

# Victorian Police

How does this cartoon portray people's feelings about the police in Victorian Britain?



***Blind man's Buff* by John Tenniel, Punch magazine, 1888**

In 1829 Sir Robert Peel (from where we get the term 'Bobbies') set up the Metropolitan Police Force, replacing the old Parish Watch system in London and elsewhere in the country.

In 1839, police from London had to be brought to Birmingham to stop a political riot. This led to an Act of Parliament requiring Birmingham to have its own police. By 1856 all counties within Britain had their own force.

To begin with, policing was aimed at controlling the poor or 'dangerous classes' rather than crime detection. Many saw the police as useless and incapable of enforcing the law particularly during large investigations.



Write a short paragraph (or have a class discussion) describing how this cartoon illustrates people's views of the police at this time.

Does it portray the police in a positive way? What does the policeman's blindfold represent or mean? What adjectives can you use to describe the people in this picture?