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## **11 Making their Mark: Young Offenders’ Life Histories and Social Networks.**

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I

Microhistory may focus on the small-scale – ‘the world in a grain of sand’ – but invariably it investigates events that have generated large bodies of sources, comprising multitudinous words.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that court cases have been the starting point for many of the ground-breaking works of microhistory.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, microhistory lends itself to crime history. The case study – its standard method – mirrors the trial process and coverage of it: the compilation and forensic scrutiny of evidence and deposition files; the adversarial claims of prosecution and defence; all poured over by the press before the court of popular opinion. Legal disputes can offer ample material for the ‘thick description’ microhistorians use to explore interactions and conflicts between individuals and the authorities.<sup>3</sup> They can also provide opportunities to ‘hear’ the voices of ordinary people, who rarely left first-

person testimony. Media reporting, similarly, offers rich pickings for microhistorians. Sensational cases, that stoked the ‘true crime’ genre, have enabled historians to unravel the cultural narratives that inform legal and media treatments of defendants and witnesses and to show how these have worked to mythologise criminal individuals and events.<sup>4</sup> But cases that attract such attention are atypical of the vast majority of prosecutions and convictions.<sup>5</sup> Overwhelmingly, these were – and still are – for minor offences that pass with scarcely any media comment. How can crime history investigate the ‘micro’ in cases where sources are scanty and when the words of defendants, accusers and witnesses were largely omitted from the documentary record?

In this chapter, I outline strategies that microhistorians might deploy to investigate the lives of obscure, petty offenders, and to reconstruct their social and cultural milieu. I focus on routine, everyday encounters with the criminal justice system in Great Yarmouth in the early Victorian years. Between 1839 and 1841, minor crimes and misdemeanours, heard summarily before a magistrate, led to eighty-three per cent of convictions at Great Yarmouth, but were seldom reported.<sup>6</sup> Even cases that went to trial at the Quarter Sessions received little more than half a line in the regional newspapers, except in a few extraordinary incidents that a reporter deemed comical or newsworthy.<sup>7</sup> To hear the voices of the labouring poor, who comprised the vast majority charged at Yarmouth, I turn instead to records produced in the prison, particularly the gaoler’s admissions registers and disciplinary log, and the daily journal of the Christian visitor who voluntarily taught inmates to read, write, and receive Biblical instruction. Records of quotidian life in nineteenth-century gaols have rarely survived in such detail, and yet, even here, inmates’ voices are only briefly and

occasionally reported, and always from the perspective of authority. By widening the scale to explore how individuals interacted in social space and the networks of familiarity they established, I seek to fuse micro and macro approaches and their respective viewpoints of proximity and distance.<sup>8</sup>

Since official documentation comprises the discourse and ideological perspectives of those who create them, Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon has argued recently that microhistorians should focus instead on first-person testimony or 'ego-documents' of the socially marginal, such as diaries and letters, and confine interpretation to the particular rather than the general.<sup>9</sup> To follow his approach, however, would mean overlooking the large majority of people who left no such testimony, and also neglecting how subalterns interact with authority and, sometimes, resist it. As James C. Scott has claimed, '...the powerless are often obliged to adopt a strategic pose in the presence of the powerful'.<sup>10</sup> In the dock, as Zoe Alker has shown, defendants may work hard to conform to approved expectations of behaviour or, conversely, defiantly live up to stereotype.<sup>11</sup> While subalterns 'ordinarily dare not contest the terms of their subordination openly', contends Scott, '[b]ehind the scenes they are likely to create and defend a social space in which offstage dissent to the official transcripts of power relations may be voiced.' This 'offstage dissent' marks 'a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant.'<sup>12</sup> Using ethnographic sources and techniques commonly deployed by microhistorians, Scott detects such 'hidden transcripts' in popular rituals, myths, folklore, rumours, and in code and gesture, as well as in written and spoken words.<sup>13</sup> This is a useful insight, for the poor made their mark in their actions as much as in their words.

In this chapter, I investigate how inmates made their mark in gaol by examining the teacher's accounts of their responses to activities designed to improve their character, and the gaoler's punishment records for evidence of how they subverted these activities or broke prison regulations. Their reports of inmates' reactions to incarceration and instruction offer tantalising glimpses of prisoners' attitudes and behaviour. However, to understand inmate responses from their own perspectives, rather than those charged with their discipline, we need to move outwards to reconstruct their family relationships and circumstances, and their peer networks inside and outside the gaol.<sup>14</sup> This involves examining their actions within social space, as well as their words. As David Green proposes, 'Excavating what was *done* rather than what was *said* is potentially a powerful way of understanding the complex relationships that underpinned social interaction but it depends on the ability to ascertain how individuals were connected to each other and the wider community through their repeated, everyday actions.'<sup>15</sup>

If we are to locate individuals within this wider frame, it is necessary to supplement the close reading of primary sources that is the usual approach of microhistory. Green, for example, uses networking tools and data analysis to reconstruct peer associations among London paupers, forged in refractory conduct in and outside the prison and workhouse in the 1840s.<sup>16</sup> This method involves identifying multiple social relationships and behavioural patterns that are not observable through textual analysis alone. Many social and cultural historians have tended to be wary of macroanalysis and, indeed, microhistory developed out of critiques of large-scale, quantitative approaches to historical enquiry.<sup>17</sup> However, as Tim Hitchcock and

Robert Shoemaker have claimed, to conduct a history from below out of the bureaucratic record we need ‘...to dismember the archives themselves, and reconstruct them with plebeian lives in mind.’<sup>18</sup> Through record linkage, group profiling and data analysis of multiple cases, it is possible, they show, to extrapolate patterns of shared behaviour and even how these vary and change by time and place. By reconstructing and comparing over three thousand London lives, drawn from various parish and criminal records, Hitchcock and Shoemaker have argued persuasively that plebeian Londoners drove changes in ‘...policing, justice and poor relief’ in the eighteenth-century, through the everyday tactics and survival strategies they adopted in their negotiations with governing actors and institutions.<sup>19</sup> ‘Distant reading’ techniques can expose, therefore, the agency of the poor and allow historians to detect the combined effects of their individual and collective actions.<sup>20</sup> Social and cultural historians have much to gain by integrating microscopic *and* macroscopic perspectives and techniques, as I demonstrate in this chapter.

Like much microhistory, my research began with close reading of printed records: the 1844 posthumous biographical sketch of the prison visitor Sarah Martin (1791-1843); a pioneer of prisoner rehabilitation who, unlike contemporary penal reformers, was a working woman - a dressmaker - who lived in close proximity with the labouring poor of Yarmouth.<sup>21</sup> Locating Martin’s surviving journals, my biographical interest in the visitor shifted to her interaction with inmates, and their relationships with each other.<sup>22</sup> Reduced to ‘offenders’ in the penal archive, I sought to recover their agency and humanity by examining their crimes and misdemeanours in the context of their ‘whole lives’, or what I can reconstruct of these from myriad sources. But can we derive historical meaning out of a single life plotted through the ten-

yearly tabulations of the census returns or records of births, marriages and deaths? What interpretative weight can we place on incidental anecdotes and fragments of 'voices' found in the archive?

The strategy I have developed is to interweave biographical reconstruction with prosopography, or group biography. By viewing individual lives in the context of their spatial location, social networks, and the circumstances and characteristics they shared with others, we can speculate not only on the possible causes and outcomes of their actions, but also on what was probable. I call this approach 'intimate reading': getting up close and personal with our subjects through immersive reading and extensive contextualisation. Record linkage lets us explore the relationships binding individuals and groups, and their interactions – no matter how unequal – with officialdom. Intimate reading is smaller in scope than the 'distant reading' methods practiced in the digital humanities, and is concerned with excavating 'deep' data on specific individuals rather than 'big' data on large aggregated groups. While the voices of the convicted were only rarely recorded, intimate reading can reveal how they made their mark in other ways.

