

It must have been extremely easy to become involved even if parents were honest but engaged for long hours in earning a meagre living. At any rate Richard at the age of 13 (if not earlier) had already clashed with the law and was on a slippery slope from which there was to be no escape. One hundred and seventy-three years ago was not the time to be on the wrong side of the law. Criminal activity, if caught, resulted in swift and savage retribution without regard to the age of the culprit. Crime in England had reached such proportions that protection of property and the person had to be tackled by the strongest measures. Over 200 types of crime were punishable by death at this time although many receiving this sentence had it commuted later.

It is not known when Richard first became involved. A later confession speaks of being caught four or five times and being sent to a House of Correction but evidence has not so far been found. We do, however, have clear evidence that a thin little boy aged 13 and just 4ft 6in in height was in serious trouble when we find him listed in the Middlesex Criminal Register of 1818:

Public Record Office - Kew

HQ26/1 to 56 (1791-1849) Reels 2730 to 2752 Criminal Registers - Series 1 Middlesex

HQ26/24 Criminal Register 1818

<u>No of Commitment</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>When and where tried</u>	<u>Sentence</u>
351	Briginshaw Richard	14	Larceny	Old Bailey Sept 1818	Not guilty

He was held in Newgate Gaol:

PCCM2/192 Newgate Register 1817 to 1818

Register of Prisoners (sic) in his Majesty's Gaol of Newgate - The Right Honorable Christopher Smith Mayor.

Francis Desanges Esq	}	Sherriffs
George Alderson Esq		
W R H Brown		Keeper

Richard Briginshaw
Age 14
Height 4ft 6in
Fair complection
Hair Brown
Eyes Hazel
Thin made
Born in St Marylebone
No occupation

Brought into custody 12th September 1818
Committed by T. Leach Esq.

Charged with stealing a book value 2/- of Fra^s Claridge

When tried - 30th September 1818 Recorder
Verdict of Jury - Not guilty

Discharged 30th September 1818

He was tried at the Old Bailey. There was no Assize Court for Middlesex but the four Judicial Sessions were heard at the Old Bailey

Middlesex Quarter Sessions
Middlesex Sessions of Oyer and Terminer
Sessions of the Delivery of the Gaol of Newgate
Quarter Session for the City and Liberty of Westminster