



# Sir Robert Peel

## 1788 - 1850

Founder of the modern police service, Sir Robert Peel was born at Chamber Hall in Bury on 5th February 1788. He was the eldest son of the Lancashire magnate Sir Robert Peel, senior. The young Robert Peel was educated by James Hargreaves who was the curate of Bury Parish Church. Peel completed his education at Harrow and Oxford. Then he entered politics.

Between 1822 and 1830 he was Home Secretary. He abolished the death penalty on over one hundred offences. He organised the inspection of large prisons, abolished gaolers' fees and employed the first female prison warders.

But he is most remembered for the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act, which established a single, full-time and professional police force for London (with the exception of the City of London), which acted as a model for later police forces throughout the country.

It was Peel who insisted that the police service should be civil, rather than military, in nature and who decided that the first police officers should look like ordinary men and not soldiers.

He later went on to become Prime Minister twice, his second ministry lasting from 1841 to 1846. He died on 2nd July 1850. As well as the legacy of the police service, Sir Robert Peel's name introduced two new words into the English language: "*Peelers*" and "*Bobbies*".