In this chapter, I focus on two brothers, their encounters with Christian philanthropy and the criminal justice system, and what these reveal about their social networks, behaviour and identities. Just as in the previous chapter, I use genealogical sources to conduct life-course analysis and investigate the brothers' particular family, occupational, and offending histories but I also draw comparisons with the social profiles of young offenders like them, and with male youths as a cohort. To gain a wider perspective on the boys' journeys in and out of the penal regime, I draw on

three related data sets: the prison population at Yarmouth (1839-41), comprising 724 admissions; inmates punished for disciplinary infractions (1836-45); and the life-courses of twenty-six young, male convicts transported to Van Diemen's Land (1836-49), as well as transcripts of their tattoos.<sup>23</sup> Mapping the web of connections between the two brothers and their peers, in this way, gives us access to the 'hidden scripts' and 'offstage dissent' generated by the criminal justice process. It provides a framework to decode fragmentary scraps of evidence of words and actions, scattered across unconnected collections. Equally as important, it helps us interpret the gaps and silences in the archival trail.

## II

The prison visitor Sarah Martin became acquainted with the Jenkins family in 1839 following the release of Abraham Jenkins, aged sixteen-years old according to the gaoler, from his first three-month sentence for stealing a stone and a half of rope, a tin canister and a cork gender from the lugger *Ann*, a small fishing vessel. He was convicted with thirteen-years-old Joshua Artis, one of the lads subsequently transported with Abraham's younger brother, William, in 1845.<sup>24</sup> In October 1839, Sarah Martin reported approvingly on the conduct of Abraham and Joshua to the Prison Inspector, as examples of those who appeared 'reclaimed' in her Liberated Prisoners Book.<sup>25</sup> When Abraham arrived at the gaol, she had doubted his capacity for 'improvement'. His father was 'a sort of pedlar – a tinker' whose 'character is not correct' – and who, apparently, did not provide his son with a decent home and paternal supervision. Abraham's character was 'bad' but the teacher also observed his poor physical condition; 'dreadfully infested with vermin'.<sup>26</sup> (Likewise, the gaoler noted the boy was 'lousy', marked with small pox, and blind in the right eye).<sup>27</sup> He

had been living in 'hovels and outhouses' for two months, probably apart from his family, and making his way as a chip boy, hawking wood-chips from the ship-yards, with his fellow accomplice Joshua.<sup>28</sup> Yet, like many prisoners, Abraham jumped at the chance of a brief education and, not knowing the alphabet, 'found great interest in learning to read and write', taking 'great care of his books', and saying proudly 'I am never lazy only when I am at my lessons.'<sup>29</sup> 'Only' lazy at his lessons: was this an error in the teacher's note-taking, or an indication of the boy's ambivalence towards his instruction? Either way, his behaviour at trial, convinced Sarah Martin he was not 'morally improved' for he appeared 'undaunted' and 'spoke improperly' to the witness giving evidence against him. After the teacher reprimanded the boy and denied him lessons for a day or two, he proved 'extremely diligent', repeating thirty verses and a hymn he had memorized.<sup>30</sup>

Invariably, the visitor's 'observations' of inmates' characters were exacting and judgemental, characteristic of the evangelical tone of contemporary prison philanthropy.<sup>31</sup> Yet her assessments were also informed by over twenty years' experience of working with inmates and habitual offenders. Of the 'liberated prisoners' Sarah Martin believed 'reclaimed' in 1839, only two adults were subsequently reconvicted. By contrast, half the juveniles she included in her list were recommitted.<sup>32</sup> Young repeat offenders formed a sizable proportion of the gaol's average residency of about thirty inmates and, as the disciplinary record attests, they were its most troublesome residents.<sup>33</sup> Between 1839 and 1841, forty-one per cent of prisoners at Yarmouth were 18 or under. Juvenile offenders were the most likely to return to prison. Nearly two-thirds of repeat offenders were under 21 and, of these, forty-five per cent were under 18. The mean age of lads transported to Van Diemen's

Land when first imprisoned was fifteen.<sup>34</sup> On average, they had been imprisoned 4.2 times before the charge that led to their transportation, mostly before they were 21. Two-thirds of their convictions were for petty theft.<sup>35</sup>

The prison visitor's wary assessments of inmates' characters were balanced, nonetheless, by practical efforts to oversee their return to the community and continuing good behaviour. Martin, for instance, promised to support prisoners who seemed committed to going straight, inviting them to visit her or send letters about their progress. Robert Harrod, subsequently transported with William, was given a basket of herrings to hawk and a jacket when he found work aboard a ship. The prison visitor consulted his mother about his behaviour and was pleased to hear he 'was going on rightly'.<sup>36</sup> Surviving extracts from Martin's *Liberated Prisoners Book* indicate how former inmates and their relatives could react positively to this philanthropic intervention that tied many over till they found regular work. The responses of the Jenkins family hint at more instrumental approaches to Christian guidance and the limits of individual charity in preventing destitution.<sup>37</sup>

Sarah Martin told the Inspector that, following his discharge, Abraham Jenkins had called on his former teacher three times and found work in a fish-office while hoping 'to go to sea'.<sup>38</sup> She approved of this occupation, believing the disciplined life aboard ship helped many youths to settle down.<sup>39</sup> She visited his family, revising her estimation of Abraham's father. The tinker was ill 'with a wife and large family in the deepest poverty'.<sup>40</sup> The visitor seems to have tended to John Jenkins and was at his side when he died (apparently following his religious conversion), for she composed

a poem, 'The Believer's Death', preserving the 'parting words' of this 'holy and good man':

He said, 'I suffer, but the God of heaven,  
Has high support and boundless comfort given,'  
The name of Jesus, to his spirit brought  
A universe of joy beyond created thought.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps his deathbed conversion was the tinker's insurance policy for the wife and children he left behind, but if Sarah Martin continued assisting his family it was not enough to keep them from the workhouse. When John's widow Elizabeth applied for poor relief she was removed to her parish of settlement with her children, including her youngest son, born shortly before her husband died.<sup>42</sup> This may explain why the family does not appear in the 1841 Census, but they made their way back to Yarmouth, where Elizabeth had raised her family and where William had been born in 1827.<sup>43</sup> When the two eldest brothers were committed to gaol together in February 1842, Abraham, then about 19, gave his occupation as fisherman. William had been working as a labourer and declared his age to be 12, though christening records reveal he was 14 years old.<sup>44</sup>

The brothers were arrested on suspicion of breaking into an unoccupied house and stealing brass bells, doorplates and tills with five other boys aged between 12 and 15. Re-encountering Abraham, Sarah Martin wearily noted her lengthy accounts of the lad, adding tersely: 'He has entirely learned to read and write in prison but fails in following the religious and moral instruction which has been imparted.'<sup>45</sup> The teacher's Everyday Book for 1842 has not survived, so we cannot know if Abraham

knuckled back down to moral education but, in the month he spent in prison before acquittal at trial, he seems not to have attracted the attention of the gaoler or warranted punishment, for there are no references to him in the disciplinary log. After release he was never caught reoffending. Despite extensive searching in genealogical databases and online newspapers, I have been unable to find any information about his subsequent life or death. In other cases, tracking prisoners through parish and census documents can suggest the circumstances that facilitated desistance from crime. For young men, these tended to involve initiation into a trade and a degree of stability offered by regular employment and the responsibilities of marriage and family life.<sup>46</sup> By the 1851 Census, however, the Jenkins family was no longer in Yarmouth. Compromised by poverty and the loss of their father, the siblings seem to have gone their separate ways and cannot be located.

Sarah Martin's observations on William, the younger Jenkins brother she had met when visiting Abraham, cast doubt on the family's uptake of their father's purported Christian conversion. William possessed neither religion nor education, she recalled, finding him 'Remarkably quick in natural ability and clever but refractory, fearless and illdisposed [sic]. His bad behaviour in prison exposed him to frequent punishments.'<sup>47</sup> Like many first-timers, who Martin thought had yet to acquire the criminal traits of dissembling and concealment, William 'spontaneously' confessed the escapade that led to his conviction but she did not record the story.<sup>48</sup> When the case was heard at the Quarter Sessions a month later, he was the only boy convicted but neither the court records nor newspapers provide details of the trial. Examination of the offences and family circumstances of other juveniles, with whom William and Abraham

associated, illuminate the challenges faced by poor boys as they negotiated the transition from childhood to manhood.

### III

In the following discussion, information about juvenile boys in the gaol records (1842-44) is compared with the convict registers for twenty-six Yarmouth lads, sentenced to transportation (1836-49) and exiled to Van Diemen's Land where, on arrival, they answered questions on their former offences, occupations, and family.<sup>49</sup> The names and whereabouts of their relatives can be cross-referenced with parish and census data. All had begun offending before the age of 21.

