

1

00:00:16,910 --> 00:00:19,344

Hello and welcome to Unexpected Essex.

2

00:00:19,344 --> 00:00:22,184

I'm your host, Eri Berry, and today

3

00:00:22,184 --> 00:00:25,024

we're taking a deep dive into one

4

00:00:25,024 --> 00:00:27,459

of England and Essex's most misunderstood

5

00:00:27,459 --> 00:00:29,893

mythical figures. I'm talking, of course,

6

00:00:29,893 --> 00:00:31,110

about Dick Turpin.

7

00:00:33,430 --> 00:00:35,447

The concept of the Highwayman and the

8

00:00:35,447 --> 00:00:37,465

name Dick Turpin often conjure up mental

9

00:00:37,465 --> 00:00:39,482

images of a well-dressed, lovable rogue

10

00:00:39,482 --> 00:00:42,076

with a cheeky grin on his face, an eye

11

00:00:42,076 --> 00:00:44,670

for the ladies and a pistol at his belt.

12

00:00:45,390 --> 00:00:48,027

You might think of a beautiful mare named

13

00:00:48,027 --> 00:00:50,665

Black Bess, or even of a very specific

14

00:00:50,665 --> 00:00:52,643

episode of Horrible Histories from the

15

00:00:52,643 --> 00:00:54,621

early 2000s if you're a British

16

00:00:54,621 --> 00:00:56,599

millennial. If you're older than that,

17

00:00:56,599 --> 00:00:58,906

you might recall the music video for

18

00:00:58,906 --> 00:01:01,214

Stand and Deliver by glam rock new

19

00:01:01,214 --> 00:01:03,522

romantics Adam in The Ants, featuring a

20

00:01:03,522 --> 00:01:04,841

rather historically inaccurate but

21

00:01:04,841 --> 00:01:06,489

nonetheless mesmerising pair of leather

22

00:01:06,489 --> 00:01:08,797

trousers. Well, you know where I'm going

23

00:01:08,797 --> 00:01:11,764

with this. I'm here to tell you the real

24

00:01:11,764 --> 00:01:14,401

story behind the myth of Dick Turpin, his

25

00:01:14,401 --> 00:01:16,694

connection to Essex and why romanticising

26
00:01:16,694 --> 00:01:18,710
the guy really isn't a great idea.

27
00:01:19,750 --> 00:01:21,602
In some countries, including the United

28
00:01:21,602 --> 00:01:23,763
Kingdom, we have the Blue Plaque scheme

29
00:01:23,763 --> 00:01:25,923
where blue plaques will be put on

30
00:01:25,923 --> 00:01:27,466
buildings to commemorate connections to

31
00:01:27,466 --> 00:01:29,627
famous people or notable events, like the

32
00:01:29,627 --> 00:01:31,788
one in Saffron Walden that marks the

33
00:01:31,788 --> 00:01:34,257
birth place of Henry Winstanley. So if I

34
00:01:34,257 --> 00:01:37,035
were to create a plaque to mark the birth

35
00:01:37,035 --> 00:01:39,195
place of Dick Turpin in Hempstead, Essex,

36
00:01:39,195 --> 00:01:40,430
what would it say?

37
00:01:41,390 --> 00:01:44,149
Probably: "Dick Turpin the highwayman

38
00:01:44,149 --> 00:01:46,866

was born here. He carried out a range

39

00:01:46,866 --> 00:01:49,244

of terrible crimes within this county in

40

00:01:49,244 --> 00:01:51,282

the 1700s. Despite the romanticisation of

41

00:01:51,282 --> 00:01:53,1000

Turpin and the myths of highwaymen being

42

00:01:53,1000 --> 00:01:56,038

gentlemen underneath, the reality is that

43

00:01:56,038 --> 00:01:57,736

they were hardened criminals, committing

44

00:01:57,736 --> 00:01:59,434

robbery, serious assaults and even

45

00:01:59,434 --> 00:02:01,473

murder." But let's be honest, that's

46

00:02:01,473 --> 00:02:04,190

never going to fit on a blue plaque.

47

00:02:04,750 --> 00:02:07,153

If you've listened to the first episode

48

00:02:07,153 --> 00:02:09,212

of this podcast, you'll probably recall

49

00:02:09,212 --> 00:02:11,615

me mentioning that the Victorians had a

50

00:02:11,615 --> 00:02:13,675

tendency to romanticise and embellish on

51
00:02:13,675 --> 00:02:16,077
historical tales. The tale of Dick Turpin

52
00:02:16,077 --> 00:02:18,480
is no exception. The concept of The

53
00:02:18,480 --> 00:02:20,197
Highwayman Gentleman comes from the

54
00:02:20,197 --> 00:02:22,256
paintings of William Powell Frith, a

55
00:02:22,256 --> 00:02:23,972
Victorian painter famous for his

56
00:02:23,972 --> 00:02:26,032
narrative scenes. Now, in his defence,

57
00:02:26,032 --> 00:02:28,778
Frith did do quite a bit of research,

58
00:02:28,778 --> 00:02:31,524
but it's his image that he conjured up

59
00:02:31,524 --> 00:02:33,927
that we tend to associate most strongly

60
00:02:33,927 --> 00:02:36,765
with. Highwayman is based

61
00:02:36,765 --> 00:02:39,674
off of an account of Claude Duval, who

62
00:02:39,674 --> 00:02:42,219
stopped a lady's coach containing £400,

63
00:02:42,219 --> 00:02:45,128

took £100, and told her she could

64

00:02:45,128 --> 00:02:48,037

keep the remaining £300 as long as she

65

00:02:48,037 --> 00:02:50,946

danced with him on the heath. Oh, how

66

00:02:50,946 --> 00:02:53,579

romantic. The reality is completely

67

00:02:53,579 --> 00:02:55,362

different. These guys were thugs, pure

68

00:02:55,362 --> 00:02:57,443

and simple. There was no separate offence

69

00:02:57,443 --> 00:02:59,523

of highway robbery so these offences were

70

00:02:59,523 --> 00:03:01,603

just treated as standard robbery. And the

71

00:03:01,603 --> 00:03:03,981

definition of this is not so different to

72

00:03:03,981 --> 00:03:06,953

that of today. I could talk for a whole

73

00:03:06,953 --> 00:03:09,628

episode just on the history of the law of

74

00:03:09,628 --> 00:03:12,006

robbery but to keep it short and sweet

75

00:03:12,006 --> 00:03:14,086

for a non legalese fluent audience, it's

76

00:03:14,086 --> 00:03:15,870
essentially theft through the use of

77

00:03:15,870 --> 00:03:17,950
force or the threat of using force.

78

00:03:18,760 --> 00:03:20,391
The important thing to note from Turpin's

79

00:03:20,391 --> 00:03:22,722
era is that it was a felony and it would

80

00:03:22,722 --> 00:03:24,120
be punished with the death penalty.

81

00:03:25,510 --> 00:03:27,761
In 1693 the Highwayman Act was passed,

82

00:03:27,761 --> 00:03:30,012
and this had the effect of encouraging

83

00:03:30,012 --> 00:03:31,942
highwaymen to give evidence against each

84

00:03:31,942 --> 00:03:34,515
other in exchange for a pardon, and they

85

00:03:34,515 --> 00:03:37,088
were also incentives for the rest of the

86

00:03:37,088 --> 00:03:39,982
public. There would be £40, so about £9000

87

00:03:39,982 --> 00:03:42,233
in modern money for whoever apprehended

88

00:03:42,233 --> 00:03:44,484

one, and they could keep the stuff

89

00:03:44,484 --> 00:03:47,057

belonging to the highwaymen as long as it

90

00:03:47,057 --> 00:03:49,308

wasn't already stolen, or at least wasn't

91

00:03:49,308 --> 00:03:52,064

claimed. Such cases were regularly tried

92

00:03:52,064 --> 00:03:54,519

in the courts between 1620 and 1680,

93

00:03:54,519 --> 00:03:56,975

though as you'll notice from my previous

94

00:03:56,975 --> 00:03:59,430

reference to the 1700s, this was way

95

00:03:59,430 --> 00:04:01,535

before Turpin's time. So who exactly

96

00:04:01,535 --> 00:04:03,990

was Dick Turpin? What was he actually

97

00:04:03,990 --> 00:04:06,445

like, and why did history misremember him

98

00:04:06,445 --> 00:04:09,252

as a romantic hero? To answer this, we

99

00:04:09,252 --> 00:04:12,058

need to go back to the very beginning

100

00:04:12,058 --> 00:04:15,055

of his life. Turpin was

101

00:04:15,055 --> 00:04:17,106

born Richard Turpin in Hempstead, Essex,

102

00:04:17,106 --> 00:04:19,156

a gorgeous village close to Saffron

103

00:04:19,156 --> 00:04:21,206

Walden, Thaxted and Haverhill to the

104

00:04:21,206 --> 00:04:22,915

north. Hempstead still retains its

105

00:04:22,915 --> 00:04:25,307

historic charm with a number of cottages

106

00:04:25,307 --> 00:04:28,041

lining its main street. His exact date of

107

00:04:28,041 --> 00:04:30,775

birth is unknown, but we do know from

108

00:04:30,775 --> 00:04:33,167

parish records that he was christened on

109

00:04:33,167 --> 00:04:35,901

the 21st of September in 1705. His father

110

00:04:35,901 --> 00:04:38,293

John was an ale housekeeper and a

111

00:04:38,293 --> 00:04:40,685

butcher, looking after an ale house named

112

00:04:40,685 --> 00:04:43,677

the Bluebell Inn. I would usually suggest

113

00:04:43,677 --> 00:04:46,124

to anyone local or visiting to pop in for

114

00:04:46,124 --> 00:04:48,570

a pint or at least a swift half but

115

00:04:48,570 --> 00:04:50,473

unfortunately the pub has closed down. I

116

00:04:50,473 --> 00:04:52,376

do note however that the local community

117

00:04:52,376 --> 00:04:55,094

does seem to be trying to re-open it so

118

00:04:55,094 --> 00:04:58,063

watch this space. Following

119

00:04:58,063 --> 00:04:59,575

in his father's footsteps, Turpin

120

00:04:59,575 --> 00:05:01,693

received a basic education as a boy,

121

00:05:01,693 --> 00:05:03,811

learning to read and write from his

122

00:05:03,811 --> 00:05:05,929

school teacher James Smith, and when he

123

00:05:05,929 --> 00:05:08,047

was old enough he became a butcher's

124

00:05:08,047 --> 00:05:09,862

apprentice. It's not completely clear in

125

00:05:09,862 --> 00:05:12,283

the records as to where he undertook this

126

00:05:12,283 --> 00:05:13,795
apprenticeship. Some sources claim that

127

00:05:13,795 --> 00:05:15,913
it was in Shoreditch in London, but

128

00:05:15,913 --> 00:05:17,729
others, including myself, it's just my

129

00:05:17,729 --> 00:05:19,846
opinion, think that it's far more likely

130

00:05:19,846 --> 00:05:22,267
to have been in the nearby town of

131

00:05:22,267 --> 00:05:24,990
Thaxted, as his uncle was claimed to work

132

00:05:24,990 --> 00:05:27,106
as a butcher there. This would

133

00:05:27,106 --> 00:05:28,910
logistically make a lot more sense than

134

00:05:28,910 --> 00:05:30,714
travelling all the way to Shoreditch if

135

00:05:30,714 --> 00:05:32,777
you have a family connection to the trade

136

00:05:32,777 --> 00:05:35,768
quite close by. We do know, however,

137

00:05:35,768 --> 00:05:37,970
that Dick Turpin did earn an honest

138

00:05:37,970 --> 00:05:40,172

living in East London running a butcher's

139

00:05:40,172 --> 00:05:42,812

shop in Buckhurst Hill. This is where he

140

00:05:42,812 --> 00:05:44,226

meets a number of important associates

141

00:05:44,226 --> 00:05:46,110

that I'll tell you about a bit later.

