



THE front door creaks open and heavy footsteps echo across the bare floor of the empty hallway. Lank wallpaper lines the well of a narrow staircase at the end. A child's red plastic handbag swings from the handle of a closed door. A hand gently pushes the bag aside and inserts a key. . .

A good opening shot for one of Alfred Hitchcock's spine-chilling movies? The old master of suspense might think so. The building in fact is a long-abandoned schoolhouse adjacent to the police station in the Wellington suburb of Newtown. But in the disused classroom behind the locked door lies the Police Department's "Black Museum."

Here in glass cases is arrayed the grisly debris of New Zealand crime, dating back to the Maungatapu murders and beyond. There are axes and hatchets and cleavers and flatirons and marlin-spikes, and a considerable array of objects which can only be classed as blunt instruments. And there are the still relics of past violence, ranging down to the wristwatch—beloved of thriller writers—stopped at the precise minute and second of a murder.

Since the purpose and only justification of this museum is to show young policemen the ways of the criminal and the methods of his detection, much of the display consists of more prosaic items. They show the patient, step-by-step analysis and identification of

simple clues like a rubber heel-mark, a flake of paint, a sliver of glass or a human hair. Against one wall, retained perhaps more for historical than detective reasons, lies a Heath Robinson tangle of tanks and tubes once used for distilling illicit whisky. Low down on the criminal scale is a shilling-sized badge which somebody once found handy for cheating the gas-meter.

One of the museum's cabinets is devoted to a display of the finer arts of crime. Here are counterfeit notes, a paint-box and brushes used for gilding sixpences into shining half-sovereigns, and plaster moulds designed for back-room minting of coins. A rough-and-ready collection of leaden half-crowns has a note attached bearing the maker's name and the information that he was a "Russian Communist." It must be presumed he stood for the equal right of all citizens to make money. His finished product, however, would hardly have fooled the most slumbrous prole, let alone the hard-eyed members of the exploiting classes. From this section as a whole must be drawn the conclusion that among our criminals, too, the tradition of fine craftsmanship (see page 8) is missing.

The work of the police themselves shows more meticulous care. A pair of horse-shoes, for instance, are relics of a famous murder case in which Detective-Sergeant (later Commissioner) Cummings directed the examination of

ARTHUR E. JONES (above) with Senior Detective E. W. Mahood, who collaborated with him in the preparation of the programmes. RIGHT: Superintendent F. N. Aplin, C.I.B. chief, who played a leading role in some of the cases in the series

1300 horses in order to check the hoof-prints of one. The marks had been found outside the farmhouse where the killing took place. The horse, Mickey, whose shoes matched the marks, turned out to be owned by a man already under suspicion. He was duly convicted of murder and executed.

This 1920 case is one of a number selected from the voluminous written files of the New Zealand Police for dramatised presentation by the NZBS. Listeners are already familiar with Scotland Yard and the Sûreté Générale—more