Five boys were initially remanded with William and Abraham in 1842 for house-breaking and stealing. The two youngest had been committed before and would re-offend. Neither James Barnes (12) nor Henry Patterson (13) appears to have been in school or employment. Only Richard Reynolds (15), released after a few days, and William Creak (14) acquitted at trial, would not be recommitted, though the latter's elder brother John became a repeat offender. The gaoler listed these two boys as labourers, like William Jenkins. Labouring jobs for boys were invariably irregular and low-paid. Thomas Farrell (14) had been an errand boy, probably for his parents who were listed as dealers in the 1841 Census.<sup>50</sup> Like most of his mates, Thomas hoped to go to sea. His subsequent offences occurred between fishing voyages, when boys had time on their hands and little money in their pockets, as was the case for Richard Reynolds and Abraham Jenkins, recently returned from sea.<sup>51</sup>

A common way of boys earning a little money was by scavenging: digging up manure, sand and soil, or scouring the docks for rope, wood and metal to sell on. Almost certainly this had been Abraham's intention when working as a chip boy and first arrested for stealing rope. On entering the gaol, he surrendered his property - 'a green bag with some small stumps of iron' - that he was collecting to sell or using to play games. Joshua Artis gave up a small bag, a knife, and a halfpenny.<sup>52</sup> Similar patterns of irregular work are found in the criminal histories of the twenty-six convict lads, whose brushes with the law began after they had completed what little schooling their parents could afford. Joshua Artis, who could read and write at 13, was atypical; the majority had basic reading skills or knew only a few letters when they entered prison.<sup>53</sup> Most had yet to begin full-time work, though a third of the convicts had served some kind of an apprenticeship before transportation, usually in their father's or elder brothers' trade.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps the most significant characteristic shared by boys who became repeat offenders or were transported is separation from parents, usually as a result of orphanage. Of the five boys arrested in 1842 with the recently bereaved Jenkins brothers, only Thomas Farrell and Richard Reynolds appear to have been living with both their parents at the time of the 1841 Census.<sup>55</sup> The four Creak siblings, aged between 3 and 15, were lodging with a young married couple and their infant children; the eldest boy and girl working respectively as labourer and female servant.<sup>56</sup> James Barnes appears to have been taken in by a tailor and his wife.<sup>57</sup> All these children may have had a parent working away, as did Henry Patterson when his mother died in 1839 and his father left his children in lodgings, with a woman Sarah Martin believed to be a prostitute. Most of the Patterson children began

offending shortly after their mother's death, as did Henry, first imprisoned in 1840 for stealing apples from a garden. He was now in prison for the eighth time and was sentenced to transportation, a few months later, for stealing a pair of boots.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, two-thirds of the convict lads had lost a parent, often shortly before their offending began. Over half (fifty-five per cent) had lost their father, without whose wage most labouring families faced destitution. Moreover, fathers were the relatives best placed to introduce young males into the labour force. Thirty-nine per cent of convict lads had lost their mother, while a fifth had no surviving parent.<sup>59</sup> Nearly a third had been convicted as rogues and vagabonds, some of whom had been homeless or in the workhouse.<sup>60</sup> When William was released from gaol in April 1842, he was handed over to the parish Relieving Officer.<sup>61</sup> Some families were unable or unwilling to accommodate a son who failed to bring in regular income or brought shame on the household. Robert Harrod, transported with William, had been living in his step-father's house. At twelve-years-old, he was hauled before the magistrates by his mother for 'wandering from home'.<sup>62</sup> Robert was one of five convict lads who had been prosecuted by a relative: one measure of the strain evident on these families.<sup>63</sup>

With family support networks acutely compromised, friendships among peers were crucial for boys as they sought entry into the adult world of male labour and companionship. In these groups, they tried on and acted out the masculine identity codes that operated in the gender-segregated occupational structure of the port. Searching for employment on the peripheries of the labour market, work, play and offending segued into each other. In August 1843, recently returned from a sea

voyage but without work, William Jenkins was sentenced to nine months for stealing rope from fishing boats with Charles Tunmore, another lad from a family of siblings who were repeatedly imprisoned.<sup>64</sup> In Van Diemen's Land, William attributed this conviction not to stealing rope, but to 'setting boats adrift'; had this been play, scavenging, pilfering, or a mix of all three?<sup>65</sup> William was arrested only once on his own, suspected of stealing a child's frock, shortly after his first imprisonment.<sup>66</sup> While all but one of the convict lads had stood trial alone, a third of their prosecutions were for joint offending and probably an even greater proportion of their undiscovered crimes and misdemeanours were carried out in groups.<sup>67</sup> Some knew each other through work but many met or firmed up acquaintances in prison. Their friendships and rivalries can be traced through the admissions register and the gaoler's list of their disciplinary infractions, a rich source for exposing 'hidden scripts'.

#### IV

Lacking control in the outside world, William Jenkins asserted himself in prison, notching up, like fellow inmate Joshua Artis, some eighteen punishments, which was far more than other prisoners accumulated. Of the other twenty-one convict lads whose full disciplinary record is known, for instance, a third were never punished during their imprisonment at Yarmouth. Two-thirds had been disciplined at least once, and together, they had averaged 3.6 punishments each.<sup>68</sup> As with other lads, William's infractions were associated with boisterous spirits and staking his place in the inmate pecking order; fourteen of his punishments were for larking about, being loud, or jostling with other boys.<sup>69</sup> Within a week of his first confinement, William was deprived of cheese for being noisy at night and soon he would spend the day in solitary for noisy conduct with James Barnes.<sup>70</sup> Both lost their cheese allowance

again, with fellow accomplice Henry Patterson, for singing and calling out to each other in the early morning before cells were unlocked.<sup>71</sup> By far the greatest number of punishments doled out by the gaoler was for noisy behaviour (invariably singing, shouting or swearing), which signalled the determination of inmates to communicate with each other by calling to prisoners in other parts of the gaol.<sup>72</sup> Raucous behaviour was not only a challenge to the gaoler's authority, for it could also annoy inmates trying to sleep or work. In 1844, adult prisoners complained they could not concentrate on reading because of 'unnecessary talking' between William Jenkins and John Present. The gaoler reprimanded the two lads and warned they would be punished for further disruptiveness.<sup>73</sup>

Playfulness frequently landed boys in trouble. During his first imprisonment, William Jenkins was sent to solitary for three days and deprived of cheese for blacking another boy's face with soot.<sup>74</sup> In subsequent confinements, he would be punished for climbing on the grating above the dayroom door and with another lad for 'wearing their dress in an unsightly manner'.<sup>75</sup> While these minor infractions suggest youthful high spirits, larking about could quickly descend into conflict between boys as they jostled for status in the inmate pecking order. When still new to prison, for instance, William received a kicking from repeat offender James Bowles (age 23), who was consequently confined for three days on bread and water.<sup>76</sup> Later, William served the same punishment for 'pushing and throwing things at Thomas Pyeman' and, again, for fighting with two boys.<sup>77</sup> In both play-acting and serious disputes, lads sought to prove the same physical 'hardness' they needed to demonstrate in the streets to hold themselves as men.<sup>78</sup>

Though most offenders were sentenced to 'hard labour', the gaol made little provision for employment and a treadwheel was not installed until 1845.<sup>79</sup> 'Useful work', however, supplied by the prison visitor, played a crucial part in keeping inmates occupied and orderly outside their lessons. While Sarah Martin set female prisoners to needlework and adult men to various tasks, such as carving cutlery out of bone and straw-hat making, she employed boys in mending books and sewing patchwork of which, 'they do not tire, but are every day asking for more pieces to sew together'.<sup>80</sup> In mending books for workhouse children and sewing items for the needy (one boy was employed making a quilt cover for a poor child), Martin hoped the juveniles would learn the value of thinking of and helping others.<sup>81</sup> Needlework, culturally associated with feminised labour, quiet contemplation and confinement, was one of the ways the visitor sought to educate boys in an evangelical model of Christian manliness, aimed at labouring boys and men. Also promoted by the religious tracts and magazines she gave them, this approved masculinity was the antithesis of the street-fighting, street-talking man: homely, industrious, dutiful and unassuming.<sup>82</sup> Sewing, however, had alternative meanings in the seaport, where it was a skill learned by mariners who needed to mend both nets and their own clothes while away at sea. During William's first imprisonment, Sarah Martin noted the boys enjoyed patchworking since 'it tends to secure order and quietness, as well as because it teaches them to sew, so that they may be able to mend their clothes and make some.'<sup>83</sup>