142

00:05:46,990 --> 00:05:49,332

We also know that he married, but again,

143

00:05:49,332 --> 00:05:51,381

records are a little bit scarce. The

144

00:05:51,381 --> 00:05:53,138

important thing to remember is that

145

00:05:53,138 --> 00:05:55,187

Turpin wasn't hugely well known in his

146

00:05:55,187 --> 00:05:57,822

day. No one is completely sure of who he

147

00:05:57,822 --> 00:06:00,164

married as there's not a parish record of

148

00:06:00,164 --> 00:06:02,213

it, but it's likely her name was

149

00:06:02,213 --> 00:06:03,970

Elizabeth Millington, though she went by

150

00:06:03,970 --> 00:06:06,604

Betty and it was likely that she was a

151

00:06:06,604 --> 00:06:08,916
maid servant. They married sometime

152

00:06:08,916 --> 00:06:10,849
around 1725, and records indicate that

153

00:06:10,849 --> 00:06:13,103
she was arrested and imprisoned in 1737

154

00:06:13,103 --> 00:06:14,392
after authorities intercepted letters

155

00:06:14,392 --> 00:06:16,646
from her husband, who was trying to

156

00:06:16,646 --> 00:06:18,579
arrange a meeting. Apparently she died

157

00:06:18,579 --> 00:06:21,155
the same year he did, but really, there's

158

00:06:21,155 --> 00:06:24,054
not a whole lot to go on. They didn't

159

00:06:24,054 --> 00:06:26,308
have any children, though Turpin did have

160

00:06:26,308 --> 00:06:28,885
a number of siblings, so it's very likely

161

00:06:28,885 --> 00:06:30,818
that there are still some distant

162

00:06:30,818 --> 00:06:32,428
relatives of him wandering around

163

00:06:32,428 --> 00:06:34,886

somewhere. Obviously, this being 1700s,

164

00:06:34,886 --> 00:06:37,537

there are no photos of Dick Turpin, but

165

00:06:37,537 --> 00:06:39,526

there are also no contemporary paintings

166

00:06:39,526 --> 00:06:42,448

of him either. Remember, he was not

167

00:06:42,448 --> 00:06:45,363

a cultural icon in his time, so no

168

00:06:45,363 --> 00:06:48,278

one was going to bother putting brush to

169

00:06:48,278 --> 00:06:51,193

canvas to capture his image. We do have

170

00:06:51,193 --> 00:06:53,744

a description of him from an associate

171

00:06:53,744 --> 00:06:56,659

though. About 30 years of age, by trade a

172

00:06:56,659 --> 00:06:59,574

butcher, about 5 feet 9 inches high,

173

00:06:59,574 --> 00:07:02,489

of a brown complexion very much marked by

174

00:07:02,489 --> 00:07:04,311

smallpox. Cheekbones broad, face thinner

175

00:07:04,311 --> 00:07:06,497

towards the bottom. His visage short,

176

00:07:06,497 --> 00:07:08,684
pretty upright and broad towards the

177

00:07:08,684 --> 00:07:11,268
shoulders." This suggests a man of fairly

178

00:07:11,268 --> 00:07:13,177
average height and appearance with a

179

00:07:13,177 --> 00:07:15,403
number of smallpox scars as opposed to

180

00:07:15,403 --> 00:07:17,312
the swoon-inducing characters from later

181

00:07:17,312 --> 00:07:19,889
fiction. Personality-wise he was pretty

182

00:07:19,889 --> 00:07:22,119
unpleasant and it was this cantankerous

183

00:07:22,119 --> 00:07:24,350
attitude which eventually got him caught.

184

00:07:25,900 --> 00:07:28,872
So how did a butcher from Essex turn to

185

00:07:28,872 --> 00:07:31,514
a life of crime as a highwayman? Well,

186

00:07:31,514 --> 00:07:33,496
his initial foray into criminal behaviour

187

00:07:33,496 --> 00:07:35,477
was likely through involvement with the

188

00:07:35,477 --> 00:07:37,129

infamous Gregory Gang, sometimes referred

189

00:07:37,129 --> 00:07:39,859

to as the Essex Gang. This

190

00:07:39,859 --> 00:07:41,952

gang began their criminal activities with

191

00:07:41,952 --> 00:07:44,743

a spot of deer stealing. Not just any

192

00:07:44,743 --> 00:07:47,186

deer, but King George the Second's deer

193

00:07:47,186 --> 00:07:49,977

from the Royal Forest of Waltham. At the

194

00:07:49,977 --> 00:07:52,070

height of their activities, the gang

195

00:07:52,070 --> 00:07:54,512

comprised of a number of individuals, but

196

00:07:54,512 --> 00:07:57,303

at the start there were fewer of them.

197

00:07:57,303 --> 00:07:59,397

There was Jeremiah Gregory, known as

198

00:07:59,397 --> 00:08:01,490

Jeremy, his brother Samuel Gregory, their

199

00:08:01,490 --> 00:08:03,583

associate Joseph Rose, and Joseph Rose's

200

00:08:03,583 --> 00:08:06,264

partner Mary Brazier. As an interesting

201

00:08:06,264 --> 00:08:08,303

aside, Mary Brazier was also an Essex

202

00:08:08,303 --> 00:08:10,342

girl, which I discovered by pure chance

203

00:08:10,342 --> 00:08:12,090

when interviewing a local historian, who,

204

00:08:12,090 --> 00:08:14,420

it turns out, is her great great, great

205

00:08:14,420 --> 00:08:16,168

great, great great great nephew. Shout

206

00:08:16,168 --> 00:08:18,499

out to Roy Brazier if you're listening to

207

00:08:18,499 --> 00:08:21,492

this. And he told me that she sometimes

208

00:08:21,492 --> 00:08:23,848

went by the name Mary Rose despite not

209

00:08:23,848 --> 00:08:25,910

being married to Joseph, and she also

210

00:08:25,910 --> 00:08:27,972

sometimes went dressed and disguised as a

211

00:08:27,972 --> 00:08:30,757

man to avoid detection. Through

212

00:08:30,757 --> 00:08:32,141

their violent poaching activities, they

213

00:08:32,141 --> 00:08:34,356

shot a man named Deakins and caused a

214

00:08:34,356 --> 00:08:36,294

great deal of mayhem in Waltham Forest.

215

00:08:36,294 --> 00:08:38,232

Of course, deer are quite difficult to

216

00:08:38,232 --> 00:08:41,000

hide and it's not wise to try to sell off

217

00:08:41,000 --> 00:08:42,662

what you've stolen to innocent bystanders

218

00:08:42,662 --> 00:08:44,600

yourself or you're likely to get caught.

219

00:08:44,600 --> 00:08:46,261

If therefore likely that the first

220

00:08:46,261 --> 00:08:47,922

involvement Turpin had with the Essex

221

00:08:47,922 --> 00:08:50,413

gang was to do with his work as a

222

00:08:50,413 --> 00:08:52,628

butcher, he was happy to sell the deer

223

00:08:52,628 --> 00:08:54,843

meat in exchange for a cut of the

224

00:08:54,843 --> 00:08:57,641

profits. In late 1734, the

225

00:08:57,641 --> 00:09:00,110

Essex gang decided to branch out from

226

00:09:00,110 --> 00:09:02,226
deer stealing and decided that robbery

227

00:09:02,226 --> 00:09:05,093
would be the way forward. This

228

00:09:05,093 --> 00:09:07,833
led to a string of home invasions and

229

00:09:07,833 --> 00:09:10,230
business raids, and it's likely at this

230

00:09:10,230 --> 00:09:12,286
point the Turpin was more heavily

231

00:09:12,286 --> 00:09:14,341
involved. This led to a pretty

232

00:09:14,341 --> 00:09:16,396
significant crime spree. The 29th of

233

00:09:16,396 --> 00:09:19,136
October saw them raid a man named Peter

234

00:09:19,136 --> 00:09:21,534
Split's shop in Woodford, followed by a

235

00:09:21,534 --> 00:09:23,589
raid on John Gladwin's property in

236

00:09:23,589 --> 00:09:25,644
Chingford on the 14th of December.

237

00:09:25,644 --> 00:09:27,699
Emboldened by their successful escape, on

238

00:09:27,699 --> 00:09:30,097

the 19th of December they raided farmer

239

00:09:30,097 --> 00:09:31,810

Ambrose Skinner's property, stealing £300

240

00:09:31,810 --> 00:09:34,207

worth of loot and records indicate that

241

00:09:34,207 --> 00:09:36,898

Turpin was involved with this one. We

242

00:09:36,898 --> 00:09:39,054

also know that William Mason, keeper of

243

00:09:39,054 --> 00:09:41,211

Epping Forest, was targeted 2 days later.

244

00:09:41,211 --> 00:09:43,367

It looks as though they stopped for

245

00:09:43,367 --> 00:09:44,907

Christmas and New Year before

246

00:09:44,907 --> 00:09:46,447

recommencing their shenanigans in the

247

00:09:46,447 --> 00:09:48,912

early January, like it was some kind of

248

00:09:48,912 --> 00:09:50,452

incredibly sketchy New Year's resolution.

249

00:09:50,452 --> 00:09:52,608

They robbed a farmer named Saunders in

250

00:09:52,608 --> 00:09:55,381

Kent on the 11th of January and then a

251

00:09:55,381 --> 00:09:57,537

Mr Sheldon from Surrey the week after.

252

00:09:57,537 --> 00:10:00,001

The 23rd of January saw a robbery at

253

00:10:00,001 --> 00:10:02,157

Great Parndon, with the victims being a

254

00:10:02,157 --> 00:10:04,006

clergyman and his manservant who received

255

00:10:04,006 --> 00:10:06,162

a pretty nasty facial injury in the

256

00:10:06,162 --> 00:10:08,794

process. Mrs Shelley in Loughton was next

257

00:10:08,794 --> 00:10:11,603

on the 1st of February. Now these

258

00:10:11,603 --> 00:10:14,217

antics did not go unnoticed by the law,

259

00:10:14,217 --> 00:10:15,850

with Essex Magistrate Martin Bladen

260

00:10:15,850 --> 00:10:17,483

taking depositions or witness statements

261

00:10:17,483 --> 00:10:20,097

from victims and these were sent to Earl

262

00:10:20,097 --> 00:10:22,057

Tylney, the Lord Warden of Waltham

263

00:10:22,057 --> 00:10:23,690

Forest, declaring that something needed

264

00:10:23,690 --> 00:10:26,379

to be done. By this time,

265

00:10:26,379 --> 00:10:28,911

the Gregory Gang had grown in number and

266

00:10:28,911 --> 00:10:31,126

it consisted of the following people. You

267

00:10:31,126 --> 00:10:33,342

might want to take some notes here,

268

00:10:33,342 --> 00:10:35,557

there's quite a few. Samuel Gregory was

269

00:10:35,557 --> 00:10:38,423

the leader. Along with his two

270

00:10:38,423 --> 00:10:40,464

brothers, Jasper Gregory and Jeremy

271

00:10:40,464 --> 00:10:42,914

Gregory, who I mentioned earlier, there

272

00:10:42,914 --> 00:10:45,771

was Thomas Rowden. He was a pewterer

273

00:10:45,771 --> 00:10:48,221

who'd been tried and acquitted for

274

00:10:48,221 --> 00:10:50,670

counterfeiting coin in 1733. There was

275

00:10:50,670 --> 00:10:53,119

William Saunders, who sometimes went by

276

00:10:53,119 --> 00:10:55,569

William Saunderson. Joseph Rose, who I

277

00:10:55,569 --> 00:10:58,018

mentioned before. He was a former

278

00:10:58,018 --> 00:11:00,059

blacksmith. Mary Brazier, also mentioned

279

00:11:00,059 --> 00:11:02,509

before, partner of Joseph Rose. John

280

00:11:02,509 --> 00:11:04,550

Fielder. John Jones. Humphrey Walker.

