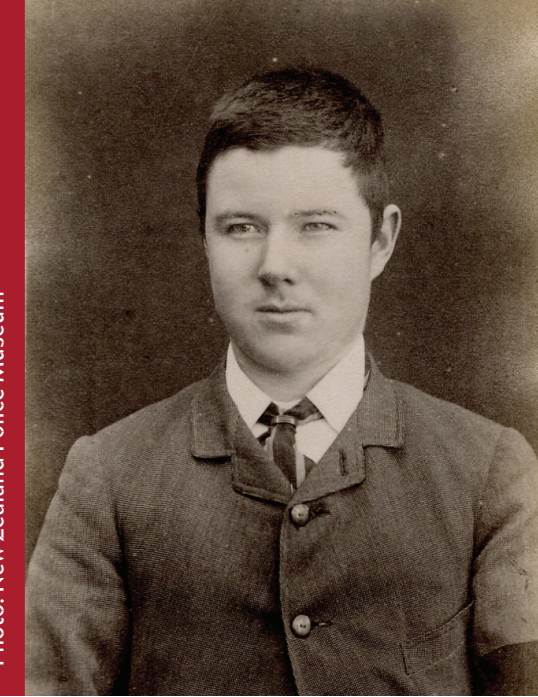


LARRIKIN, EXPERT THIEF & BURGLAR

Photo: New Zealand Police Museum



NAME INC ALIASES:

Thomas Gleeson

NATIVE PLACE:

New Zealand

RELIGION:

Roman Catholic

OFFENCE:

Burglary

SENTENCE:

Six Years

Thomas Gleeson's police charge sheet describes him as an 18-year-old 'larrikin ... an expert thief and burglar'. He was arrested for a string of burglaries in Christchurch and Dunedin in late 1888, caught with a vast swag that included several guns, as well as a bushy false beard and a waxed moustache.

There was even some women's clothing, which prompted speculation that it was for another of his many disguises. While in the old prison on remand for breaking and entering, he cut through one of the iron window bars in his cell with a knife. He climbed down into the prison yard and propped up a bench against the wall, then climbed over it, managing to

avoid getting snagged on the broken glass set into the top. He broke into a shop to get some clothes, food and cash, as well as a pipe and a comb.

A few days later out in the country a policeman saw him 'slouching along' and arrested him, but not before 'the desperate young ruffian' had hit him over the head a couple of times with a stick. Together with the burglaries he committed while on the run, Gleeson got six years in total.