Evidence from the teacher's journals strongly suggests some lads welcomed the break from the loud posturing of inmate interactions that her quiet occupations, lessons and story-reading sessions afforded.<sup>84</sup> The men pleaded with the teacher to

supply the boys more work since it kept them quiet and orderly, allowing the adults to concentrate on lessons, but she was reluctant to overindulge the juveniles in pleasurable labour, lest they took it for granted.<sup>85</sup> Though it helped subdue her volatile scholars, she regretted this employment was not matched by more onerous tasks:

these boys need some occupation here, of another character, and of a less amusing nature, viz. peremptory, engaged, fixed hours of labour. The greatest number of these boys are better fed than when out of prison; the cleanliness they are obliged to observe, and regular hours for sleep, if annoying at the first moment, soon promote comfort; so that in the absence of occupation of a deterring kind, these boys may well be always full of spirits, just like school boys on a play-ground.<sup>86</sup>

William Jenkins, however, was not content that his pleasure should depend on the good will of his teacher and perhaps balked at the deferential manly ideal she advocated. Towards the end of his first imprisonment, he was found to have secreted a bag of patchwork and needles in his sleeping cell. While the teacher saw patchwork and the provision of storybooks, and pens and paper as rewards for good conduct, to many inmates these were items of currency to trade in their illicit economy, or to keep for themselves for subversive use. When the turnkey and teacher discovered the missing bag, William attempted to burn his loot and, when prevented, was insolent to Miss Martin, for which he was locked up for two days on bread and water.<sup>87</sup>

The boy's insubordination on this occasion suggests his refractory conduct was not just related to rowdy playfulness but marked his challenging stance towards authority

and discipline, and perhaps to the domesticated ideal of Christian boyhood the teacher instilled. Already he had been punished for refusing to clean the day ward.<sup>88</sup> Towards the end of his last sentence at Yarmouth, he aggressively defied the gaoler, having already broken a pane of glass and been 'disrespectful' when the prisoners were reprimanded for the 'dirty state' of the ward. Instructed to take his 'night utensil' (presumably a chamber pot) to his cell, he rounded on the gaoler: "...you may take the tub yourself and be b-----d for I will not take it" and '...put his face in mine and in a rough tone of voice mocked me.'<sup>89</sup>

William Jenkins's punishment record illuminates how some inmates vociferously challenged official regulations governing conduct, communication and obedience, and the informal moral discipline enforced by the Christian teacher. It is only by placing these actions in the wider context of prisoner conduct, however, that we can appreciate the general responses of inmates to the disciplinary environment. The years 1842-4, during which William was confined, saw punishments doubling in number. These had risen steadily since the late 1830s (when a new gaoler was appointed who strove to implement recent statutory regulations governing prisoner conduct), only to fall by half following the introduction of the treadmill in 1845.<sup>90</sup> Yet even in these more turbulent years, only a minority of inmates – typically juvenile boys – were disciplined. Most, it seems, kept their heads down so that, if they did not follow regulations to the letter, at least they avoided attracting the notice of their watchful teacher and the guards. Moreover, prisoners monitored and moderated each other's conduct to avoid conflict among inmates and the withdrawal of potentially profitable activities supplied by the teacher.

By contrast, acting up, throwing their weight around, and filling the prison with their voices enabled the boys to exert control over their environment while demonstrating the toughness expected of men in the heavy and often dangerous occupations of the sea-faring port. Larking about and tests of daring, in and outside gaol, were among the ways they gained entry into the convivial world of male labour, sport and pleasure. However, such unruly behaviour could also antagonise family and community members as well as land them in trouble with the authorities. By 1844, William Jenkins and his mates may have burned too many bridges, for they were picked up near Norwich for stealing from a dwelling house, having wandered from their native town. At trial, when they were sentenced to transportation for stealing £4, 6s from a public house, the court drew on the Yarmouth gaoler's testimony about their previous convictions: Joshua Artis (9 times); Robert Harrod (11 times); and William Jenkins (3 times at Yarmouth and a recent committal in Norwich).<sup>91</sup>

## V

Convict records, compiled on each exile transported to Van Diemen's Land, often contain a 'hidden script' in the description of their tattoos. These 'embodied scripts' – as we might call them - provide an alternative perspective on the lads' antics and associations. In the marks they etched on their bodies, we see how convicts - rather than others - viewed themselves, their passions, and close connections. Tattooing was one of the ways Yarmouth boys marked their passage into the rites of adult masculinity. At least twenty-four of the twenty-six convict lads were tattooed when they arrived in Van Diemen's Land. Probably most began adorning themselves long before they left Yarmouth. The tattooed ring worn by Robert Harrod when he was 12

(the youngest prisoner I have discovered with markings), no doubt symbolized his entry into the circle of night-time friends with whom he strayed from home.<sup>92</sup>

Tattoo parlours did not develop until the 1870s so the lads' tattoos must have been made by themselves or by companions. Some convicts will have begun making their marks in gaol and continued to embellish their body art aboard the transport ships, where tattooing was a major past-time and act of sociability.<sup>93</sup> In Yarmouth Gaol, where tattooing was prohibited, occasionally the gaoler caught prisoners in the act. Thomas Farrell, one of William's early accomplices, spent a day in the cells 'for endeavouring to make some marks on the Boy Bowles' arm by pricking it &c'.<sup>94</sup> We do not know if this was the first time these lads experimented with tattooing but when Thomas returned a year later for his sixth imprisonment, his initials, T.F., had been scored on his left arm and T on his left hand. By then he had served his first berth at sea when, most likely, he proudly marked his initiation into life on the ocean with the anchor tattoo he was now sporting.<sup>95</sup> William Jenkins may also have been discovered in the midst of a tattooing experiment when the gaoler interrupted a group of boys pricking the letter H into a piece of bread.<sup>96</sup> Possibly he had been sourcing do-it-yourself tattooing implements when he purloined the bag of needles from the prison visitor.<sup>97</sup>

Most boys began their tattoos with simple, easily achieved marks rather than elaborate designs, such as dots that probably signalled friendship groups. Sixteen convict lads sported dots, including William who had a row of dots on one arm and five dots between forefinger and thumb. Initials and names were the most common form of tattoo, often combined with a figure representing the person they named.

Typically, sailors tattooed their names to ensure their bodies could be identified if drowned; a practice many convicts adopted.<sup>98</sup> William placed his initial W next to a man's head, perhaps symbolising his dead father or the man he hoped to become. The man's face was illuminated by the sun and placed next to the anchor and cable, signs of faith and safe passage. The initials HL were repeated three times, either a love-attachment or a companion. Apart from the self, initials usually represented lovers, relatives, or friends, indicating the strength of these attachments despite the highly compromised circumstances of the boys' familial networks. Isaac Riches, prosecuted by his parents for stealing from his mother, portrayed all his family, including his father smoking and drinking and two men 'arm in arm', probably the brother with whom he was transported.<sup>99</sup> John Newstead tattooed the names of a group of boys with whom he was convicted and the one-time sweetheart he was imprisoned for assaulting.<sup>100</sup>

Their body art depicted the sports and past-times enjoyed by Yarmouth's labouring men and boys. Probably the fowls (or cocks) on Thomas Bowles's left arm and hand signalled poaching, or cockfighting and gaming.<sup>101</sup> Robert Harrod had a dog on his right arm, a symbol of companionship that may also have denoted a passion for racing or poaching.<sup>102</sup> In prison, the boys devised their own blood sports by chasing mice and killing flies.<sup>103</sup> Gambling was an integral part of masculine culture. On admission, inmates handed over their gaming implements, but devised substitutes in gaol which were regularly confiscated from the wards. His tattooed draft board and snake conveyed John Newstead's game spirit in the battle of chance and his attachment to the fatalistic outlook of the labouring poor, as did the suns and half moons, hearts and darts - the symbols of luck and ill-fortune - many convicts wore.<sup>104</sup>

In their body adornment, the boys celebrated and commemorated their attachment and loyalty to family and friends, their town and its way of life. Maritime insignia depicted the sea-faring trades many aspired to join. Only six convict lads described themselves as 'labourers' in Van Diemen's Land. Instead most gave the trade in which he had been apprenticed or that his male relatives pursued, thus linking him back to the life he had envisioned. William stated he was a seaman, like his brother and the man with the boat in his tattoos. Both the tattooed designs the convicts marked on their bodies during the voyage, and the statements they made about their occupations at its end, can be seen as the means of preserving self-identity in the face of banishment from the world they knew. How did these identities endure or change as they adapted to exile?