281

00:11:05,440 --> 00:11:07,168

Herbert Haynes, now we know of him, that

282

00:11:07,168 --> 00:11:09,970

he was a barber or a periwig maker

283

00:11:09,970 --> 00:11:12,524

turned thief. Dick Turpin, obviously, and

284

00:11:12,524 --> 00:11:15,442

the youngest of the group, a guy named

285

00:11:15,442 --> 00:11:17,995

John Wheeler, and it's believed he was

286

00:11:17,995 --> 00:11:20,912

aged 15 to 17 at the time of

287

00:11:20,912 --> 00:11:23,465

these offences and all of these were

288

00:11:23,465 --> 00:11:26,018

living in London by early 1735. Their

289

00:11:26,018 --> 00:11:28,206

next offence was a particularly brutal

290

00:11:28,206 --> 00:11:30,759

home invasion of Earlsbury Farm on the

291

00:11:30,759 --> 00:11:32,948

4th of February, followed by similar

292

00:11:32,948 --> 00:11:35,501

activity at the House of William Francis

293

00:11:35,501 --> 00:11:38,239

in Marylebone. By the 8th

294

00:11:38,239 --> 00:11:40,337

of February 1735, the authorities were

295

00:11:40,337 --> 00:11:42,784

seriously fed up and the Duke of

296

00:11:42,784 --> 00:11:44,533

Newcastle issued a proclamation offering

297

00:11:44,533 --> 00:11:47,330

a £50 reward for information that led to

298

00:11:47,330 --> 00:11:49,777

the conviction of those involved in the

299

00:11:49,777 --> 00:11:52,574

crimes. So how did this gang get caught?

300

00:11:52,574 --> 00:11:55,372

Ultimately, as is so often the case, a

301

00:11:55,372 --> 00:11:57,470
series of coincidences led to their

302

00:11:57,470 --> 00:12:00,267
downfall. You see, on their way to raid

303

00:12:00,267 --> 00:12:02,714
Earlsbury Farm, the gang stopped off for

304

00:12:02,714 --> 00:12:05,162
refreshments at a couple of alehouses in

305

00:12:05,162 --> 00:12:07,894
Edgware and one of these was The Nine

306

00:12:07,894 --> 00:12:10,486
Pins and Bowl which was run by a landlord

307

00:12:10,486 --> 00:12:13,213
named Richard Wood. By pure chance on

308

00:12:13,213 --> 00:12:15,424
the 11th of February, Wood had business

309

00:12:15,424 --> 00:12:17,950
in Bloomsbury and went off to go and

310

00:12:17,950 --> 00:12:20,476
attend to it and while he's there he

311

00:12:20,476 --> 00:12:23,003
spotted the horses used by the gang when

312

00:12:23,003 --> 00:12:25,529
they visited his ale house on the night

313

00:12:25,529 --> 00:12:27,739

that his neighbour was robbed. He called

314

00:12:27,739 --> 00:12:30,266

the constable and with help from a couple

315

00:12:30,266 --> 00:12:32,476

of other people, three members of the

316

00:12:32,476 --> 00:12:34,371

gang were arrested. John Fielder, Joseph

317

00:12:34,371 --> 00:12:36,266

Rose, who was actually William Saunders

318

00:12:36,266 --> 00:12:38,476

giving a false name and John Wheeler.

319

00:12:38,476 --> 00:12:40,687

They seized 5 pistols from these three

320

00:12:40,687 --> 00:12:42,670

and despite all of them denying their

321

00:12:42,670 --> 00:12:44,770

involvement, they were held in New Prison

322

00:12:44,770 --> 00:12:47,170

on suspicion of the raid on the farm

323

00:12:47,170 --> 00:12:50,088

anyway. John Wheeler, the youngest, caved

324

00:12:50,088 --> 00:12:52,634

in quite quickly and hoping for leniency,

325

00:12:52,634 --> 00:12:55,179

he informed on the entire gang. Fielder

326

00:12:55,179 --> 00:12:57,725
and Saunders were sent to Newgate Prison

327

00:12:57,725 --> 00:12:59,906
to await trial, but despite his

328

00:12:59,906 --> 00:13:02,452
assistance, Wheeler went to New Prison a

329

00:13:02,452 --> 00:13:04,634
week later. Joseph Rose, the actual

330

00:13:04,634 --> 00:13:07,179
Joseph Rose this time, Mary Brazier and

331

00:13:07,179 --> 00:13:09,361
Humphrey Walker were captured in a

332

00:13:09,361 --> 00:13:11,906
chandler's shop. They did not go quietly,

333

00:13:11,906 --> 00:13:13,725
with Walker being pretty seriously

334

00:13:13,725 --> 00:13:16,270
injured in the process of being captured.

335

00:13:17,320 --> 00:13:19,062
Wheeler continued to think like a canary

336

00:13:19,062 --> 00:13:21,877
from behind bars and it's from him that

337

00:13:21,877 --> 00:13:24,079
we get the first description of Turpin,

338

00:13:24,079 --> 00:13:26,910

which is quite similar to the one I read

339

00:13:26,910 --> 00:13:29,426

previously. "A butcher by trade, a tall

340

00:13:29,426 --> 00:13:31,627

fresh coloured man very much marked with

341

00:13:31,627 --> 00:13:33,829

the smallpox, about 26 years of age,

342

00:13:33,829 --> 00:13:36,031

about 5 feet 9 inches." After their

343

00:13:36,031 --> 00:13:37,603

capture, Rose, Fielder, Saunders and

344

00:13:37,603 --> 00:13:39,805

Walker were tried and convicted for their

345

00:13:39,805 --> 00:13:42,007

crimes and scheduled for hanging on the

346

00:13:42,007 --> 00:13:44,209

10th of March. Walker, who I mentioned

347

00:13:44,209 --> 00:13:46,096

before was injured during his arrest,

348

00:13:46,096 --> 00:13:48,612

died in the early hours of that morning

349

00:13:48,612 --> 00:13:51,034

before the hanging was due. And it's

350

00:13:51,034 --> 00:13:53,147

likely he died of his previous injuries

351

00:13:53,147 --> 00:13:54,959
rather than anything that was further

352

00:13:54,959 --> 00:13:56,771
inflicted on him. Field, Rose and

353

00:13:56,771 --> 00:13:58,884
Saunders were executed at the gallows of

354

00:13:58,884 --> 00:14:01,550
Tyburn in London. Jasper Gregory was

355

00:14:01,550 --> 00:14:04,070
tried at the Essex Assizes at Chelmsford

356

00:14:04,070 --> 00:14:07,024
and executed 3 weeks later. At

357

00:14:07,024 --> 00:14:08,911
this time, the remaining gang members

358

00:14:08,911 --> 00:14:10,798
weren't exactly lying low to evade

359

00:14:10,798 --> 00:14:13,314
capture. The 7th of April saw Samuel and

360

00:14:13,314 --> 00:14:15,515
Jeremy Gregory rob Sir John Osborne of

361

00:14:15,515 --> 00:14:18,031
his gold watch and they also attempted to

362

00:14:18,031 --> 00:14:20,547
rob Mr Spooner who managed to escape. Not

363

00:14:20,547 --> 00:14:23,062

two days later, they were spotted at a

364

00:14:23,062 --> 00:14:24,949

cock fight near Petersfield. They might

365

00:14:24,949 --> 00:14:27,465

have flown under the radar were it not

366

00:14:27,465 --> 00:14:29,666

for witnesses who clocked a pistol in

367

00:14:29,666 --> 00:14:31,553

Samuel's belt. 4 locals apprehended them,

368

00:14:31,553 --> 00:14:33,754

with Jeremy getting shot in the leg

369

00:14:33,754 --> 00:14:35,956

during the struggle and they were sent

370

00:14:35,956 --> 00:14:38,304

to Winchester Gaol. Samuel confessed and

371

00:14:38,304 --> 00:14:41,111

was convicted and executed on the 4th of

372

00:14:41,111 --> 00:14:43,567

June, but Jeremy died from his gunshot

373

00:14:43,567 --> 00:14:46,023

wound. This leads us to Herbert Haynes,

374

00:14:46,023 --> 00:14:48,830

who made the unwise decision to have an

375

00:14:48,830 --> 00:14:51,637

affair with the wife of an ex colleague,

376

00:14:51,637 --> 00:14:54,444

a man named John Carroll. Haynes and John

377

00:14:54,444 --> 00:14:56,900

Carroll's wife tried to flee to Holland

378

00:14:56,900 --> 00:14:58,303

and Carroll, understandably incensed,

379

00:14:58,303 --> 00:15:00,408

told a local constable about Haynes's

380

00:15:00,408 --> 00:15:02,473

other activities. Haynes tried

381

00:15:02,473 --> 00:15:03,955

unsuccessfully to bribe the constable

382

00:15:03,955 --> 00:15:06,624

with £50 and after this failed he was

383

00:15:06,624 --> 00:15:09,430

convicted and met his end by execution on

384

00:15:09,430 --> 00:15:11,899

the 8th of August. No word, though, on

385

00:15:11,899 --> 00:15:13,750

whether Carroll and his wife reconciled.

386

00:15:14,670 --> 00:15:17,088

Mary Brazier was also tried in April and

387

00:15:17,088 --> 00:15:18,901

following her conviction was sentenced to

388

00:15:18,901 --> 00:15:20,714

14 years transportation to America. As

389

00:15:20,714 --> 00:15:23,434

they had to wait for a full boatload of

390

00:15:23,434 --> 00:15:25,248

transportees, she wasn't sent until the

391

00:15:25,248 --> 00:15:28,099

December. The same December saw John

392

00:15:28,099 --> 00:15:30,547

Jones caught trying to return to his

393

00:15:30,547 --> 00:15:32,296

hometown. Locals spotted him, informed

394

00:15:32,296 --> 00:15:34,744

the constable, and he was arrested. He

395

00:15:34,744 --> 00:15:36,843

was originally convicted and sentenced to

396

00:15:36,843 --> 00:15:39,641

death, but did receive a reprieve and he

397

00:15:39,641 --> 00:15:41,390

was sentenced to transportation instead.

