standard throughout the colony.



Bearing Witness

A doctor or surgeon attended each flogging. He could stop the procedure if the victim suffered severe blood loss or was close to death. But once the wounds were healed, victims were sometimes sentenced to receive the remaining lashes. When William Williams was sentenced to 100 lashes for robbery, the surgeon remitted the sentence to 75. While recovering in hospital, Williams was dragged back to the triangle and given the remainder because of his continual complaining. Dying on the triangle was not unheard of. In April 1822, John Ollery screamed for mercy before falling silent after 30 strokes. After another five, the surgeon pronounced him dead. It was rumoured that the last strokes had lashed his lifeless corpse, but the official report stated that he died in hospital. For the attempted murder of Constable Terry Thomas, Joseph Greenwood was sentenced to 100 lashes and death. He petitioned Governor Arthur, claiming that it was torture to flog a condemned man, but his pleas were in vain. At the time of his execution his back was still bleeding and, according to John Broxup, crawling with maggots. The Van Diemonian public were horrified, and the gruesome ordeal made headlines in Britain.