## VI

After convicts left Yarmouth it becomes more difficult to sustain an 'intimate reading', when their actions and life choices can no longer be deduced from the circumstances and patterns of behaviour of a wider known cohort. On the transport ship *Theresa* the three Yarmouth lads – Jenkins, Artis and Harrod - encountered another evangelical teacher, Colin Arrott Browning, the ship surgeon responsible for their moral as well as physical welfare. Browning organised prisoners into small classes, each supervised by an orderly and literate man.<sup>105</sup> It is possible that Henry Lavery, who could read and write, was assigned responsibility for teaching William. Had the Yarmouth boy found an alternative father-figure in this forty-five year-old gardener and groom from Worcester, who had left behind a wife and four children? If so, this could explain the tattooed initials 'HL' with which the lad had marked himself

three times.<sup>106</sup> At the end of the voyage, the surgeon described Jenkins's conduct as 'good', although despite nearly three-years of prison schooling, the lad could only read on arrival in Van Diemen's Land. At 5 feet 3½ inches, and just shy of eighteen years old, he will have been near his full height.<sup>107</sup>

Few convicts, whatever their age or sex, served their sentence without getting into trouble with the authorities. In a penal colony considered a prison without walls, their movements were closely monitored.<sup>108</sup> Yet despite his turbulent history at Yarmouth Gaol, William Jenkins's disciplinary record is surprisingly light. Towards the end of his fifteen months probation as a 'government servant' in a work gang, he was noted for 'disobedience' several times and had a month added to his probation for being 'absent without leave', one of the most common forms of misconduct. A couple of days later, he was sent to solitary for fourteen days for 'making threatening language to a fellow prisoner and ill-treating him.' But, after he was assigned to a sheep-farmer at Hamilton in the High Plains, north-west of Hobart, he was reprimanded just once for 'being in the township without a pass'. By July 1849 he received his ticket-of-leave and was free to find his own employment, provided he did not leave the colony. In January 1852 he received his Certificate of Freedom.<sup>109</sup>

Locating former convicts after they exited the penal system can be difficult, especially if they were not caught reoffending and had a common name. I trawled exhaustively through birth, marriage, and death indexes for several William Jenkins, and through ship departures to see if he headed for the gold fields in Victoria, where most of his convict mates from Yarmouth chanced their luck when they obtained their freedom. Then finally I found him by reading every newspaper article including

the name 'William Jenkins' because, like me, he searched for his family. Over four days in 1874 he placed advertisements in Tasmania's leading newspaper:

JENKINS, EDWARD AND ABRAHAM.

Information wanted as to the whereabouts of the above named parties,  
last heard of (being shipwrecked, but saved) at New Zealand,  
about thirty years ago.

Address, WILLIAM JENKINS, River Dee, 3736<sup>110</sup>

In my archival quests and digital searches I had missed William Jenkins, for he appears in the marriage register as 'Jenkins', wedded in 1863 at the minister's house in Bothwell, near Hamilton, where he had been assigned to sheep-farmers. He still had a hazy sense of his own age which was recorded as thirty-three. His bride, Mary Stock, was just seventeen.<sup>111</sup> Their first child, William, had been born in 1861.<sup>112</sup> In all they would have nine children, several bearing the names of Williams's birth family. Neither bride, nor groom, nor their witnesses, signed their names in the marriage register, their marks suggesting none could write.<sup>113</sup>

Mary had been born in Hamilton, the daughter of convicts who settled there in the 1830s. A labourer and ploughman from Essex, Joseph Stock had agricultural experience to turn his hand to cattle-farming.<sup>114</sup> On arrival in the colony, Elizabeth Kepax from Worcester was listed as a house servant of washing and ironing, and a prostitute.<sup>115</sup> Arriving in Van Diemen's Land a few years before William, they will have been his near contemporaries. Almost certainly, they were among the former convicts who befriended the young man and helped him adapt to the rural life of the Central Highlands, where many emancipated convicts chose to remain. When William Jenkins married, he was listed as 'an eating house keeper', an occupation

that suggests conviviality. Had young Mary been working as his servant when she became pregnant? He made a good catch. The year before Mary gave birth, William had purchased 838½ acres overlooking the River Dee on the road between Hamilton and Marlborough. In 1871 he purchased a further 241 acres.<sup>116</sup> He may also have continued ducking and diving, however, for though never prosecuted after securing his freedom, he was named during his brother-in-law's trial for cattle rustling from one of the large landowners to whom William had been assigned.<sup>117</sup> Had he just got better at covering his tracks? When William died, of inflammation of the bowels at the house of his father-in-law in 1883, his occupation was recorded as farmer.<sup>118</sup> His death was reported in several newspapers. The funeral procession left from the Bridge Inn to the Church. The Hamilton correspondent recalled a man well-known, liked and respected:

Another old resident of the district, Mr. William Jenkins, who for many years resided at the Dee, New Country, has passed away amongst us. A large number of people yesterday followed his remains to their last resting place at the Ouse, where his body was interred in the Church of England Cemetery.<sup>119</sup>

Sometimes, one fragment can provide the missing link to connect a chain of otherwise isolated sources. In this case, it is an advertisement, placed in a newspaper, which links the middle-aged farmer back to the rowdy, gregarious boy who first entered gaol with his elder brother over three decades earlier. We cannot know if William Jenkins made contact with his brothers, and can only speculate how he had known of their shipwreck: Were they heading for New Zealand or Australia? Had they planned to join William when he was sentenced to exile? Had he stayed in occasional correspondence with family in England, despite his inability to write?

What made William search in 1874? The man's experience as a convict servant, eating-house owner, and farmer in the High Plains of Van Diemen's Land, was far removed from the sea-faring life he had imagined, back in Yarmouth. But a connection had remained, if only in memory, with the family and life from which he had been forcibly parted. In its formal wording, the advertisement does not quite give us the old convict's 'voice' but, in its hopefulness, it conveys the strength of those attachments and his feelings.

## VII

Reconstructing the outline of a life from scraps of evidence, made in different times and places, can yield more than isolated anecdotes and disembodied voices. Using record linkage, we can begin to interpret the experiences and subjective identities of boys and young men, cast by contemporary discourse as 'idle rogues' and 'artful dodgers'.<sup>120</sup> By plotting their movements, we can uncover their occupation of social space and the relationships and networks they forged there. In the penal records on their behaviour we may not hear the actual words spoken in their (not always) 'hidden scripts', but we can retrieve something of the tenor of their often loud and raucous 'off-stage (and on-stage) dissent' that disturbed and provoked authority. At Great Yarmouth, male juvenile offences closely correlated with the place of adolescent boys on the peripheries of the port's casual labour market, and opportunities it afforded for unsupervised recreation and petty theft. Most convict lads had experienced parental loss and poverty; sometimes family conflict, too. Peer groups formed as supplements and alternatives to kinship ties and were cemented by male camaraderie and rivalries, played out in the streets and prison wards. Most lads ceased offending as they approached their mid- to late-twenties, whether it was

in Yarmouth or Van Diemen's Land, when they found the means to support themselves or formed families that stabilised them.

By intimately reading qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources, we can begin to contextualise and interpret fragmentary surviving evidence on individuals, who were only briefly and occasionally noted by figures of officialdom and authority, and whose lives and behaviour they often dimly understood. It is uncommon for microhistories to deploy quantitative analysis for, in current practice, most social and cultural historians focus on close readings of primarily textual and discursive evidence. Tracking the experience of individuals and their networks over time, however, reveals patterns in their behaviour and associations that rarely become apparent when tracing an individual in isolation through a single set of sources. Historians, suggests Hannu Salmi, citing Stephen Greenblatt, can 'give their work "the touch of the real" by tracing the situations, feelings, and reactions that were possible for contemporaries, even if their existence cannot be directly read from the sources.' Intimate reading, I would add, permits us to surmise not only what was possible, but also what was probable.<sup>121</sup> Characteristics and experiences shared by a distinct group or network, such as the prison and convict lads examined here, allow us to speculate on the gaps in the records that sketch out a life, while tantalising traces of individual voices and actions can be used to speak for other hidden lives.