398

00:15:42,140 --> 00:15:45,045

This just leaves Thomas Rowden and Dick

399

00:15:45,045 --> 00:15:47,790

Turpin. So around this time,

400

00:15:47,790 --> 00:15:49,950

Turpin was getting properly stuck into

401

00:15:49,950 --> 00:15:52,830

the life of a highwayman. The 10th of

402

00:15:52,830 --> 00:15:55,350

July saw the press identifying him and

403

00:15:55,350 --> 00:15:57,870

Rowden as suspects involved in a robbery.

404

00:15:57,870 --> 00:16:00,750

A reward of £100 was added to the

405

00:16:00,750 --> 00:16:02,550

existing reward for information leading

406

00:16:02,550 --> 00:16:04,710

to their capture. Pretty substantial as

407

00:16:04,710 --> 00:16:06,870

when it's adjusted for inflation you're

408

00:16:06,870 --> 00:16:09,390

looking at about £20,000. Despite this

409

00:16:09,390 --> 00:16:11,550

incentive, the pair both undertook more

410

00:16:11,550 --> 00:16:14,070

robberies in the second half of 1735 and

411

00:16:14,070 --> 00:16:16,695

evaded capture. At this point, Rowden

412

00:16:16,695 --> 00:16:18,396

returned to Gloucestershire to resume his

413

00:16:18,396 --> 00:16:20,025

previous activities of counterfeiting

414

00:16:20,025 --> 00:16:22,677

coin and swapped to the name of Daniel

415

00:16:22,677 --> 00:16:24,998

Crisp. He was prosecuted under that name

416

00:16:24,998 --> 00:16:27,318

in July of 1736 for passing counterfeit

417

00:16:27,318 --> 00:16:29,971

coin and he was sentenced to a year

418

00:16:29,971 --> 00:16:32,292

behind bars. This is a lesser offence

419

00:16:32,292 --> 00:16:33,949

than actual counterfeiting, which would

420

00:16:33,949 --> 00:16:36,270

have had him sent to the gallows.

421

00:16:37,750 --> 00:16:40,033

So while serving his sentence as Daniel

422

00:16:40,033 --> 00:16:42,641

Crisp, he meets a man who's visiting a

423

00:16:42,641 --> 00:16:44,272

fellow prisoner, and this visitor

424

00:16:44,272 --> 00:16:46,228

happened to have a mutual acquaintance

425

00:16:46,228 --> 00:16:48,837

with Rowden. Rowden asked him to pass on

426

00:16:48,837 --> 00:16:50,467

Daniel Crisp's compliments. Really smart

427

00:16:50,467 --> 00:16:53,076

idea that using an alias to send well

428

00:16:53,076 --> 00:16:55,685

wishes to someone who has no clue that

429

00:16:55,685 --> 00:16:57,641

you're using that name. The acquaintance

430

00:16:57,641 --> 00:16:59,924

was obviously really confused by this and

431

00:16:59,924 --> 00:17:01,880

obviously wanted to solve this mystery.

432

00:17:01,880 --> 00:17:04,489

They said they didn't know a Daniel Crisp

433

00:17:04,489 --> 00:17:06,772

and so they visited the prison to

434

00:17:06,772 --> 00:17:08,459

investigate upon seeing. Rowden, the

435

00:17:08,459 --> 00:17:10,696

acquaintance, rode to London and told the

436

00:17:10,696 --> 00:17:12,613

magistrates exactly who they had locked

437

00:17:12,613 --> 00:17:14,850

up. After putting two and two together

438

00:17:14,850 --> 00:17:17,087

and coming up with four, they convicted

439

00:17:17,087 --> 00:17:19,004

him and sentenced him to transportation.

440

00:17:19,004 --> 00:17:20,922

Finally, around this time, the youngest

441

00:17:20,922 --> 00:17:23,478

member of the Gregory gang, the one who

442

00:17:23,478 --> 00:17:25,396

grasped on everybody, John Wheeler, he

443

00:17:25,396 --> 00:17:27,952

died. As far as we're aware, though, this

444

00:17:27,952 --> 00:17:30,189

was of natural causes. So this just

445

00:17:30,189 --> 00:17:32,426

leaves Dick Turpin, the only member of

446

00:17:32,426 --> 00:17:34,982

the gang who isn't dead or convicted and

447

00:17:34,982 --> 00:17:37,538

therefore transported at this point. But

448

00:17:37,538 --> 00:17:40,404

Eri, I hear you cry, it's only 1736. What

449

00:17:40,404 --> 00:17:43,269

was he up to in the remaining couple of

450

00:17:43,269 --> 00:17:45,179

years before being caught and executed?

451

00:17:45,179 --> 00:17:47,089

Well, it's believed that he disappeared

452

00:17:47,089 --> 00:17:49,955

over to Holland at the end of 1735 and

453

00:17:49,955 --> 00:17:52,183

the authorities did nothing to quell this

454

00:17:52,183 --> 00:17:54,922

particular rumour. To be fair, this makes

455

00:17:54,922 --> 00:17:57,326

a lot of sense because it's much easier

456

00:17:57,326 --> 00:17:59,128

to justify your inability to capture

457

00:17:59,128 --> 00:18:01,231

someone if they fled to another country.

458

00:18:01,231 --> 00:18:03,334

That said, Turpin didn't stay away for

459

00:18:03,334 --> 00:18:05,737

too long and there is some evidence to

460

00:18:05,737 --> 00:18:07,540

suggest he was back in 1737.

461

00:18:08,770 --> 00:18:11,482

The 12th of February of 1737 saw Turpin's

462

00:18:11,482 --> 00:18:14,194

wife, her maid and a guy named Robert

463

00:18:14,194 --> 00:18:16,906

Knott committed to Hartford Gaol "on a

464

00:18:16,906 --> 00:18:18,601

violent suspicion of being dangerous

465

00:18:18,601 --> 00:18:20,636

rogues and robbing upon the highway".

466

00:18:20,636 --> 00:18:22,670

Apparently they were with Turpin at

467

00:18:22,670 --> 00:18:24,365

Puckeridge in Hertfordshire that evening

468

00:18:24,365 --> 00:18:26,738

and they were caught, though Turpin once

469

00:18:26,738 --> 00:18:29,111

again slipped through the grasp of the

470

00:18:29,111 --> 00:18:31,853

law. Their trial on the 28th

471

00:18:31,853 --> 00:18:33,716

of February saw the women acquitted,

472

00:18:33,716 --> 00:18:35,890

though Knott was held until he could find

473

00:18:35,890 --> 00:18:38,064

sureties for the next sessions, and at

474

00:18:38,064 --> 00:18:40,237

this point Turpin disappears for a month

475

00:18:40,237 --> 00:18:41,790

before reappearing with two other

476

00:18:41,790 --> 00:18:43,653

highwaymen, a Matthew King and Stephen

477

00:18:43,653 --> 00:18:45,206

Potter around the Leicestershire area

478

00:18:45,206 --> 00:18:47,380

before later moving back down to London.

479

00:18:48,640 --> 00:18:51,486

The 29th of April saw one of the

480

00:18:51,486 --> 00:18:53,620

group steal Joseph Major's horse. This

481

00:18:53,620 --> 00:18:56,111

horse had the absolutely adorable name of

482

00:18:56,111 --> 00:18:58,245

White Stockings. I absolutely love that

483

00:18:58,245 --> 00:19:00,380

name. Being justifiably annoyed, he went

484

00:19:00,380 --> 00:19:03,226

straight to the closest pub to tell the

485

00:19:03,226 --> 00:19:05,984

landlord, a guy named Richard Bayes. Now,

486

00:19:05,984 --> 00:19:08,256

being a landlord, Bayes had a whole host

487

00:19:08,256 --> 00:19:10,527

of contacts through the pub trade and he

488

00:19:10,527 --> 00:19:12,799

was able to find out quite quickly where

489

00:19:12,799 --> 00:19:14,503

White Stockings was being stabled. He

490

00:19:14,503 --> 00:19:15,922

gathered some assistance from eager

491

00:19:15,922 --> 00:19:17,910

participants and went there to lie in

492

00:19:17,910 --> 00:19:20,182

wait for Turpin to return. But the first

493

00:19:20,182 --> 00:19:22,453

person to show up wasn't Turpin at all.

494

00:19:22,453 --> 00:19:24,441

It was Matthew King's brother John, who

495

00:19:24,441 --> 00:19:26,429

was questioned on the origin of the

496

00:19:26,429 --> 00:19:28,133

horse. He clearly wasn't a particularly

497

00:19:28,133 --> 00:19:29,836

convincing liar because no one believed

498

00:19:29,836 --> 00:19:32,546

that he'd bought the horse himself. After

499

00:19:32,546 --> 00:19:33,726

fetching the constable to interrogate

500

00:19:33,726 --> 00:19:35,614

John King, he confessed that a man was

501

00:19:35,614 --> 00:19:38,115

waiting for the horse in Red Lion Street.

502

00:19:38,115 --> 00:19:40,894

The group ran to the area and Bayes

503

00:19:40,894 --> 00:19:42,979

recognised Matthew King and tried to

504

00:19:42,979 --> 00:19:45,064

catch him. While this struggle ensued,

505

00:19:45,064 --> 00:19:47,843

Turpin turned up, shots were fired and in

506

00:19:47,843 --> 00:19:50,623

the chaos King got a bullet to the

507

00:19:50,623 --> 00:19:53,402

leg. In his later book Richard Bayes, pub

508

00:19:53,402 --> 00:19:55,487

landlord turned historian, gave an

509

00:19:55,487 --> 00:19:58,267

account of the night in question. "King

510

00:19:58,267 --> 00:20:00,351

immediately drew a pistol which he

511

00:20:00,351 --> 00:20:02,783

clapped to Mr Baye's breast, but luckily

512

00:20:02,783 --> 00:20:05,563

it flashed in the pan upon which King

513

00:20:05,563 --> 00:20:08,365

struggled to get out his other. It

514

00:20:08,365 --> 00:20:10,169

had twisted around in his pocket and he

515

00:20:10,169 --> 00:20:12,706

could not. Turpin, who was waiting not

516

00:20:12,706 --> 00:20:14,441

far off on horseback, hearing the

517

00:20:14,441 --> 00:20:16,176

skirmish, came up when King cried

518

00:20:16,176 --> 00:20:18,778

out, "Dick, shoot him, or we are taken by

519

00:20:18,778 --> 00:20:20,802

God." At which instance Turpin fired his

520

00:20:20,802 --> 00:20:23,115

pistol, and it missed Mr Bayes, and shot

521

00:20:23,115 --> 00:20:25,140

King in two places, who cried out, "Dick,

522

00:20:25,429 --> 00:20:27,164

you have killed me." Which Turpin

523

00:20:27,164 --> 00:20:29,477

hearing, he rode away as hard as he

524

00:20:29,477 --> 00:20:31,790

could. King fell at the shot, though he

525

00:20:31,790 --> 00:20:34,103

lived a week after, and gave Turpin the

526

00:20:34,103 --> 00:20:36,841
character of a coward." So this

527

00:20:36,841 --> 00:20:38,704
incident led to the law adding

528

00:20:38,704 --> 00:20:40,568
manslaughter to Turpin's long list of

529

00:20:40,568 --> 00:20:42,741
crimes. It was rumoured that Turpin swore

530

00:20:42,741 --> 00:20:44,915
revenge against Bayes at this point, but

531

00:20:44,915 --> 00:20:47,400
there's not a lot of evidence to support

532

00:20:47,400 --> 00:20:49,573
this. The papers reported that Bayes had

533

00:20:49,573 --> 00:20:52,058
shot King, but no one is completely sure

534

00:20:52,058 --> 00:20:53,300
of what actually happened.

