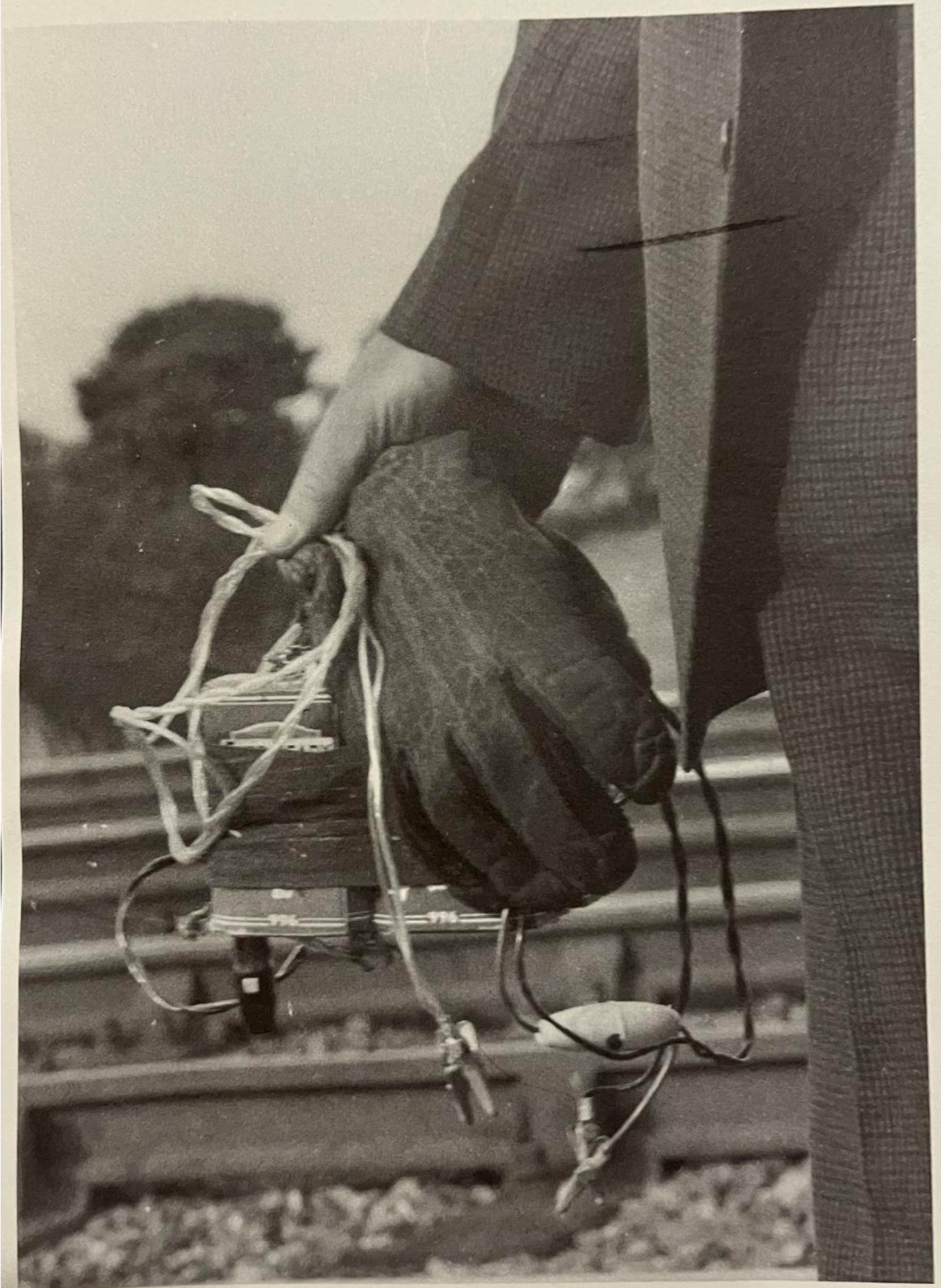


The Great Train Robbers



The Great Train Robbers

Bruce Reynolds

An antique dealer, a prominent thief and leader of the South West gang. He is believed to have masterminded The Great Train Robbery and put the gang together. After the heist he went on the run before he was found on 7 November 1968 at Babbacombe, near Torquay five years later. He was sentenced to 10 years for planning the robbery. In 1995 he published a book called 'Autobiography of a thief'.

John Thomas Daly

31 year old brother-in-law of Bruce Reynolds, was accused of participating in the robbery, but was later cleared by Mr Justice Edmund Davis.

William Gerald Boal

50 years old at the time of the robbery and an engineer from Fulham, he was found guilty of conspiracy and robbery while armed with offensive weapons.