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and the online conversations curated by the Many-Headed Monster Blog, July-August 2015, <https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/voices-of-the-people/>, where 'Captured Voices', an illustrated short version of this chapter can be viewed <https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2015/08/07/captured-voices-2/>. I am especially grateful to David R. Green for sharing his work on social networking and to Zoe Alker and Lucinda Matthews-Jones for their perceptive comments on an earlier draft.

<sup>1</sup> W. Blake (c. 1801-3) "'Auguries of Innocence" - On Microhistory and the Small-scale', see B.S. Gregory (1999) 'Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life', *History and Theory*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 100-10 and D. Bell (2002) 'Total History and Microhistory: The French and Italian Paradigms', in L. Kramer and S. Maza (eds) *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 262-76.

<sup>2</sup> C. Geertz (1973) 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in his work *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books), pp. 3-30. For examples: N. Zemon Davis (1983) *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) and R. Darnton (1985) *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books).

<sup>3</sup> Geertz (1973) 'Thick Description'.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance, readings of Jack Sheppard's celebrity in P. Linebaugh (1991) *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen Lane) and M. Buckley (2002) 'Sensations of Celebrity: *Jack Sheppard* and the Mass Audience', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 423-64. For the cultural narratives surrounding Jack the Ripper, see J.R. Walkowitz (1992) *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago).

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<sup>5</sup> Recent examples include investigations of Victorian women prosecuted for murder, whose trials exposed contemporary class and gender norms and influenced the rise of sensation in popular fiction and journalism: see K. Summerscale (2008) *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher: A Shocking Murder and the Undoing of a Great Victorian Detective* (New York: Walker & Company); E. Gordon and G. Nair (2009) *Murder and Morality in Victorian Britain: The Story of Madeleine Smith* (Manchester: Manchester University Press) and K. Colquhoun (2014) *Did She Kill Him? A Victorian Tale of Deception, Adultery and Arsenic* (London: Little Brown).

<sup>6</sup> Based on Norfolk Record Office, Great Yarmouth Gaol Registers, December 1838-December 1850 (Y/L2 9), for the three years 1839-41. 107 cases were heard at the Quarter Sessions out of 641 admissions for crime and misdemeanours. A further 83 admissions were on charges of debt. The total number of admissions in the period was 724. All extant records from Great Yarmouth Gaol are held at the Norfolk Record Office, Norwich (hereafter Norfolk RO).

<sup>7</sup> For examples, see H. Rogers (2012) 'Singing in Gaol: Christian Instruction and Inmate Culture in the Nineteenth Century', *Prison Service Journal*, Vol. 199, pp. 35-43, at p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> For an insightful debate on scale and perspective in historical enquiry, see J. Brewer (2010) 'Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 87-109 and responses by P. Hudson (2010) 'Closeness and Distance', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 375-85 and F. de Vivo (2010) 'Prospect or Refuge? Microhistory, History on the Large Scale', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 387-97.

<sup>9</sup> S.G. Magnússon (2015) 'Tales of the Unexpected: The "Textual Environment", Ego-Documents and a Nineteenth-Century Icelandic Love Story – An Approach in

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Microhistory', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 77-94, at p. 77, p. 79 and p. 89.

<sup>10</sup> J.C. Scott (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), p. xii.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Alker (2014) 'When High and Low Collide: Gender and Respectability in the mid-Victorian Courtroom' - Street Violence in Mid-Victorian Liverpool (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Liverpool John Moores University), pp. 214-44.

<sup>12</sup> Scott (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>13</sup> For an insightful survey of the influence of ethnography and anthropology on microhistory, see W. Pooley (29 September 2015) 'Native to the Past: History, Anthropology and Folklore' in *Past and Present* [Virtual Issue], No. 229 at <http://past.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2015/09/29/pastj.gtv038.short?rss=1>.

<sup>14</sup> Bruno Latour's actor-network theory (ANT) offers a useful way of conceptualising agency through social networks; see B. Latour (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). For historical applications of ANT, see T. Bender (2006) 'History, Theory & the Metropolis' *CMS Working Paper Series*, No. 5 at [http://www.metropolitanstudies.de/workingpaper/bender\\_005-2006.pdf](http://www.metropolitanstudies.de/workingpaper/bender_005-2006.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> D.R. Green (2014) 'Working the System: Pauper Communities and Plebeian Spaces in Mid-Nineteenth-Century London', (Unpublished Paper), p. 8. Crime historians are beginning to draw on scholarship on networking and space developed in cultural and historical geography, using GIS, visualisation and networking tools. See Z. Alker's use of GIS in 'Street Crime' at note 11 above and collaborative research-in-progress by *Founders and Survivors: Australian Life Courses in Historical Context, 1803–1920*, <http://foundersandsurvivors.org/> as well as *The*

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*Digital Panopticon: The Global Impact of London Punishments, 1780–1925*,  
<http://www.digitalpanopticon.org/>.

<sup>16</sup> Green, 'Working the System'. See also D. R. Green (2006) 'Pauper protests: power and resistance in early nineteenth-century London workhouses', *Social History*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 137-59.

<sup>17</sup> For an overview of these debates see, A.I. Port (2015 edition) 'History from Below, The History of Everyday Life, and Microhistory' in J. Wright (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences - Volume 11*, pp. 108-13.

<sup>18</sup> T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker (2015) *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> Hitchcock and Shoemaker (2015) *London Lives*, p. 24 and p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> The term is Franco Moretti's. See his collected essays in F. Moretti (2013) *Distant Reading* (London: Verso).

<sup>21</sup> Anon (1844) *A Brief Sketch of the Life of the Late Miss Sarah Martin of Great Yarmouth, With Extracts from the Parliamentary Reports on Prisons; Her Own Journals &c* (Yarmouth: C. Barber). All subsequent references are to an expanded version, S. Martin (Undated) *The Prison Visitor of Great Yarmouth, With Extracts from her Writings and Prison Journals* (London: Religious Tract Society); hereafter *Sarah Martin*.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Martin's surviving 'Everyday Books' are kept at the Tolhouse Museum (afterwards TM) by Great Yarmouth Museum Service. These are labeled: 'Prison School Journal 1836-8'; 'Everyday Book from November 7 1839–April 6 1840'; and 'Copy Books written by prisoners under tuition of Sarah Martin. From April 12 1840

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to August 12 1840'. Dated entries will be referred to as 'Everyday Book'.

<sup>23</sup> Access databases were used to analyse: prisoner admissions 1839-41 based on Norfolk RO, Great Yarmouth Gaol Registers, December 1838-December 1850 (Y/L2 9); the gaoler's entries on discipline in Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, January 1836-Dec 1840 (Y/L2, 47) and January 1841-December 1845 (Y/L2 48); and individual convict records from the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO), Convict Department (available online <http://search.archives.tas.gov.au/default.aspx?detail=1&type=A&id=TA00060>: Indents of Male Convicts, 27<sup>th</sup> July 1824 – 26<sup>th</sup> May 1853 (Con 19); Conduct Registers of Male Convicts Arriving in the Period of the Probation System, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1840 – 31 December 1853 (Con 33); and Description Lists of Male Convicts, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1828 – 31 December 1853 (Con 18). In subsequent notes, convicts' names are followed by their police number, ship, year of arrival, and the record used.

<sup>24</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1839 (Y/L2 9). Thomas Merryman was also remanded but not charged. Though listed as nine-years-old, baptism records show he was nearly eleven as he was christened on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Oct 1828 - see *England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975*, Ancestry.com. Joshua Artis had spent his first time in prison earlier in the month, when remanded for three days on suspicion of stealing a watch; see Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1839 (Y/L2 9). He was listed as ten-years-old but his christening records indicate he was thirteen (birthdate 31<sup>st</sup> January 1826; baptised 12<sup>th</sup> February 1826); see *England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975*, Ancestry.com.

<sup>25</sup> Martin's 'Liberated Prisoners Book' has been lost. Extracts were included, however, in *Parliamentary Papers*, Inspectors of Prisons of Great Britain II, Northern and Eastern District, Fourth Report, Cmnd. 199 (1839), pp. 171-4 and *ibid* Fifth

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Report, Cmnd. 258 (1840), 124–31, including Martin’s reports on Jenkins and Artis, pp. 128-9.

