Crime and Punishment, Unit 1 Medieval Britain c.1250-c.1500. Core Knowledge.

Medieval England was a Christian country with a strictly ordered society.



- Almost everyone in Medieval England was a Christian. The church taught that sinners would be punished in hell.
- Society was strictly ordered and controlled (hierarchical). The King had most power, followed by Lords, the Clergy (priests) and peasants at the bottom.
- The country was divided in counties, each controlled by a sheriff.
- Peasants worked the land for the Lord of the Manor. 90% of people lived in the countryside. If harvests failed then they could starve.
- The law stated that adult men had to keep weapons in case they were called to war.

Crime was divided into serious and petty crimes

- Theft was the most common crime and the majority of crimes were non-violent.
- Homicide rates were high due to people arguing when using heavy tools.
- Serious crimes were stealing more than 12d and murder.
- Petty crimes included getting into debt and minor harm to a person or property.
- There was a famine during the 14th century which led to a crime increase.

New Crimes emerged in Medieval England.

- Vagrancy (wandering in search of work) increased after the Black Death as so many workers had died. An Act in 1351 made it illegal for a worker to leave a home village.
- In 1350 scolding (using offensive language) became a crime. Women targeted.
- 1351, treason defined as plotting to kill the King or for a wife to kill her husband.
- 1500 - Heresy (spreading beliefs not allowed by the church) a major crime.

The Law was enforced by Sheriffs, constables and ordinary people.

- If the Hue and Cry was heard, everyone had to hunt for a criminal.
- Each county had a Sheriff who had an armed posse to track criminals.
- Parish Constables maintained the law in towns and villages and watchmen patrolled the streets at night.
- Adult men were grouped into tithings. If one broke the law, the others had to bring him to court.

A system of courts existed to deal with crimes.

- Juries knew the accused so were unlikely to convict them in court.
- 1293 - Royal judges visit each county 2/3 times a year in county assize courts to hear the most serious cases.
- 1361 - JP's took over from hundred courts (run by Sheriff) dealing with other serious cases. By 1388 JP's did this four times a year (quarter sessions).
- From 1250 all petty crimes were dealt with in the Manor Courts held by the Lord.
- Church courts dealt with offences committed by priests and other moral crimes.

Punishment depended on how serious the crime was

- Fines, public humiliation (cucking stool, stocks and pillory) and prison used to punish petty crimes.
- Serious crimes punished with death i.e. Hanging or burning.
- High treason was punished by hanging, drawing and quartering.
- People could avoid punishment by: joining an outlaw gang, claim sanctuary in a church, buy a pardon from the King, join the army, being pregnant, being a priest or become a King's approver (report another criminal).

Crime and Punishment, Unit 2 Early Modern Britain c.1500-c.1750. Core Knowledge.

England grew and became more prosperous, so there was an increase in crime

- Population of England grew from 2.4m in 1520 to 4.1m in 1600. London became the largest city in Europe by 1750.
- Most people continued to work in the countryside. Bad harvests still led to hunger.
- Religious changes during the Reformation led to an increase in moral crimes
- Roads were built, becoming more popular. International trade by sea increased.
- The printing press led to a faster spread of new ideas.

Vagrancy, moral crimes, witchcraft, smuggling and highway robber emerged.

- Poverty, caused by poor harvests, led to an increase in vagrancy. Vagrants were treated as being a danger when in reality they just wanted work.
- Witchcraft trials saw women accused when there was bad fortune following a quarrel. The trials peaked during famines (1580-90). Declined when scientific ideas emerged.
- Rise of Puritanism saw more moral crimes including drinking, swearing, scolding in public and sexual immorality.
- High taxes in the 18th century saw tax-dodging smugglers bring in brandy, silk and tea from overseas to England.
- 17th and 18th century saw increased stagecoach use on roads. As people carried valuables on them there was an increase of highway robbery.



Law enforcement remained very similar to the medieval period

- Still no police force, the hue and cry was still made. Churchwardens, Parish Constables and JP's still enforced the law.
- In the 17th century, JPs dealt with more crimes at Petty Sessions. Sheriffs, Manor and Church courts became less important.
- Watchmen were employed to patrol the streets at night

New punishments and more capital punishments emerged during the Early Modern Period

- New forms of public humiliation were introduced. The scolds bridle, ducking stool along with the existing cucking stool, pillory and stocks.
- From 1572 Vagabonds were whipped and burned through the ear.
- Prisons were still mainly for those awaiting trial and they were usually held in castles, bridges and town gates.
- 1531 more prisons were built. In 1609 Bridewells (house of correction) were built in every county. Prisoners were forced to do hard work inside them.
- 1688 - Bloody Code introduced which increased the number of capital offences from 50 in 1688 to 200 in 1820.
- The Bloody Code was supposed to reduce crime but didn't as the law was seen as too harsh by judges, so they didn't convict the accused very often.