Charlie Wilson (Charles Frederick Wilson)

31 years old at the time of the robbery. The bookmaker from Clapham was a key figure in the planning and implementation of the robbery. Wilson was an affable and trustworthy associate of Reynolds. He was found guilty of conspiracy and robbery while armed with offensive weapons.

On 12 August 1964, he escaped from Winson Green prison, Birmingham, after serving four months of his sentence. He was arrested in Canada on 25 January 1968 by Det Supt Butler. He was released from prison in 1978 after serving 11 years and seven months. While on parole he started working as a store man in a sugar factory. In 1990, aged 58 years old he was shot dead while celebrating his 35th wedding anniversary in Spain.

Thomas William Wiseby

A bookmaker from Camberwell, he was found guilty of conspiracy and robbery while armed with offensive weapons. He was kept imprisoned at Oxford jail. Wiseby was 33 at the time of the robbery.

Undergraduates at Oxford University said they were asked by Oxford City Police not to carry out jokes, "rags" or other activities near the jail where Wiseby was kept – in case they were "misinterpreted".

Robert Alfred Welch

34 years old at the time of the offence, he was a club proprietor from Islington and found guilty of conspiracy and robbery while armed with offensive weapons.

James Hussey

30 years old at the time of the offence, he was a painter from East Dulwich and found guilty of conspiracy and robbery while armed with offensive weapons

Roy John James

Known as "The Weasel" and 28 years old at the time of the offence, he was a part-time racing driver from Chelsea. As an expert driver he was a key member of the gang, able to drive a lorry at night with no lights on. He was the 21st person to be arrested in connection with the Great Train Robbery. He was arrested after a rooftop chase in St John's Wood with members of the Flying Squad in pursuit. During a search of his mews flat £12,000 was found. James helped with the signals, cutting telephone lines and uncoupling the coaches. He was sentenced for 30 years in April 1964 for his part in the robbery and released on 16 August 1975 after serving 12 years in Aylesbury and Winchester prisons.

Douglas Gordon Goody

34 years old at the time of the offence, he was a suave, well-dressed London hairdresser and part-time thief from Putney. He was the number two in the South West gang. Goody was well known in criminal circles for his coolness under pressure. In 1976 he was released from prison together with Thomas Wiseby, Robert Welch and James Hussey.

Leonard Denis Field

31 at the time of the offence, he was a merchant seaman from Harringay and was found guilty of conspiracy to rob. He put in an offer of £5,750 for Leatherslade farm which was eventually accepted by the owner. The owner also agreed that Field could move in on July 29 and the money paid on August 13. Witnesses said people were seen at the farm on August 6 and 7; the prosecution alleged that they were the raiders making final preparations for the robbery on August 8. In fact, the purchase of the farm was never completed and the money was never paid.

Brian Arthur Field

29, a managing clerk from Whitchurch Hill, Oxfordshire, was found guilty of conspiracy to rob. He was not related to Leonard Field and was the managing clerk of a firm of solicitors involved in negotiations for the purchase of Leatherslade Farm from its owner, Mr. Bernard Rixon. He was charged with receiving £100,900 of stolen money.

John Denby Wheeler

41, a former soldier. He practised as a solicitor in London's West End and lived in Ashted, Surrey. He was found not guilty of conspiracy to rob, but guilty of conspiracy to conceal the identity of the buyer of Leatherslade Farm, the gang's hide-out.

Roger John Cordery

42 at the time of the offence, from East Molesey, Surrey. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to rob, not guilty of armed robbery which was accepted by the prosecution and guilty to three counts of receiving stolen goods. It was Cordery who told the gang what to do with the signals and how to stop the train.

Ronnie Biggs (Ronald Arthur Biggs)

34 at the time of the offence, he was a criminal who on release from prison and wanted to stay out of trouble. He became a carpenter but his business was struggling so he went to Reynolds for a loan. Rather than giving Biggs a loan, Reynolds enlisted Biggs' help in the robbery. Biggs pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to stop the train and to robbery and was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. He became the most famous member of the gang after he escaped from prison on 8 July 1965 and remained a fugitive for 31 years living in Australia and Rio. In 1996 he published a book called 'Odd man out'. He had a stroke in 1998 and lost the use of his right hand and began to slur his words. He returned to England with his son in 2001 and was sent back to prison. His sentence was reviewed and an appeal for leniency turned down.

Ronald "Buster" Edwards

A former boxer turned club owner and a close friend of Reynolds and Goody. Buster was the leader of the South East gang and was asked by Reynolds to join the heist because he didn't have enough men and needed both gangs to join together. After the robbery Buster went on the run before surrendering on 19 September 1966 in Canada. He was brought back and sentenced to 15 years in prison, the lowest sentence given to any of the robbers.

