

We have been looking at the importance of the Cathedral to our local area. Here we learn that the Bishop of Ely was not just in charge of the religious life in Ely but also law and order. We also learn more about the building of the gaol which you have all visited as the museum in Ely.

What you need to do:

1. Find out about the gaol - read the extract from the face book page printed here, below and watch the video to find out about the gaol.

This an extract from the Ely Museum Face book page

Today's #MuseumFromHome at [Ely Museum](#) is all about our building - the Old Gaol!

Did you know that over 300 years ago the Bishop of Ely was responsible for law & order? It was Bishop Peter Gunning who bought a house on the corner of what we now know as Lynn Road & Market Street in about 1679. With remodelling and extensions, including the addition of a walled exercise yard, this building became the Bishops Gaol.

Sadly, the building was poorly maintained which meant terrible conditions for the prisoners and some barbaric methods were introduced to stop the prisoners escaping! You can learn more about those in the video below.

<https://www.facebook.com/ElyMuseum/videos/2778219518971931/>

By the year 1836 the gaol was closed and prisoners moved on to Cambridge County Prison.

The now 'Old Gaol' then had many other uses including as a private home, a Mechanics Institute and the administrative headquarters of East Cambridgeshire District Council. Then in April 1997, Ely Museum opened in the gaol and welcomed thousands of visitors until we closed last September for our exciting redevelopment!

There is an activity you can do at the very end of the video which tells you how to make a model of the gaol. You can make the back ground, add in the characters and then add the bars in front. Please don't make the handcuffs.

2. Learn about one of the gaol's most famous inmates.

The Bishops Gaol in Ely had two types of prisoners, debtors and felons. Here, we are learning about just one of the prisoners called James Lines who found himself in Ely gaol. The gaoler kept a ledger of the prisoners, which included a description of each of them.

Read the information about James Lines on the next page.

When you have learnt all about his crimes, you can try to draw his picture from the description or you can make a front page headline all about his attempted escape from gaol.

Imagine you are a reporter and you have the inside story on the events. Make a front page headline and front page exclusive story. Make your report look like a paper with headline, sub headings, columns and a picture with caption.

Report on

- what happened and how
- When it happened
- Why it happened,
- who was there
- Include eye witness accounts or interview the people involved

What happened?

James Lines, born in 1803 in Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire asked Robert Bailey, a blacksmith from Benwick, Cambridgeshire, for a job but Bailey refused. In retaliation, James stole a stock and die set, which is a type of blacksmiths tools used for making screws and pipes, from him as he left. The missing item was quickly spotted and a friend of the blacksmith went out to search for James.

Now James knew his crime had been discovered, he tried to return what he stole but was caught while running away! He was arrested and sent to Ely Gaol to await his trial.

His case was held at the Spring Assizes, a type of local court, that was held at the Sessions House in Ely in front of Henry Storks, Esq. Chief Justice of the Isle of Ely. James was found guilty and sentenced to transportation to Australia for 7 years and was returned to Ely Gaol to wait for a ship.

While in Ely Gaol, as he was waiting to be moved to a convict ship, James and several other prisoners devised a plan to escape. James was the ringleader and wanted to also get revenge on the gaoler himself! The group of prisoners quickly put their plan into action and got the wife of one of the prisoners to throw tools and supplies over the wall so they were able to start cutting through their chains. However their plan was discovered, along with the cut shackles and a hidden note to the wife that was assisting the escape attempt.

The men were secured in extra irons and James, as the ringleader, was quickly transferred to a prison hulk, an old ship being used as a floating prison in Woolwich, London.

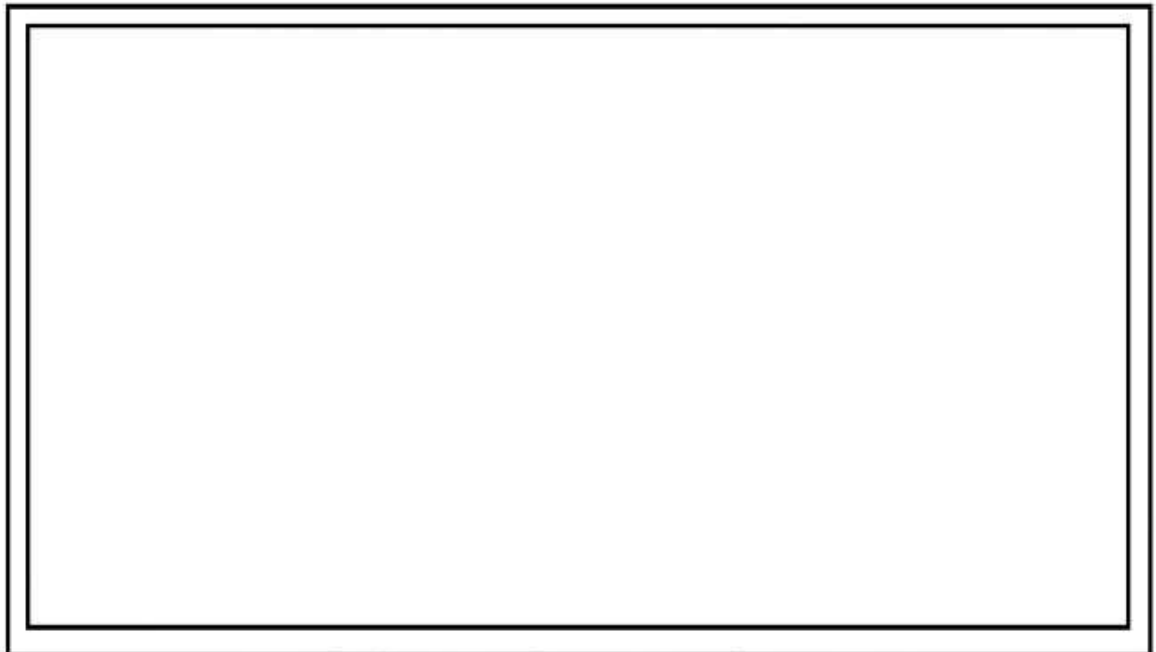
James finally sailed for Australia on the convict ship *Manlius*, along with 175 other convicts on July 16th, 1828. They reached Van Diemen's Land (now known as Tasmania) on November 9th, 1828.

Over the course of his seven year sentence James got in trouble numerous times for things such as running away and neglect of duty. His various punishments for these offences included periods of additional hard labour and even 25 lashes!

He did eventually complete his sentence and, as a free man he married the following year and started working as a blacksmith in Evandale, a town in Tasmania. However the tough conditions meant that his free life in Tasmania sadly did not last long. He died in May 1838 and he was buried at Evandale Cemetery.

Prisoner Profile

Name: James Lines
Trade: Blacksmith Farrier
Height: 5ft 8"
Age: 26, born 1803
Complexion: Dark
Head: Large
Hair: Brown
Whiskers: Dark brown
Visage: Oval
Forehead: Very narrow
Eyebrows: Brown
Eyes: Hazel
Nose: Medium, pointy
Mouth: Narrow
Chin: Medium length & width
Remarks: Brown mole on left cheek



Using his description, draw a picture of James Lines.