Crime and Punishment, Unit 3 Industrial Britain c.1750-c.1900. Core Knowledge.

The Industrial Revolution saw rapid and dramatic changes in Britain



- Britain's population grew from 6 million in 1750 to 37 million in 1900.
- Industrialisation brought factories, jobs, goods and wealth to Britain.
- Life for people was grim. Cities were unhealthy and overcrowded whilst those in the countryside lived in poverty due to a lack of jobs.
- Urbanisation meant that more people lived in towns and cities by 1850.
- New ideas emerged such as utilitarianism which influenced the government to try to bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people.

New Crimes emerged

- Petty theft was still the most common crime but it happened in the new factories, warehouses and middle-class homes filled with new expensive goods.
- Fare-dodging on railways, not sending children to school and businessmen stealing from companies were all new crimes.
- Only 10% of crime was violent and the murder rate was low. Most crime was opportunistic (unplanned).

The crime rate increased 1750-1850 but then started to fall.

- In 1815 the end of the Napoleonic Wars saw soldiers return to Britain which had very high prices (inflation), low wages and unemployment. This led to crime.
- Overcrowding in cities led to more opportunities to commit crime. Alleyways, crowds and unsupervised property led to theft of people and property.
- People didn't know everyone in the large cities making it easier to get away.
- People wanted to find out why crime happened. Radical thinkers linked poverty to crime whereas Conservative thinkers linked crime to bad habits of the poor.

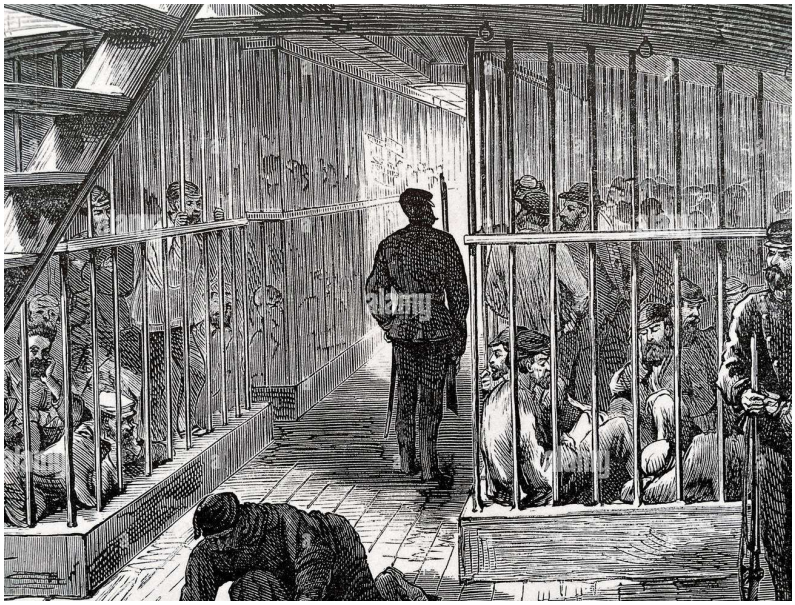
The emergence of a police force led to crime falling from the 1850s



- 1750 - Bow Street Runners setup by John Fielding. They were paid and patrolled only in the evenings.
- In 1829 the Metropolitan police were founded by Robert Peel with 3000 men.
- In 1856 the County and Borough Police Act saw a national police force setup
- In 1842 CID (detectives) were used to investigate crime
- New technology was used by police eg. Fingerprinting, photographs and telegraph

New ideas led to less frequent and more humane executions

- Humanitarian ideas against cruelty and government fears of rowdy crowds led to changes.
- In 1780 executions held on prison roofs. The 'New Drop' made executions quicker.
- From 1837 only murder and attempted murder were capital offences.
- In 1868 all executions were private. In 1872 the 'Long Drop' made executions instant.

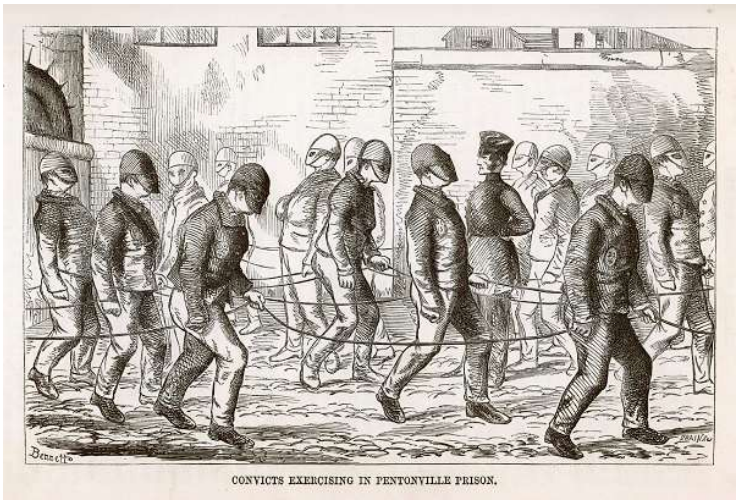


Transportation to Australia saw 5000 convicts a year sent instead of going to prison