535

00:20:54,780 --> 00:20:57,146
Realising that if he was caught after the

536

00:20:57,146 --> 00:20:59,809
death of King, it was likely to be pinned

537

00:20:59,809 --> 00:21:01,879
on him, Turpin headed to Epping Forest

538

00:21:01,879 --> 00:21:03,950

where he'd previously hidden in a cave

539

00:21:03,950 --> 00:21:06,316

with King. No one is exactly sure these

540

00:21:06,316 --> 00:21:08,683

days as to where the cave is precisely,

541

00:21:08,683 --> 00:21:11,049

but we know that there was a Loughton-

542

00:21:11,049 --> 00:21:12,824

based surveyor named D'Oyley who marked

543

00:21:12,824 --> 00:21:15,782

an area to the north of Loughton Camp as

544

00:21:15,782 --> 00:21:17,261

Turpin's cave. Excavations, however, have

545

00:21:17,261 --> 00:21:19,993

revealed no evidence of this. It

546

00:21:19,993 --> 00:21:21,970

was here in Epping Forest, though, that

547

00:21:21,970 --> 00:21:23,665

Turpin finally committed to the offence

548

00:21:23,665 --> 00:21:26,272

of murder, by killing Thomas Morris, a

549

00:21:26,272 --> 00:21:28,788

servant of Mr. Thompson, who was a keeper

550

00:21:28,788 --> 00:21:30,990

of the forest. Morris spotted Turpin and

551

00:21:30,990 --> 00:21:33,820

tried to apprehend him on the 4th of May.

552

00:21:34,540 --> 00:21:36,660

Turpin shot him with a carbine.

553

00:21:38,710 --> 00:21:41,479

It's not totally clear what Turpin did

554

00:21:41,479 --> 00:21:44,366

after this. The people of Epping

555

00:21:44,366 --> 00:21:46,653

Forest were reported as saying that they

556

00:21:46,653 --> 00:21:49,265

would only try to catch Turpin for a

557

00:21:49,265 --> 00:21:51,551

sizeable reward as it was too dangerous.

558

00:21:51,551 --> 00:21:53,838

Turpin was clearly a desperate man at

559

00:21:53,838 --> 00:21:56,777

this stage. £200 was offered and this was

560

00:21:56,777 --> 00:21:59,390

the point at which Turpin headed to Long

561

00:21:59,390 --> 00:22:01,676

Sutton in Lincolnshire in the summer of

562

00:22:01,676 --> 00:22:03,635

1737. You'll note though, that there's

563

00:22:03,635 --> 00:22:06,248

still no mention at all of Black Bess.

564

00:22:06,248 --> 00:22:08,208

Eventually he travelled further north and

565

00:22:08,208 --> 00:22:10,494

changed his name to avoid detection, and

566

00:22:10,494 --> 00:22:12,453

it was here that everything began

567

00:22:12,453 --> 00:22:15,281

to unravel. Unfortunately

568

00:22:15,281 --> 00:22:18,013

for Turpin, it seems as though at some

569

00:22:18,013 --> 00:22:20,404

point that his temper and arrogance got

570

00:22:20,404 --> 00:22:23,136

the better of him, and much in the

571

00:22:23,136 --> 00:22:25,526

way that Al Capone was finally convicted

572

00:22:25,526 --> 00:22:27,575

through the unlikely offence of tax

573

00:22:27,575 --> 00:22:29,282

fraud, Dick Turpin's final conviction was

574

00:22:29,282 --> 00:22:32,014

just the tip of the entire rotten iceberg

575

00:22:32,014 --> 00:22:34,920

of his vile behaviour. So

576

00:22:34,920 --> 00:22:37,580
in June 1737, Turpin is boarding with

577

00:22:37,580 --> 00:22:40,240
a man in Brough named William Harris,

578

00:22:40,240 --> 00:22:42,900
having given the alias of John Palmer.

579

00:22:43,580 --> 00:22:45,407
He was selling horses across the county

580

00:22:45,407 --> 00:22:47,495
of York and when Harris asked him where

581

00:22:47,495 --> 00:22:49,583
he lived, Turpin said he lived at Long

582

00:22:49,583 --> 00:22:51,410
Sutton with his father and sister. The

583

00:22:51,410 --> 00:22:53,497
reason he had left his father was because

584

00:22:53,497 --> 00:22:56,107
he owed a debt and did not want to be

585

00:22:56,107 --> 00:22:57,934
arrested by bailiffs saying that if they

586

00:22:57,934 --> 00:23:00,611
caught him they would kill him. Harris

587

00:23:00,611 --> 00:23:02,300
replied, somewhat confused, that if the

588

00:23:02,300 --> 00:23:04,551

person who owed the debt was unarmed, it

589

00:23:04,551 --> 00:23:06,803

would be hard for the bailiffs to kill

590

00:23:06,803 --> 00:23:09,617

him just over a debt. For reasons best

591

00:23:09,617 --> 00:23:11,371

known to himself, possibly drink-related,

592

00:23:11,371 --> 00:23:13,417

Turpin told Harris that he actually owned

593

00:23:13,417 --> 00:23:15,755

an excellent pair of pistols and did not

594

00:23:15,755 --> 00:23:17,802

fear the bailiffs, knowing that if they

595

00:23:17,802 --> 00:23:20,140

tried to catch him, he would shoot them.

596

00:23:21,260 --> 00:23:23,780

You might wonder here why Harris is

597

00:23:23,780 --> 00:23:25,940

testifying against John Palmer at all.

598

00:23:25,940 --> 00:23:28,820

After all, he has no proof of what

599

00:23:28,820 --> 00:23:31,340

was said - it could have been bravado,

600

00:23:31,340 --> 00:23:33,500

but the reason for giving evidence

601

00:23:33,500 --> 00:23:36,020

relates to a separate incident in the

602

00:23:36,020 --> 00:23:38,540

October of 1738. Palmer had been hunting,

603

00:23:38,540 --> 00:23:41,420

failed to catch anything, and in a temper

604

00:23:41,420 --> 00:23:43,940

shot a rooster belonging to another man

605

00:23:43,940 --> 00:23:46,460

in the street. When he was confronted

606

00:23:46,460 --> 00:23:48,859

about this, Palmer told the other guy if

607

00:23:48,859 --> 00:23:50,712

he would only stay whilst he had charged

608

00:23:50,712 --> 00:23:53,242

his piece, he would shoot him too. Rude.

609

00:23:53,242 --> 00:23:55,720

Well, this led to three justices coming

610

00:23:55,720 --> 00:23:58,552

to Brough to bind Palmer over to keep

611

00:23:58,552 --> 00:24:01,380

the peace. Before we go any further,

612

00:24:01,380 --> 00:24:02,820

it's probably worth explaining very

613

00:24:02,820 --> 00:24:05,124

quickly what we mean by binding over to

614

00:24:05,124 --> 00:24:07,428

keep the peace. It's a weird old legal

615

00:24:07,428 --> 00:24:09,732

term that we still use today in England.

616

00:24:09,732 --> 00:24:12,036

A bind over is basically a legal order.

617

00:24:12,036 --> 00:24:13,764

It's given by either the Magistrates

618

00:24:13,764 --> 00:24:16,356

Court or the Crown Court to deal with low

619

00:24:16,356 --> 00:24:18,084

level public order issues. It's a

620

00:24:18,084 --> 00:24:19,524

preventative measure rather than a

621

00:24:19,524 --> 00:24:21,540

punishment, so the person just has to

622

00:24:21,540 --> 00:24:23,844

agree to behave themselves and "keep the

623

00:24:23,844 --> 00:24:25,860

peace" for a specified period of time.

624

00:24:26,670 --> 00:24:28,537

It's not a criminal conviction, but it is

625

00:24:28,537 --> 00:24:30,170

a formal agreement and breaking it will

626

00:24:30,170 --> 00:24:32,361
result in having to pay a forfeit or

627

00:24:32,361 --> 00:24:34,763
someone else having to pay a surety on

628

00:24:34,763 --> 00:24:36,564
their behalf. So this could mean

629

00:24:36,564 --> 00:24:38,365
somebody's brother or friend might agree

630

00:24:38,365 --> 00:24:40,467
to pay the surety if the person

631

00:24:40,467 --> 00:24:42,869
misbehaves, in which case it's on them to

632

00:24:42,869 --> 00:24:44,670
make sure that that person behaves

633

00:24:44,670 --> 00:24:46,471
themselves. The individual has to consent

634

00:24:46,471 --> 00:24:48,573
to being bound over. And these have

635

00:24:48,573 --> 00:24:50,675
evolved somewhat over time, but they have

636

00:24:50,675 --> 00:24:53,077
been a feature of English law for many

637

00:24:53,077 --> 00:24:54,878
centuries. They first appeared back in

638

00:24:54,878 --> 00:24:57,280

1361 during the reign of King Edward the

639

00:24:57,280 --> 00:25:00,043

Third. Anyway, moving back to

640

00:25:00,043 --> 00:25:02,110

John Palmer alias Turpin.

641

00:25:04,080 --> 00:25:05,396

Given Palmer's unpleasant behaviour,

642

00:25:05,396 --> 00:25:08,028

combined with the fact that no harm had

643

00:25:08,028 --> 00:25:10,331

been caused to anyone, it makes sense

644

00:25:10,331 --> 00:25:12,305

that they would have approached this

645

00:25:12,305 --> 00:25:14,937

incident with the intent to bind him over

646

00:25:14,937 --> 00:25:16,911

rather than actually prosecute. But for

647

00:25:16,911 --> 00:25:19,213

some weird reason best known to himself,

648

00:25:19,213 --> 00:25:21,187

Palmer refuses to find anyone for

649

00:25:21,187 --> 00:25:23,490

sureties, and this led to the justices

650

00:25:23,490 --> 00:25:25,793

committing him to the House of Correction

651

00:25:25,793 --> 00:25:28,425
at Beverley. He even rode his own horse

652

00:25:28,425 --> 00:25:31,057
over to that House of Correction, and why

653

00:25:31,057 --> 00:25:33,360
he didn't try to escape is just

654

00:25:33,740 --> 00:25:35,724
baffling. James Sharp in his fantastic

655

00:25:35,724 --> 00:25:38,369
book Turpin, The Myth of the English

656

00:25:38,369 --> 00:25:40,023
Highwayman, speculates that this could

657

00:25:40,023 --> 00:25:42,007
have been because Turpin didn't really

658

00:25:42,007 --> 00:25:44,652
think it was going to matter too much,

659

00:25:44,652 --> 00:25:46,636
and that the consequences weren't going

660

00:25:46,636 --> 00:25:49,612
to be that severe. But it was while he

661

00:25:49,612 --> 00:25:52,257
was held in the House of Correction that

662

00:25:52,257 --> 00:25:54,241
the justices started to hear some

663

00:25:54,241 --> 00:25:55,895

interesting rumours about John Palmer.