<sup>26</sup> ‘A.J.’ in Martin’s table, ‘A Glance at Some Persons who Seemed after their Imprisonment to have been Reclaimed or Improved’, in *Parliamentary Papers*, Inspectors of Prisons of Great Britain II, Northern and Eastern District, Fifth Report, Cmnd. 258 (1840), pp. 128-29.

<sup>27</sup> Norfolk RO, Index and Receiving Book from 25<sup>th</sup> of December 1838 and 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1839 (Y/L2 7).

<sup>28</sup> For an evangelical story lamenting the abject state of such boys, see S. Canty (1855) *George Seten or the Chip Boy of the Dry Dock: A Tale of City Life* (New York: Garrett), available via the Internet Archive. Thank you to the Sydney Jones Library, Liverpool University for this reference.

<sup>29</sup> ‘A.J.’, *Parliamentary Papers*, Inspectors of Prisons of Great Britain II, Northern and Eastern District, Fifth Report, Cmnd. 258 (1840), pp. 129.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> W.J. Forsythe (1987) *The Reform of Prisoners 1830-1900* (London: Croom Helm) and M. Ignatieff (1978) *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1950* (London: Peregrine).

<sup>32</sup> For detailed examination of these former inmates, see H. Rogers (2014) ‘Kindness and Reciprocity: Liberated Prisoners and Christian Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 721-45. See p. 733 for analysis of young liberated prisoners.

<sup>33</sup> See table on the greatest, least, and average number of prisoners held (1840-1843) *Parliamentary Papers*, Report of Prison Inspectors, Eighth Report, Cmnd. 517 (1843), p. 181.

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<sup>34</sup> Based on twenty-two convict lads whose age was confirmed by birth or christening records. Isaac Riches was the youngest at first imprisonment, just shy of twelve-years-old when summarily convicted as a rogue and vagabond, intent on stealing, though the gaoler recorded his age as 14; see Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1841. Christened on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1829, Isaac was 11 when he entered prison - see the online transcription of Baptism registers for St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, 1813-1880 part of the Baptism Project Great Yarmouth St Nicholas, [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tinstaaf/Church\\_Pages/yarmouth\\_h\\_gt\\_1829.htm#Top](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tinstaaf/Church_Pages/yarmouth_h_gt_1829.htm#Top). This birthdate correlates with the age (17 years) he gave on arrival in Van Diemen's Land. See TAHO, Conduct Record Isaac Riches, 17982, per *Joseph Somes* (1) 1846, CON33/1/77. See also TAHO, Convict Indent CON14/1/35 and Description List CON18/1/45. Some historians have suggested prisoners lowered their ages in the hope of more lenient treatment; see J.J. Tobias (1967) *Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: B.T. Batsford), pp. 14-21, at p. 19 and V.A.C. Gatrell and T.B. Hadden (1972) 'Criminal Statistics and their Interpretation', in E.A. Wrigley (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 336-96, at p. 379. Recorded variations in the convict lads' ages, however, do not indicate a clear effort to deceive, with as many over-estimating as under-estimating age at transportation. Since children were usually christened shortly after birth, baptism records are the best means of verifying the age of those born before compulsory birth registration was introduced in 1837.

<sup>35</sup> Between them they had been committed 137 times at Yarmouth. In 120 of these admissions, the gaoler entered the offender as under twenty-one. Three-quarters of these committals (77) were for some kind of theft.

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<sup>36</sup> *Sarah Martin*, pp. 128–9. On arrival in Van Diemen’s Land in 1845, William Jenkins listed his surviving family, resident in Yarmouth, as: mother Elizabeth; brothers Thomas, Absolum, Edward; sisters Elizabeth and Mary Ann; see TAHO, Convict Indent, William Jenkins, 15933, per *Theresa*, 1845, CON14/1/29.

<sup>37</sup> For examples, see Rogers (2014) ‘Kindness and Reciprocity’, *passim*.

<sup>38</sup> ‘A.J.’, Inspectors of Prisons of Great Britain II, Northern and Eastern District, Fifth Report, p. 129.

<sup>39</sup> TM, ‘Everyday Books’, *passim*.

<sup>40</sup> ‘A.J.’, Inspectors of Prisons of Great Britain II, Northern and Eastern District, Fifth Report, p. 129.

<sup>41</sup> [Sarah Martin] (1845) ‘The Believer’s Death’, *Selections from the Poetical Remains of the Late Miss Sarah Martin of Great Yarmouth* (Yarmouth: James M. Denew), pp. 60-1. See also John Jenkins, *Death Index*, Jan-Mar 1840, Yarmouth, Norfolk, Vol. 13, p. 285 from Ancestry.com. John Jenkins was listed as a tinker when his youngest son, Henry, was baptised at Caister, 10 January 1840, shortly before he died. See Baptism Project Great Yarmouth St Nicholas (1840) [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tinstaafl/Church\\_Pages/yarmouth\\_h\\_gt\\_1840.htm#Top](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tinstaafl/Church_Pages/yarmouth_h_gt_1840.htm#Top).

<sup>42</sup> TM, Sarah Martin’s Prisoner Register, 1842, No. 120. Elizabeth Jenkins and her children were removed to Ayleburton, parish of Lydney Gloucester, 14 April 1840: Norfolk Record Office, Index of Examined Paupers, Y/L16/8 (1756-1844), MF/RO 597/6.

<sup>43</sup> The Gaol Register states Abraham was born in Northampton but I have found no record of his birth or his parents’ marriage; Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1839 (Y/L2 9).

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<sup>44</sup> William was christened in Caister, 26 August 1827. Ancestry.com. *England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014: FHL Film Number 1278997.

<sup>45</sup> TM, Sarah Martin's Prisoner Register, 1842, No. 119.

<sup>46</sup> Rogers (2014) 'Kindness and Reciprocity', pp. 729-32 and B.S. Godfrey, D.J. Cox and S.D. Farrall (2007) *Criminal Lives: Family Life, Employment and Offending* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 165–82.

<sup>47</sup> TM, Sarah Martin, Prisoner Register, 1842, No. 120.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> A similar number of Yarmouth lads were transported to other destinations in the same period.

<sup>50</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1842 (Y/L2 9). See also 1841 Census, HO107/793/6, accessed from Ancestry.com. Thomas Farrell was wrongly included in the household for he is also listed as resident at the gaol.

<sup>51</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Receiving Book, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1842 and 21 January 1843, (Y/D 41/28).

<sup>52</sup> Norfolk RO, Index and Receiving Book, 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1839 (Y/L2 7).

<sup>53</sup> See H. Rogers (2012) "Oh, What Beautiful Books!" Captivated Reading in an Early Victorian Prison', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 57-84.

<sup>54</sup> See H. Rogers (2015) 'A Very Fair Statement of His Past Life': Transported Convicts, Former Lives and Previous Offences', *Open Library of the Humanities*, Vol. 1, No. 1, at <http://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/2278/>.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Farrell was wrongly included in the household for he is also listed as resident at the Gaol in the 1841 Census, HO107/793/6, accessed from

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Ancestry.com. Reynolds senior was a labourer as we can also see from the 1841 Census, HO107/793/4 accessed from Ancestry.com.

<sup>56</sup> 1841 Census, HO107/794/4, accessed from Ancestry.com.

<sup>57</sup> 1841 Census, HO107/793/5, accessed from Ancestry.com.

<sup>58</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1840; and 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June 1842 (Y/L2 9). Mary Patterson, Free DMB Death Index, 1837-1915, Apr-Jun 1839, Yarmouth, Norfolk, Vol. 13, p. 287 accessed from Ancestry.com. At the 1841 Census, the Patterson children were living with their father in Yarmouth; see HO107/793/5, accessed from Ancestry.com. Following a stint in the juvenile reformatory, Parkhurst, Henry Patterson was transported per *Thomas Arbuthnot*, arriving Williamstown, Victoria on 4 May 1847; see Australian Joint Copying Project, Microfilm Roll 92, Class and Piece Number HO11/15, Page Number 149 (76).

<sup>59</sup> It seems there were significantly higher rates of orphanage in this cohort of convict lads than in the wider population. In her analysis of autobiographies about working-class boyhood in the period 1800-78, Jane Humphries finds that by fourteen years of age, sixteen per cent had lost their father, thirteen per cent their mother, and twenty-seven per cent had survived both parents. See J. Humphries (2010) *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 61-72, especially at p. 65.