In 1988 his exploits were portrayed by Phil Collins in the hit film Buster. He ended up running a flower stall at Waterloo station before he hung himself in a store near his flower stall in 1994. A wreath in the shape of a train was sent to the funeral by his brother.

James Edward White

Arrested two years and eight months after the Great Train Robbery. At the time of his arrest 46-year-old White had been living in Kent and working as a freelance boat salesman called Bob Lane. He pleaded guilty to being with others and being armed with an offensive weapon and robbery but pleaded not guilty to conspiracy. This was accepted and he was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment. It was White's caravan that was discovered in Surrey shortly after the robbery with more than £30,000 behind the wood panelling. After his arrest, White told the police about a further £4,500 hidden near the caravan's stove.

Convicted of receiving stolen goods

Martin Harvey

Pleaded guilty to receiving stolen goods and was sentenced to 12 months in prison.

Robert William Pelham

Was given a conditional discharge for 12 months.

Walter and Patricia Smith

Husband and wife, were convicted of receiving stolen goods.

Alfred and Mary Pilgrim

Were tried but no evidence was found and the verdict was found not guilty. They had been accused of receiving £860 each knowing it to be stolen.

Mary Manson

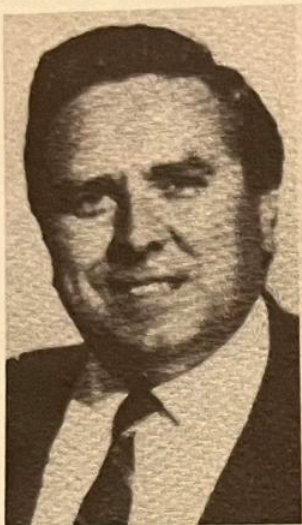
Friend of Reynolds, was convicted of receiving stolen goods. She was charged with receiving £835.

Rene Evelyn Boal

Wife of William Boal, was convicted of receiving money totalling £1,195 between August 9 and 16, 1963.

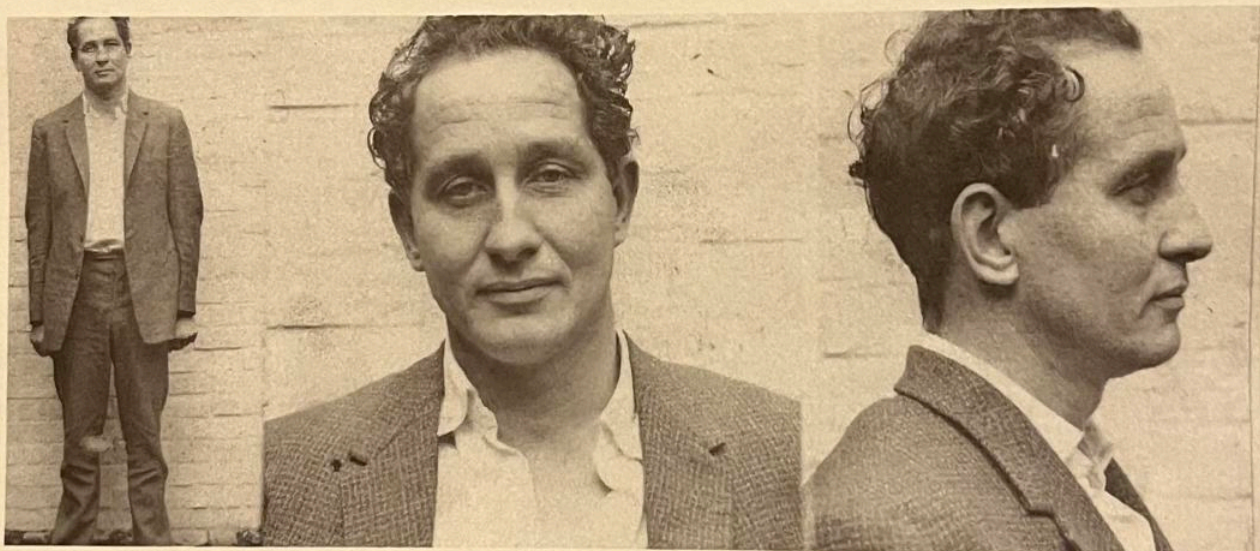
Sheree White

Wife of James White, was found guilty of receiving stolen goods.



Ronald "Buster" Edwards

Bruce Reynolds



Ronnie Biggs (Ronald Arthur Biggs)

Contact Information

Visit our web site: www.thamesvalley.police.uk/museum

If you are interested in booking a talk by the curator, please email:
TVPmuseum@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk



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