664

00:25:55,895 --> 00:25:58,540

The way he kept crossing borders of the

665

00:25:58,540 --> 00:26:00,524

counties and moving horses about was

666

00:26:00,524 --> 00:26:01,847

drawing some suspicion, particularly

667

00:26:01,847 --> 00:26:03,500

because nobody who was questioned was

668

00:26:03,700 --> 00:26:06,420

exactly clear on how he made a living.

669

00:26:07,220 --> 00:26:09,180

Palmer was questioned about this and he

670

00:26:09,180 --> 00:26:11,420

answered that he was a butcher. He stuck

671

00:26:11,420 --> 00:26:13,380

to his previous story about living in

672

00:26:13,380 --> 00:26:15,060

Long Sutton, Lincolnshire with his father

673

00:26:15,060 --> 00:26:17,020

and getting into debt over some sheep

674

00:26:17,020 --> 00:26:19,820

that turned out to not be fit to eat. To

675

00:26:19,820 --> 00:26:22,060

avoid the debt he had come to Yorkshire.

676

00:26:22,060 --> 00:26:24,020

Now these justices were not taking his

677

00:26:24,020 --> 00:26:26,260

word for this. They sent a messenger down

678

00:26:26,260 --> 00:26:28,500

to Lincolnshire to check and it turns out

679

00:26:28,500 --> 00:26:30,740

that yes, John Palmer had been a resident

680

00:26:30,740 --> 00:26:32,980

of Long Sutton, but his father never had

681

00:26:32,980 --> 00:26:35,550

been. Palmer was actually being

682

00:26:35,550 --> 00:26:38,091

investigated for stealing sheep. And he

683

00:26:38,091 --> 00:26:39,864

was also suspected of stealing horses

684

00:26:39,864 --> 00:26:41,933

too. Once the justices heard this, they

685

00:26:41,933 --> 00:26:44,001

realised the offences he was accused of

686

00:26:44,001 --> 00:26:46,661

were too serious for him to be kept in

687

00:26:46,661 --> 00:26:48,434

the Beverley House of Corrections. So

688

00:26:48,434 --> 00:26:50,798

they moved him to York Castle where he

689

00:26:50,798 --> 00:26:51,980

was kept under guard.

690

00:26:53,640 --> 00:26:56,242

Whilst being held in York Castle, John

691

00:26:56,242 --> 00:26:58,473

Palmer wrote to his brother-in-law in

692

00:26:58,473 --> 00:27:01,447

Essex to ask for his help and here

693

00:27:01,447 --> 00:27:04,421

is where a bit of bad luck led

694

00:27:04,421 --> 00:27:07,206

to Turpin coming completely unstuck. Now,

695

00:27:07,206 --> 00:27:09,351

you need to understand the context here.

696

00:27:09,351 --> 00:27:11,802

Back in the old days, before the Postal

697

00:27:11,802 --> 00:27:13,333

Service was properly established, letters

698

00:27:13,333 --> 00:27:15,784

would be sent to the closest place that

699

00:27:15,784 --> 00:27:18,235

acted as a post office, and the recipient

700

00:27:18,235 --> 00:27:20,686

would have to pay the postage before they

701

00:27:20,686 --> 00:27:22,830

got the letter. They didn't have stamps

702

00:27:22,830 --> 00:27:25,588

back in those days to cover it. So upon

703

00:27:25,588 --> 00:27:27,426

visiting the post office in Saffron

704

00:27:27,426 --> 00:27:29,264

Walden to check for mail, Turpin's

705

00:27:29,264 --> 00:27:31,102

brother-in-law is told that there's a

706

00:27:31,102 --> 00:27:33,942

letter for him there from York. Not

707

00:27:33,942 --> 00:27:35,574

knowing anyone from York and being

708

00:27:35,574 --> 00:27:37,478

frankly horrified at the cost of the

709

00:27:37,478 --> 00:27:39,958

postage, the brother-in-law said no thank

710

00:27:39,958 --> 00:27:42,546

you, I will not be taking this letter.

711

00:27:42,546 --> 00:27:45,135

I'm not too fussed. So he leaves the

712

00:27:45,135 --> 00:27:47,076

letter there. Unluckily for Turpin, who

713

00:27:47,076 --> 00:27:49,988

should be next in the queue to get his

714

00:27:49,988 --> 00:27:51,929

post than Turpin's former school teacher

715

00:27:51,929 --> 00:27:54,889

named James Smith. The same James

716

00:27:54,889 --> 00:27:57,757

Smith who taught Turpin how to write

717

00:27:57,757 --> 00:28:00,625

as a boy. Smith instantly recognised the

718

00:28:00,625 --> 00:28:02,674

handwriting and grew very suspicious.

719

00:28:02,674 --> 00:28:05,132

Having heard tell of Turpin's

720

00:28:05,132 --> 00:28:07,591

shenanigans over the years, he brought

721

00:28:07,591 --> 00:28:09,804

the local constable. They paid the

722

00:28:09,804 --> 00:28:11,532

postage, retrieved the letter and read

723

00:28:11,532 --> 00:28:14,518

it. Smith rode north to York Castle

724

00:28:14,518 --> 00:28:16,297

and identified John Palmer as Dick

725

00:28:16,297 --> 00:28:18,075

Turpin. The authorities realised they had

726

00:28:18,075 --> 00:28:20,150

a far more dangerous criminal on their

727

00:28:20,150 --> 00:28:21,929

hands than they had previously thought

728

00:28:21,929 --> 00:28:24,300

and they began the process of trying him.

729

00:28:25,140 --> 00:28:28,082

So just let that sink in for a moment. If

730

00:28:28,082 --> 00:28:29,847

John Smith hadn't been the person

731

00:28:29,847 --> 00:28:31,612

standing behind the brother-in-law at the

732

00:28:31,612 --> 00:28:33,966

post office, Turpin might not have been

733

00:28:33,966 --> 00:28:36,319

caught. At this point, it's hard to know

734

00:28:36,319 --> 00:28:38,085

exactly what would have happened, but

735

00:28:38,085 --> 00:28:40,144

it's really interesting to think that he

736

00:28:40,144 --> 00:28:41,909

could have gone on for significantly

737

00:28:41,909 --> 00:28:43,380

longer, getting away with things.

738

00:28:44,750 --> 00:28:46,671

Originally, given that the murder of the

739

00:28:46,671 --> 00:28:48,317

forest keepers servant took place in

740

00:28:48,317 --> 00:28:50,238

Essex and Turpin's other crimes in the

741

00:28:50,238 --> 00:28:51,884

London area, the authorities did consider

742

00:28:51,884 --> 00:28:54,354

trying him in a court down South, but the

743

00:28:54,354 --> 00:28:56,549

Attorney General stuck to the idea of a

744

00:28:56,549 --> 00:28:58,744

trial in York to save some money. This

745

00:28:58,744 --> 00:29:00,939

also allowed for a little bit of nepotism

746

00:29:00,939 --> 00:29:03,409

to happen as one of the Justices of the

747

00:29:03,409 --> 00:29:05,055

Peace who was originally summoned was

748

00:29:05,055 --> 00:29:07,525

also an MP for Hull and he wanted his

749

00:29:07,525 --> 00:29:09,445

brother to be a member for the

750

00:29:09,445 --> 00:29:10,817

prosecution. This is something he

751

00:29:10,817 --> 00:29:13,012

wouldn't have been able to wrangle if the

752

00:29:13,012 --> 00:29:14,860

trial had taken place in the south.

753

00:29:15,860 --> 00:29:18,587

So the trial takes place on the 22nd

754

00:29:18,587 --> 00:29:21,315

of March in 1739 and there were two

755

00:29:21,315 --> 00:29:23,019

indictments listed. The first was

756

00:29:23,019 --> 00:29:25,746

stealing a mare worth £3 and a

757

00:29:25,746 --> 00:29:28,133

foal worth 20 shillings and secondly for

758

00:29:28,133 --> 00:29:30,860

stealing a gelding worth £3 and all

759

00:29:30,860 --> 00:29:33,587

of these horses were owned by a Thomas

760

00:29:33,587 --> 00:29:35,292

Creasey. Now weirdly, the indictments

761

00:29:35,292 --> 00:29:37,337

were actually inaccurate. I mean the

762

00:29:37,337 --> 00:29:39,724

horses were accurate, but the dates were

763

00:29:39,724 --> 00:29:42,451

out by nearly a year and there was

764

00:29:42,451 --> 00:29:44,496

legislation even then to confirm that

765

00:29:44,496 --> 00:29:46,256

inaccuracies could render charges void.

766

00:29:46,256 --> 00:29:48,467

Given that this is the case, one would

767

00:29:48,467 --> 00:29:50,400

think that they would have been more

768

00:29:50,400 --> 00:29:52,611

cautious and made sure to get those dates

769

00:29:52,611 --> 00:29:54,545

right because the dates that they gave

770

00:29:54,545 --> 00:29:56,479

actually tallied up with the dates that

771

00:29:56,479 --> 00:29:59,346

Turpin was already in prison. Now, in

772

00:29:59,346 --> 00:30:01,930

those days, there was no right to legal

773

00:30:01,930 --> 00:30:03,546

representation. The judge was essentially

774

00:30:03,546 --> 00:30:06,130

an umpire to the case. Turpin did a

775

00:30:06,130 --> 00:30:08,068

really poor job of defending himself.

776

00:30:08,068 --> 00:30:10,653

Bearing in mind that the dates on the

777

00:30:10,653 --> 00:30:12,914

indictment, as I've said, were wrong. He

778

00:30:12,914 --> 00:30:15,498

foolishly tried to claim to have been in

779

00:30:15,498 --> 00:30:17,760

prison at the time that the actual

780

00:30:17,760 --> 00:30:20,021

offences took place. So he knows those

781

00:30:20,021 --> 00:30:22,282

dates and he's citing the correct dates

782

00:30:22,282 --> 00:30:25,190

and saying, Oh no, I was in prison on

783

00:30:25,190 --> 00:30:27,128

these correct dates rather than just

784

00:30:27,128 --> 00:30:29,085

going with the incorrect dates that

785

00:30:29,085 --> 00:30:31,267

they're giving and saying yes, I was in

786

00:30:31,267 --> 00:30:33,449

prison then. If he'd have stuck with the

787

00:30:33,449 --> 00:30:35,085

incorrect dates given by the prosecution,

788

00:30:35,085 --> 00:30:37,267

he might have had more luck in defending

789

00:30:37,267 --> 00:30:38,904

himself because technically he would have

790

00:30:38,904 --> 00:30:41,085

been telling the truth that on the dates

791

00:30:41,085 --> 00:30:43,267

given by the prosecution he was in fact

792

00:30:43,267 --> 00:30:44,904

detained. Consequently, his claims of an

793

00:30:44,904 --> 00:30:46,813

alibi were dismissed by the courts. He

794

00:30:46,813 --> 00:30:48,449

denied knowing the witnesses and he

795

00:30:48,449 --> 00:30:50,631

produced no witnesses of his own. And he

796

00:30:50,631 --> 00:30:52,813

then kicked off saying that he thought he

797

00:30:52,813 --> 00:30:55,540

was going to be tried in Essex and so he

798

00:30:55,540 --> 00:30:57,449

hadn't contacted anyone to act as a

799

00:30:57,449 --> 00:31:00,150

witness on his behalf. After being

800

00:31:00,150 --> 00:31:01,980

convicted, he was sentenced to death.