<sup>60</sup> Three had convictions for being refractory paupers. See various Gaol Registers, *passim*.

<sup>61</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, January 1841-December 1845, 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1842 (Y/L2 48).

<sup>62</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 1808-Nov 1838, 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1837 (Y/L2 8).

<sup>63</sup> Rogers (2015) "A Very Fair Statement", *passim*.

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<sup>64</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1843 (Y/L2 9).

<sup>65</sup> William Jenkins, TAHO, Conduct Record, CON33/1/67.

<sup>66</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register, 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1842 (Y/L2 9).

<sup>67</sup> Interestingly this proportion equates with the 1/3 cases in Green's sample, where refractory paupers were sent to prison for jointly committing offences, compared with 2/3 who were convicted as acting alone. See Green, 'Working the System', pp. 13-14.

<sup>68</sup> Based on analysis of disciplinary log in Gaol Keeper's Journal, January 1836-Dec 1840 (Y/L2, 47) and January 1841-December 1845 (Y/L2 48). Three convicts, who served some of their imprisonment before or after the years 1836-45, have been excluded from this calculation.

<sup>69</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1844 (Y/L2 48).

<sup>70</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 17<sup>th</sup> of January and 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1842 (Y/L2 48).

<sup>71</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1842 (Y/L2 48).

<sup>72</sup>Rogers (2012) 'Singing in Gaol', pp. 39-41.

<sup>73</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1844, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>74</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1842, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>75</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1844, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>76</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 27<sup>th</sup> of January, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>77</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1843 and 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1844 (Y/L2 48).

<sup>78</sup> See C. Emsley (2005) *Hard Men: Violence in England since 1750* (London: Hambledon).

<sup>79</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Committee 1836-50, 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1844 (Y/TC 3/36) and 4<sup>th</sup> of

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February 1845, (Y/TC 3/36).

<sup>80</sup> TM, 'Everyday Book', 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1842, cited in *Sarah Martin*, p. 126.

<sup>81</sup> TM, 'Everyday Book', 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1842, cited in *Sarah Martin*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>82</sup> Rogers (2012) "Oh, What Beautiful Books!", pp. 60-76.

<sup>83</sup> TM, 'Everyday Book', 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1842, cited in *Sarah Martin*, p. 126.

<sup>84</sup> Rogers (2012) "Oh, What Beautiful Books!", *passim*.

<sup>85</sup> TM, 'Everyday Book', 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1842, cited in *Sarah Martin*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>86</sup> TM, 'Everyday Book', 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1842; cited in *Sarah Martin*, p. 126.

<sup>87</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1842, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>88</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1842, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>89</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1844, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>90</sup> TM, 'Everyday Book', 15<sup>th</sup> May 1837; Norfolk RO, Gaol Committee 1836-50, 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1844 (Y/TC 3/36) and 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1845, (Y/TC 3/36).

<sup>91</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1844 (Y/L2 48). See also TAHO, Joshua Artis, 15826, Robert Harrod, 15914, William Jenkins, 15933, per *Theresa*, 1845, Conduct Record CON33/1/67, Convict Indent CON14/1/29 and Norfolk RO, various Gaol Registers, *passim*.

<sup>92</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Register 1808-Nov 1838, July 7 1837 (Y/L2 8).

<sup>93</sup> For convict tattoos see: J. Bradley and H. Maxwell-Stewart (1997) "Behold the Man": Power, Observation and the Tattooed Convict', *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 71-97; J. Bradley and H. Maxwell-Stewart (1997) 'Embodied Explorations: Investigating Convict Tattoos and the Transportation System', in I. Duffield and J. Bradley (eds), *Representing Convicts: New Perspectives on Forced Convict Labour Migration* (Leicester: Leicester University Press), pp. 183-203; D. Kent (1997) 'Decorative Bodies: The Significance of Convicts' Tattoos', *Journal of*

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*Australian Studies*, Vol. 53, pp. 78-88; L. Frost and H. Maxwell-Stewart (2001) (eds) *Chain Letters: Narrating Convict Lives* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press); H. Rogers (2009) 'The Way to Jerusalem: Reading, Writing and Reform in an Early Victorian Gaol', *Past and Present*, No. 205, pp. 71-104; and Rogers (2015) "A Very Fair Statement", pp. 27-32.

<sup>94</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1841, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>95</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Receiving Book 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1842, (Y/D 41/28).

<sup>96</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1844, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>97</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Keeper's Journal, 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1842, (Y/L2 48).

<sup>98</sup> I. Dye (1989) 'The Tattoos of Early American Seafarers, 1796-1818', *Proceedings of the American Philosophy Society*, Vol. 133, No. 4, pp. 520-54.

<sup>99</sup> Isaac Riches, TAHO, Conduct Record, CON33/1/77.

<sup>100</sup> Norfolk RO, Gaol Receiving Book, 8 June 1844 (Y/D 41/28) and John Newstead, 21025, per *Ratcliffe* (2), 1848, TAHO, Conduct Record, CON33/1/91.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas Bowles, 10001, per *Asiatic*, 1843, TAHO, Conduct Record CON33/1/42.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Harrod, 15914, per *Theresa*, 1845, TAHO, Conduct Record CON33/1/67.

<sup>103</sup> 'Everyday Book', 24<sup>th</sup> September [1840 or 1841], cited in *Sarah Martin*, p. 125.

<sup>104</sup> John Newstead, 21025, per *Ratcliffe* (2), 1848, TAHO, CON33/1/91.

<sup>105</sup> C. Arrot Browning (1847) *The Convict Ship, and England's Exiles* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co.), access via Internet Archive.

<sup>106</sup> No other convict aboard *Theresa* shared the same initials. Henry Lavery died at the end of the year at Port Cygnet, Van Diemen's Land (9<sup>th</sup> of December 1845); see Henry Lavery, 15950, per *Theresa*, 1845, TAHO, Conduct Record, CON33/1/67.

<sup>107</sup> William Jenkins, 15933, per *Theresa*, 1845, TAHO, CON33/1/67.

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- <sup>108</sup> For an overview, see H. Maxwell-Stewart (2010) 'Convict Transportation from Britain and Ireland 1615-1870', *History Compass*, Vol. 8, No. 11, pp. 1221-42.
- <sup>109</sup> William Jenkins, 15933, per *Theresa*, 1845, TAHO, CON33/1/67.
- <sup>110</sup> *Mercury* (Hobart), 16-20 May 1874, p. 1, accessed via Trove.
- <sup>111</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> July 1863, TAHO, Tasmanian Names Index, Marriage Records – see <https://stors.tas.gov.au/RGD37-1-22p6j2k>
- <sup>112</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> June 1861, TAHO, Tasmanian Names Index, Birth Register – see <https://stors.tas.gov.au/RGD33-1-39p205j2k>
- <sup>113</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> July 1863, TAHO, Tasmanian Names Index, Marriage Register – see <https://stors.tas.gov.au/RGD37-1-22p6j2k>
- <sup>114</sup> Joseph Stock, 880, per *Marmion*, 1828 (TAHO) Conduct Record, CON 31/38, p. 296.
- <sup>115</sup> Elizabeth Kepax, per *Nautilus*, 1828 (TAHO) Conduct Registers of Female Convicts Arriving during the Assignment Period, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1803-31 December 1843, CON40/6.
- <sup>116</sup> *Mercury* (Hobart), 7<sup>th</sup> March 1860, p. 4 and *Mercury* (Hobart), 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1871, p. 1.
- <sup>117</sup> *Mercury* (Hobart), 17<sup>th</sup> July 1874, p. 3.
- <sup>118</sup> TAHO, Tasmanian Names Index, Death Register, 22 February 1833, RGD35/1/52 no 376.
- <sup>119</sup> *Mercury* (Hobart), 1<sup>st</sup> March 1883, p. 3.
- <sup>120</sup> See H. Shore (1999) *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (London: Boydell).
- <sup>121</sup> H. Salmi (2011) 'Cultural History, the Possible, and the Principle of Plenitude', *History and Theory*, Vol. 50, pp. 171-87, at p. 182, quoting Stephen Greenblatt

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(1999) 'The Touch of the Real' in S.B. Ortner (ed.) *The Fate of 'Culture': Geertz and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 14.