

# Guildford Spike ILT

## Year 8

### **AIM HIGH**

#### **To do well you should:**

1. Show your understanding from the Spike visit using as much accurate detail as possible.
2. Compare the Spike to evidence about other Spikes.
3. Reach your own conclusion about how typical Guildford Spike was.
4. Show your understanding of why this museum is important.
5. Use your *imagination* to recreate the past!

### **PRESENTING YOUR WORK**

#### **You can present your work:**

- In your book and in this booklet.
- Printed out from the computer.

## **Task 1: Five Facts**

Write down five facts you can remember about the Guildford Spike!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

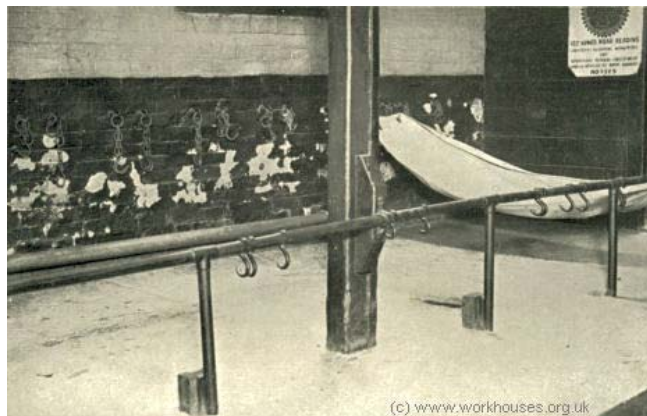
## Task 2: Similarities and differences – the Whitechapel Spike

These pictures are from a Spike in Whitechapel in London. Do these pictures remind you of the Guildford Spike? Can you spot any differences?

Label the similarities and differences.

### Picture 1:

Whitechapel circa 1860



### Picture 2:

Whitechapel circa 1860



### Task 3: Similarities and differences – George Orwell’s “The Spike”

Read the extract from “The Spike” by George Orwell on pages 5 and 6. Fill in the table using your notes from the visit and “The Spike.”

**Challenge!**

Read Orwell’s complete essay and add extra details to your table. The complete essay can be downloaded from the school website:

<http://www.guildfordcounty.co.uk/independent>

	Guildford Spike	Orwell’s Spike
Things that were forbidden		
Ways that vagrants hid things		
Separating men and women		
Bathing		
Food		
The cells		
The next day		

Answer these questions in your book.

1. According to Orwell, what is the worst thing about being a vagrant?
2. Do you agree with him?

#### **Task 4:**



**The Guildford Spike was a lot like other Spikes.**

Using the pictures from Task 2 and Orwell's "The Spike," decide if you agree with this statement. Write:

- Ways that Guildford Spike was similar to other Spikes.
- Ways that it was different.
- Your conclusion.

#### **Task 5: Be creative!**

Write a diary entry, play or song about the life of a vagrant. Use your notes from the Spike and the Vagrants' Slang section in your Spike booklet. Try to write in the language used by the vagrants!

Details you could include:

- What time do you arrive at the Spike?
- Is this your first time at the Spike, or have you visited before?
- Who do you meet at the Spike?
- Have you seen any of the people before?
- Where do you go first?
- What work are you expected to do?
- Is it difficult?
- How does it feel to spend a night in a cell at the Spike?
- Where do you go the next morning?

#### **Task 6: A poster for the Spike**

Design a poster to encourage people to visit the Guildford Spike in 2010. Include on your poster:

- What you can see at Guildford Spike.
- What the Guildford Spike can tell you about being a vagrant in the nineteenth century.
- Why Guildford Spike is important.

## “The Spike” by George Orwell

It was late-afternoon. Forty-nine of us, forty-eight men and one woman, lay on the green waiting for the spike to open. We were too tired to talk much. We just sprawled about exhaustedly, with home-made cigarettes sticking out of our scrubby faces.

What talk there was ran on the Tramp Major of this spike. He was a devil, everyone agreed, a tartar, a tyrant, a bawling, blasphemous, uncharitable dog. You couldn't call your soul your own when he was about, and many a tramp had he kicked out in the middle of the night for giving a back answer. When you came to be searched, he fair held you upside down and shook you. If you were caught with tobacco there was hell to pay, and if you went in with money (which is against the law) God help you.

I had eightpence on me. 'For the love of Christ, mate,' the old hands advised me, 'don't you take it in. You'd get seven days for going into the spike with eightpence!'

So I buried my money in a hole under the hedge, marking the spot with a lump of flint. Then we set about smuggling our matches and tobacco, for it is forbidden to take these into nearly all spikes, and one is supposed to surrender them at the gate. We hid them in our socks, except for the twenty or so per cent who had no socks, and had to carry the tobacco in their boots, even under their very toes. In the end only one man was caught. This was Scotty, a little hairy tramp with a bastard accent sired by cockney out of Glasgow. His tin of cigarette ends fell out of his sock at the wrong moment, and was impounded.

At six, the gates swung open and we shuffled in. An official at the gate entered our names and other particulars in the register and took our bundles away from us. The woman was sent off to the workhouse, and we others into the spike.

Some of the men refused the bath, and washed only their 'toe-rags', the horrid, greasy little clouts which tramps bind round their feet. Each of us had three minutes in which to bathe himself. Six greasy, slippery roller towels had to serve for the lot of us.

When we had bathed our own clothes were taken away from us, and we were dressed in the workhouse shirts, grey cotton things like nightshirts, reaching to the middle of the thigh.

Then we were sent into the dining-room, where supper was set out on the deal tables. It was the invariable spike meal, always the same, whether breakfast,

dinner or supper — half a pound of bread, a bit of margarine, and a pint of so-called tea. It took us five minutes to gulp down the cheap, noxious food. Then the Tramp Major served us with three cotton blankets each, and drove us off to our cells for the night. The doors were locked on the outside a little before seven in the evening, and would stay locked for the next twelve hours.

The cells measured eight feet by five, and, had no lighting apparatus except a tiny barred window high up in the wall, and a spyhole in the door. In many spikes one sleeps on a wooden shelf, and in some on the bare floor, with a rolled-up coat for pillow.

We hurried into our clothes, and then went to the dining room to bolt our breakfast. The bread was much worse than usual, because the military-minded idiot of a Tramp Major had cut it into slices overnight, so that it was as hard as ship's biscuit. But we were glad of our tea after the cold, restless night. I do not know what tramps would do without tea, or rather the stuff they miscall tea. It is their food, their medicine, their panacea for all evils. Without the half goon or so of it that they suck down a day, I truly believe they could not face their existence.

After breakfast we had to undress again for the medical inspection, which is a precaution against smallpox.

This being Sunday, we were to be kept in the spike over the week-end. As soon as the doctor had gone we were herded back to the dining-room, and its door shut upon us. It was a lime-washed, stone-floored room, unspeakably dreary with its furniture of deal boards and benches, and its prison smell. The windows were so high up that one could not look outside, and the sole ornament was a set of Rules threatening dire penalties to any casual who misconducted himself.

I have come to think that boredom is the worst of all a tramp's evils, worse than hunger and discomfort, worse even than the constant feeling of being socially disgraced. It is a silly piece of cruelty to confine an ignorant man all day with nothing to do; it is like chaining a dog in a barrel.

**Remember, you can challenge yourself by reading the longer version of this essay. You can find it on the school website.**