Melbourne's Bank Raid

In the autumn of 1906, there was a raid by armed 'would be' robbers on the the Birmingham and Counties District Bank in Melbourne. Three lads - all aged 17 - armed themselves with real revolvers containing live bullets and set out to rob this bank. This raid took place around noon, and it seems that two of the lads waited at the front entrance of the bank so as to prevent any one else from entering whilst the third entered the bank, pointed his revolver at the manager's head and said, "Hands up." At this, the manager ducked behind the counter and shouted for help. The robber 'lost his nerve' ran outside where together with his two accomplishes ran down the streets leading to the Pool.

Within a couple of minutes, it seemed that the whole town was chasing after them. The robbers pointed their revolvers at the chasing crowd but did not fire and were soon overcome by the crowd and arrested by the police.

Today, this would be deemed an extremely serious offence but it was viewed differently at the time as the extract from the Nottingham Evening Post - Tuesday 4th December 1906 - about trial of the three lads shows:

> *…The jury then deliberated, and few minutes the foreman said. "We wish the judge to consider it a boyish trick." The Commissioner: You wish to find them not guilty of assault with intent rob the bank. A Juror: That our Unanimous verdict. The Commissioner: I think you are quite right. Both prisoners, in reply to the Commissioner, admitted that they had been reading pernicious literature, and expressed sorrow for what they had done. The Commissioner said the prisoners had themselves serious peril, and had the charge been proved against them should had have sent them to penal servitude. They were respectable looking lads, and he hoped they would never come into that court again. They were discharged. .. .*