- From 1750 convicts sent to USA but after 1776 to Australia to act as a deterrent.
- Australia needed setting up so used convict labour which was hard for the convicts.
- Prisoners served 7 years, 14 years or life of hard labour. Most didn't go back.
- From 1830's transportation faced criticism from Australians as they didn't want more criminals. Transportation cost also cost a lot of money for Britain.
- In the 1850s gold was found in Australia – people wanted to go. 1868 last transport ship to Australia.

The end of transportation meant the prison system had to be expanded

- John Howard in 1777 campaigned for separate cells for prisoners and gaolers to be paid a salary.
- Elizabeth Fry was successful in improving the women's prison at Newgate.
- Millbank was the first national prison in 1816. It failed due to poor discipline.
- 1823 Gaols Act saw prisoners get their own cell and JP inspections.
- 1840's saw huge expansion of prisons. By 1877 90 had been built.
- Separate system was enforced – prisoners kept apart. Breakdowns common.
- 1850s saw the silent system instead. Prisoners did boring tasks in silence like roll cannonballs to each other.
- 1865 Prison Act brought very harsh treatment. Prisoners were made to walk treadmills and turn crank handles for no reason. Whippings for bad behaviour.



CONVICTS EXERCISING IN PENTONVILLE PRISON.

Crime and Punishment, Unit 3 Modern Britain c.1900-present Core Knowledge.

The Twentieth Century saw many technological, governmental and societal changes

- After WW2, Britain prospered with many people buying consumer goods and owning their own homes.
- People gained new rights like the vote (1928), equal pay between genders (1970) and the Equality Act (2010). It is illegal to discriminate based on characteristics.
- Immigration increased leading to social tensions and discrimination.
- The Welfare State emerged, the government would help the vulnerable in need.
- Telephones, radio, television, computers, the internet, cars and social media have rapidly increased the speed of communication and transport.

Crime rates consistently increased during the Twentieth Century

- 1920s-30s, the Great Depression, saw staggering unemployment. Crime very high.
- WW2 saw looting of shops and homes during air raids.
- Adding cyber-crime to statistics saw the crime rate double in 2015.
- The 'war on drugs' has not seen drug crime reduce.
- Hate crimes still occur and change has been slow eg. The murder of Stephen Lawrence (1993) highlighted institutional racism within the police.



New crimes emerged adding to the crime rate

- Car ownership led to new motor crimes. Speeding (1896) Drink driving (1967), seatbelts (1991) and speed cameras (1992). Car theft decreased from the 90s due to increased car security.
- Football hooliganism became common in the 1970s and 80s. Increased match security such as CCTV brought these rates down. Also higher ticket prices.
- Hate crimes defined in 1998 as targeting someone based on race/gender/religion/disability.
- 1971 saw the drug classification system introduced – drugs given A/B/C classes.
- 1990's - The internet has seen the rise of cybercrime. Fraud is the most common crime in the UK, most of it online or over the phone.

Policing has seen dramatic changes due to technological advances

- In 1902 fingerprinting and from 1984 DNA is used to identify suspects.
- Police call boxes emerged in London (1929) and the 999 telephone number (1937) meant the public could call the police.
- The police used radios (1960s) to contact each other in cars and on foot.
- Growth of CCTV (1980s) means the public can be monitored.
- Police records are held on central computerised databases.
- Police carry Tasers and pepper spray. There are firearms and other specialised units



The courts are now a nationalised system

- 1971 - Courts Act replaced Assize Courts with a nationalised Crown Court.
- Less serious cases heard in a magistrate's court. (1908) juvenile courts introduced.
- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) brings trials to court rather than the police.
- 1919 saw women being able to serve on a jury.
- 1974 saw no property restrictions on who can be on a jury

Prisons were reformed to be more humane. The prison population continues to rise.

- Corporal punishment on a birching bench used as an alternative to prison. Phased out for young people (1933), adults (1948) and prisoners (1962)
- Borstals introduced for offenders under 21 (1902) where education was provided.
- 1965 - Capital (death) punishment ends in reaction to Derek Bentley.
- 1988 - Borstals replaced by Young Offenders Institutes
- 1940's - now – prisons have become very overcrowded. Led to Strangeways riot.
- 1967 - parole system (early release) introduced to reduce prison numbers.
- 1990 - Electronic tagging and community service introduced as alternatives to prison.