801

00:31:03,100 --> 00:31:05,760

Turpin was executed on Sunday the

802

00:31:05,760 --> 00:31:07,660

8th of April in 1739.

803

00:31:08,460 --> 00:31:10,460

The hangman was also a convicted

804

00:31:10,460 --> 00:31:12,793

highwayman, and he was reprieved on the

805

00:31:12,793 --> 00:31:15,127

condition that he carry out the grisly

806

00:31:15,127 --> 00:31:17,460

deed. Generally in the 21st century, we

807

00:31:17,460 --> 00:31:19,793

don't have a great perception of the

808

00:31:19,793 --> 00:31:22,127

justice system of the 18th century, which

809

00:31:22,127 --> 00:31:24,127

can seem pretty barbaric by modern

810

00:31:24,127 --> 00:31:26,820

standards. But it's also a good example

811

00:31:26,820 --> 00:31:29,433

of why deterrence is an aim of sentencing

812

00:31:29,433 --> 00:31:31,720

doesn't really work. A lot of criminals

813

00:31:31,720 --> 00:31:34,007

simply don't think they're going to be

814

00:31:34,007 --> 00:31:36,293

caught, so the idea of a punishment

815

00:31:36,293 --> 00:31:38,253

doesn't really bother them. Logically, it

816

00:31:38,253 --> 00:31:40,540

can be argued that if harsh sentences

817

00:31:40,540 --> 00:31:42,827

such as hanging acted as deterrents, then

818

00:31:42,827 --> 00:31:44,787

our history books wouldn't be littered

819

00:31:44,787 --> 00:31:47,514

with so many horrific cases. Within

820

00:31:47,514 --> 00:31:49,758

the context of the time, though,

821

00:31:49,758 --> 00:31:52,376

executions were a pretty popular form of

822

00:31:52,376 --> 00:31:53,872

entertainment. A contemporary account

823

00:31:53,872 --> 00:31:56,864

from the era by a guy named Mandeville

824

00:31:56,864 --> 00:31:59,482

stated that the crowds at an execution

825

00:31:59,482 --> 00:32:01,352

would often entertain themselves by

826

00:32:01,352 --> 00:32:04,344

picking up "the dead carcasses of dogs

827

00:32:04,344 --> 00:32:07,336

and cats, or for want of them, rags

828

00:32:07,336 --> 00:32:09,954

and all trompery that is capable of

829

00:32:09,954 --> 00:32:12,946

imbibing dirt". These were then "flung as

830

00:32:12,946 --> 00:32:15,938

high and as far as a strong arm

831

00:32:15,938 --> 00:32:18,169

can carry them and commonly directed

832

00:32:18,169 --> 00:32:20,146

where the throng is the thickest."

833

00:32:20,146 --> 00:32:22,783

Lovely. I've seen a few pints lobbed into

834

00:32:22,783 --> 00:32:25,419

mosh pits in my time, but I'm delighted

835

00:32:25,419 --> 00:32:27,726

to say that I've never seen anyone

836

00:32:27,726 --> 00:32:30,363

lobbing a dead animal. Maybe I just don't

837

00:32:30,363 --> 00:32:32,340

go to that kind of gig.

838

00:32:33,670 --> 00:32:36,146

Now allegedly, Turpin was buried in

839

00:32:36,146 --> 00:32:38,269

Saint George's churchyard. It's a very

840

00:32:38,269 --> 00:32:40,391

large grave which allegedly contains his

841

00:32:40,391 --> 00:32:42,867

horse Black Bess as well. The inscription

842

00:32:42,867 --> 00:32:45,697

on the stone is newer than those around

843

00:32:45,697 --> 00:32:48,527

it, and it certainly isn't from 1739. It

844

00:32:48,527 --> 00:32:51,003

is worth noting here though that the

845

00:32:51,003 --> 00:32:53,479

stone says he was executed at Tyburn.

846

00:32:53,479 --> 00:32:55,955

It's not referring to the famous Tyburn

847

00:32:55,955 --> 00:32:58,785

in London. The area in York that the

848

00:32:58,785 --> 00:33:00,908

execution took place in was also

849

00:33:00,908 --> 00:33:03,030

nicknamed Tyburn for having a similar

850

00:33:03,140 --> 00:33:05,828

reputation. Turpin's body was

851
00:33:05,828 --> 00:33:08,178
nearly used for dissection by the medical

852
00:33:08,178 --> 00:33:10,529
profession. This was pretty common at the

853
00:33:10,529 --> 00:33:12,545
time. Body snatchers would retrieve the

854
00:33:12,545 --> 00:33:15,231
corpse of an executed criminal to be used

855
00:33:15,231 --> 00:33:17,582
in research in exchange for cash. The

856
00:33:17,582 --> 00:33:19,933
public were not impressed with this and

857
00:33:19,933 --> 00:33:21,948
they retrieved Turpin's body and they

858
00:33:21,948 --> 00:33:24,928
reburied it. It's worth noting at

859
00:33:24,928 --> 00:33:27,545
this point that this wasn't out of any

860
00:33:27,545 --> 00:33:29,181
particular affection for Turpin himself,

861
00:33:29,181 --> 00:33:31,471
and it actually gives us a really

862
00:33:31,471 --> 00:33:33,107
interesting insight into public opinion

863
00:33:33,107 --> 00:33:35,724

at the time. The public wasn't so much

864

00:33:35,724 --> 00:33:37,686

pro Turpin as they were anti body

865

00:33:37,686 --> 00:33:39,976

snatcher, and there were a few reasons

866

00:33:39,976 --> 00:33:42,920

for this. A lot of society at the time

867

00:33:42,920 --> 00:33:44,556

believed in bodily resurrection, which

868

00:33:44,556 --> 00:33:47,173

wasn't possible if a body had been cut

869

00:33:47,173 --> 00:33:50,062

up. This was also seen as

870

00:33:50,062 --> 00:33:52,175

a further punishment, and it was

871

00:33:52,175 --> 00:33:54,289

therefore frowned upon. The hanging was

872

00:33:54,289 --> 00:33:57,108

what the person was sentenced to, and the

873

00:33:57,108 --> 00:33:59,222

hanging should be where this particular

874

00:33:59,222 --> 00:34:01,688

instance ended. It also didn't help that

875

00:34:01,688 --> 00:34:04,154

the medical profession at the time was

876

00:34:04,154 --> 00:34:06,972

viewed with a great deal of mistrust. So

877

00:34:06,972 --> 00:34:09,438

the public reburied him, and this time

878

00:34:09,438 --> 00:34:11,905

they reburied him with slaked lime to

879

00:34:11,905 --> 00:34:14,018

help him decompose faster through a

880

00:34:14,018 --> 00:34:15,428

gruesome chemical reaction called

881

00:34:15,428 --> 00:34:17,998

saponification. The oils in his body

882

00:34:17,998 --> 00:34:20,730

reacted with the lime and he turned

883

00:34:20,730 --> 00:34:23,446

into literal soap. Yes, you

884

00:34:23,446 --> 00:34:25,232

heard that correctly. He turned into

885

00:34:25,232 --> 00:34:27,937

soap. And so that was

886

00:34:27,937 --> 00:34:30,050

the end of the man, Dick Turpin.

887

00:34:31,250 --> 00:34:33,599

But what of his persisting legend? How

888

00:34:33,599 --> 00:34:35,948

did we end up with this weirdly

889

00:34:35,948 --> 00:34:38,759

romanticised view of him?To answer

890

00:34:38,759 --> 00:34:41,755

that, we need to fast forward to the

891

00:34:41,755 --> 00:34:44,605

1800s. Now, if

892

00:34:44,605 --> 00:34:46,419

you've ever looked into criminology,

893

00:34:46,419 --> 00:34:48,595

you'll know that trends in criminal

894

00:34:48,595 --> 00:34:51,134

behaviour change, and this was the case

895

00:34:51,134 --> 00:34:54,036

even back then. In the same way that

896

00:34:54,036 --> 00:34:56,575

today's crime stats show an increase in

897

00:34:56,575 --> 00:34:59,477

things like cyber crime, back in the late

898

00:34:59,477 --> 00:35:02,016

1700s and earlier 1800s, there was a

899

00:35:02,016 --> 00:35:04,192

shift away from highway robbery and

900

00:35:04,192 --> 00:35:05,643

towards forgery. Essentially, highway

901

00:35:05,643 --> 00:35:08,545
robbery died out. For a long time after

902

00:35:08,545 --> 00:35:11,446
his death, there was no mention of Turpin

903

00:35:11,446 --> 00:35:14,084
in any of the literature. He

904

00:35:14,084 --> 00:35:16,056
was essentially forgotten about until

905

00:35:16,056 --> 00:35:18,816
around 50 years after his execution. But

906

00:35:18,816 --> 00:35:21,576
not all highwaymen were left out of

907

00:35:21,576 --> 00:35:23,941
the written record. Enter Daniel Defoe,

908

00:35:23,941 --> 00:35:26,701
who wrote about the exploits of one

909

00:35:26,701 --> 00:35:29,067
John Nevison, who, after committing a

910

00:35:29,067 --> 00:35:31,827
robbery in Kent, allegedly galloped up to

911

00:35:31,827 --> 00:35:34,587
York as fast as his horse could

912

00:35:34,587 --> 00:35:37,347
go in order to create a false

913

00:35:37,347 --> 00:35:40,016

yet plausible alibi. When Nevison

914

00:35:40,016 --> 00:35:42,696
arrived, he placed a bet with a Lord so

915

00:35:42,696 --> 00:35:44,780
the Lord would remember seeing him that

916

00:35:45,090 --> 00:35:46,1000
day. He managed to escape conviction

917

00:35:46,1000 --> 00:35:49,864
thanks to the speed of his horse, and he

918

00:35:49,864 --> 00:35:52,410
became known as Swift Nicks as a result.

919

00:35:53,130 --> 00:35:55,961
Turpin's most famous feat of riding his

920

00:35:55,961 --> 00:35:58,792
horse up to York was actually performed

921

00:35:58,792 --> 00:36:00,410
by someone completely different.

922

00:36:02,070 --> 00:36:04,923
But hang on, if Daniel Defoe recorded

923

00:36:04,923 --> 00:36:07,776
it correctly that Nevison did the ride

924

00:36:07,776 --> 00:36:10,629
to York, then how did Turpin end

925

00:36:10,629 --> 00:36:13,074
up getting the credit in popular

926

00:36:13,074 --> 00:36:15,520

folklore? Yep, you've guessed it, it's

927

00:36:15,520 --> 00:36:17,557

the Victorians, specifically one William

928

00:36:17,557 --> 00:36:20,343

Ainsworth. In 1834, he published a novel

929

00:36:20,343 --> 00:36:22,885

named Rookwood. Now in the interests of

930

00:36:22,885 --> 00:36:25,428

full transparency, I have not read this

931

00:36:25,428 --> 00:36:28,333

book, but I have looked for a summary

932

00:36:28,333 --> 00:36:31,239

and from what I can tell this novel

933

00:36:31,239 --> 00:36:34,145

was quite frankly a bit bonkers. It had

934

00:36:34,145 --> 00:36:36,687

a series of very weird plots and

935

00:36:36,687 --> 00:36:38,866

subplots. It was influenced heavily by

936

00:36:38,866 --> 00:36:41,046

gothic literature, which was a category

937

00:36:41,046 --> 00:36:42,498

covering anything pre enlightenment

938

00:36:42,498 --> 00:36:44,678

essentially, and a new genre of

939

00:36:44,678 --> 00:36:46,857

historical novels that were growing in

940

00:36:46,857 --> 00:36:49,547

popularity. Now, one of those

941

00:36:49,547 --> 00:36:52,032

weird subplots in Rookwood concerns Dick

942

00:36:52,032 --> 00:36:54,518

Turpin and his fictional horse, Black

943

00:36:54,518 --> 00:36:57,417

Bess. That's right, folks, you heard me.

944

00:36:57,417 --> 00:36:59,902

Black Bess wasn't real, and Turpin

945

00:36:59,902 --> 00:37:02,802

certainly didn't ride to York on her.

946

00:37:02,802 --> 00:37:05,702

Two huge parts of Turpin's legend are

947

00:37:05,702 --> 00:37:07,923

completely untrue. No idea, therefore,

948

00:37:07,923 --> 00:37:10,677

why Dick Turpin has such a massive grave

949

00:37:10,677 --> 00:37:13,088

because there is no horse buried with

950

00:37:13,088 --> 00:37:15,842

him. In addition, this is the first time

951

00:37:15,842 --> 00:37:18,252

we see the concept of the gentleman

952

00:37:18,252 --> 00:37:19,974

highwayman in fiction. The last

953

00:37:19,974 --> 00:37:22,040

conviction for highway robbery took place

954

00:37:22,040 --> 00:37:24,106

three years before the book was

955

00:37:24,106 --> 00:37:26,739

published. And so the idea of how

956

00:37:26,739 --> 00:37:28,379

ruthless and frankly bloody horrible

957

00:37:28,379 --> 00:37:30,020

highwaymen actually were was largely

958

00:37:30,020 --> 00:37:32,316

forgotten by the general population. As a

959

00:37:32,316 --> 00:37:34,285

result, the public loved the book,

960

00:37:34,285 --> 00:37:35,925

particularly the exploits of Dick

961

00:37:35,925 --> 00:37:37,566

Turpin. More books followed, also

962

00:37:37,566 --> 00:37:39,206

featuring highwaymen, written by people

963

00:37:39,206 --> 00:37:41,831

who were keen to cash in on the

964

00:37:41,831 --> 00:37:43,800

enthusiasm for the Robin Hood type

965

00:37:43,800 --> 00:37:45,768

figures that the novelists were creating,

966

00:37:45,768 --> 00:37:48,065

the idea that people find theft more

967

00:37:48,065 --> 00:37:50,033

palatable when someone is stealing from

968

00:37:50,033 --> 00:37:52,330

the rich to give to the poor.

969

00:37:53,100 --> 00:37:54,612

Turpin wasn't doing that though if we

970

00:37:54,612 --> 00:37:57,597

remember, he was just a crook. The media

971

00:37:57,597 --> 00:37:59,934

output surrounding highwaymen as a topic

972

00:37:59,934 --> 00:38:02,661

exploded. Think of how many books about

973

00:38:02,661 --> 00:38:04,608

vampires and werewolves were published

974

00:38:04,608 --> 00:38:06,945

following the success of the Twilight

975

00:38:06,945 --> 00:38:09,282

series. It's the exact same principle

976

00:38:09,282 --> 00:38:12,008
applying all the way back in the

977

00:38:12,008 --> 00:38:14,345
Victorian era. And the exploits of

978

00:38:14,345 --> 00:38:16,682
highwaymen weren't just confined to the

979

00:38:16,682 --> 00:38:19,408
pages of books. 1832 saw the introduction

980

00:38:19,408 --> 00:38:21,745
of the Penny Storyteller, better known

981

00:38:21,745 --> 00:38:24,471
later as the Penny Dreadful, a cheap

982

00:38:24,471 --> 00:38:27,150
serial booklet. Popular among the

983

00:38:27,150 --> 00:38:29,383
working classes which often published

984

00:38:29,383 --> 00:38:32,214
sensationalised accounts of crime, Penny

985

00:38:32,214 --> 00:38:34,480
Dreadfuls were criticised at the time in

986

00:38:34,480 --> 00:38:37,070
much the same way that the true crime

987

00:38:37,070 --> 00:38:39,660
genre can be now, or horror movies, or

988

00:38:39,660 --> 00:38:41,603

violent video games. The concern that

989

00:38:41,603 --> 00:38:43,545

people would be inspired to commit

990

00:38:43,545 --> 00:38:45,488

atrocious acts after reading them sparked

991

00:38:45,488 --> 00:38:48,078

what we now recognise as something of a

992

00:38:48,078 --> 00:38:50,344

moral panic. All this to say, there

993

00:38:50,344 --> 00:38:52,610

really is nothing new under the sun.

994

00:38:53,490 --> 00:38:56,422

Around the start of the 1900s, the Penny

995

00:38:56,422 --> 00:38:58,988

Dreadful started to die out in its

996

00:38:58,988 --> 00:39:00,820

popularity, but the stories involving

997

00:39:00,820 --> 00:39:03,019

highwaymen did not. They were, however,

998

00:39:03,019 --> 00:39:04,852

significantly sanitised to protect the

999

00:39:04,852 --> 00:39:06,684

sensibilities of the public. Children's

1000

00:39:06,684 --> 00:39:08,883

toys were made depicting highwaymen. They

1001

00:39:08,883 --> 00:39:10,716
were porcelain figures and films

1002

00:39:10,716 --> 00:39:12,915
persisting into the later years. Notable

1003

00:39:12,915 --> 00:39:15,847
films were made by Hammer and of course,

1004

00:39:15,847 --> 00:39:18,412
who can forget Carry On Dick from the

1005

00:39:18,412 --> 00:39:20,245
Carry On franchise featuring the iconic

1006

00:39:20,245 --> 00:39:22,444
Sid James, Kenneth Williams and Barbara

1007

00:39:22,444 --> 00:39:24,610
Windsor?Despite Turpin's primary

1008

00:39:24,610 --> 00:39:26,943
connection to Essex, apart from a couple

1009

00:39:26,943 --> 00:39:28,943
of walking or cycling routes through

1010

00:39:28,943 --> 00:39:31,277
Epping Forest that cover areas where he

1011

00:39:31,277 --> 00:39:33,610
committed some of his more well known

1012

00:39:33,610 --> 00:39:35,277
offences, Essex tourism doesn't really

1013

00:39:35,277 --> 00:39:37,943

play up to the myth of Turpin in

1014

00:39:37,943 --> 00:39:40,610

the way that the City of York does.

1015

00:39:40,610 --> 00:39:43,277

After all, it is where he was executed

1016

00:39:43,277 --> 00:39:45,277

and subsequently buried. Indeed, The York

1017

00:39:45,277 --> 00:39:47,610

Dungeon offers an actor-led story telling

1018

00:39:47,610 --> 00:39:50,486

of his downfall. So why isn't Essex

1019

00:39:50,486 --> 00:39:52,399

leaning on this from a tourism

1020

00:39:52,399 --> 00:39:54,632

perspective? I do have a couple of

1021

00:39:54,632 --> 00:39:56,227

theories. Firstly, as beautiful as

1022

00:39:56,227 --> 00:39:58,459

Hempstead is, it's also tiny. And The

1023

00:39:58,459 --> 00:40:01,011

Bluebell, as I mentioned at the top of

1024

00:40:01,011 --> 00:40:03,243

the episode, is sadly closed. There isn't

1025

00:40:03,243 --> 00:40:05,476

really much of a reason to visit

1026

00:40:05,476 --> 00:40:07,708

Hempstead by itself. It's the sort of

1027

00:40:07,708 --> 00:40:09,941

place that you might pass through and

1028

00:40:09,941 --> 00:40:12,811

stop to have a pint were the pub still

1029

00:40:12,811 --> 00:40:15,792

open. Thaxted, the town where

1030

00:40:15,792 --> 00:40:18,063

Turpin is likely to have completed his

1031

00:40:18,063 --> 00:40:20,009

apprenticeship already has a great deal

1032

00:40:20,009 --> 00:40:21,631

of historical interest from other

1033

00:40:21,631 --> 00:40:23,577

sources, which will absolutely form part

1034

00:40:23,577 --> 00:40:26,173

of future episodes, by the way. All this

1035

00:40:26,173 --> 00:40:28,443

to say, perhaps that from a tourism

1036

00:40:28,443 --> 00:40:30,390

perspective, they don't really need to

1037

00:40:30,390 --> 00:40:32,336

lean on the myth. Turpin was

1038

00:40:32,336 --> 00:40:34,283

categorically a horrible person, and it

1039

00:40:34,283 --> 00:40:36,553

makes sense that these quaint parts of

1040

00:40:36,553 --> 00:40:38,824

the county aren't too keen on the

1041

00:40:38,824 --> 00:40:40,122

association. It's an interesting

1042

00:40:40,122 --> 00:40:42,392

anecdote, sure enough, but not really an

1043

00:40:42,392 --> 00:40:45,206

entire reason to visit. That

1044

00:40:45,206 --> 00:40:47,416

said though, there are so many locations

1045

00:40:47,416 --> 00:40:49,310

across England claiming to have a

1046

00:40:49,310 --> 00:40:51,835

connection to Turpin, so much so that I

1047

00:40:51,835 --> 00:40:54,361

would love to track them all down. Just

1048

00:40:54,361 --> 00:40:56,571

for fun, on the Unexpected Essex website

1049

00:40:56,571 --> 00:40:58,465

there's a section called the Turpin

1050

00:40:58,465 --> 00:41:00,991

Tally. If you've ever been into a local

1051

00:41:00,991 --> 00:41:03,832

pub and been told by a landlord that Dick

1052

00:41:03,832 --> 00:41:06,358

Turpin drank or stayed or sneezed in it,

1053

00:41:06,358 --> 00:41:09,199

I would love for you to submit it to

1054

00:41:09,199 --> 00:41:11,724

be added to the log. Bonus points if

1055

00:41:11,724 --> 00:41:13,619

they're claiming a haunting because let's

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00:41:13,619 --> 00:41:16,470

be honest, he would be one of the world's

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00:41:16,470 --> 00:41:18,270

busiest ghosts if he was everywhere

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00:41:18,270 --> 00:41:20,670

people said he was. Thanks so much for

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00:41:20,670 --> 00:41:22,470

listening to Unexpected Essex. I hope

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00:41:22,470 --> 00:41:24,270

you've enjoyed this episode. Please do

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00:41:24,270 --> 00:41:25,770

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00:41:25,770 --> 00:41:27,570

podcasts. It genuinely makes a difference

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00:41:27,570 --> 00:41:29,970

to a small independent show. You can find

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00:41:29,970 --> 00:41:32,070

Unexpected Essex online, at the links in

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00:41:32,070 --> 00:41:34,170

the show notes, and on various social

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00:41:34,170 --> 00:41:36,570

platforms. If you know of a story, a

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00:41:36,570 --> 00:41:38,370

place, or a forgotten figure that

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00:41:38,370 --> 00:41:40,470

deserves an episode, do get in touch.

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00:41:40,470 --> 00:41:42,870

This county is full of surprises and I'd

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00:41:42,870 --> 00:41:45,486

rather not find them all. Own until next

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00:41:45,486 --> 00:41:48,250

time, stay safe and have a great day.