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LONDON PRISONS, PRISONERS AND SENTENCES

When Daniel Defoe published his *Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-26), he reported that there were twenty two "public gaols" and many more "tolerated prisons" in London. The city was awash with places for confining prisoners, whether they were arrested for debt, petty crime, or serious crime. Most were run along commercial lines, though the fees charged were regulated by Justices of the Peace and others. Throughout the eighteenth century there were repeated scandals concerning the treatment of prisoners, and as penal principles changed and expectations increased towards the end of the century substantial efforts were made to rebuild prisons and reform conditions.

PRISONS

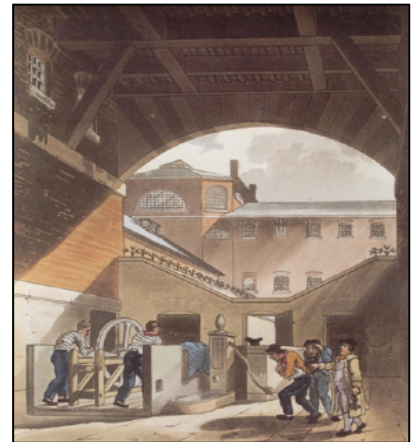
Cold Bath Fields.

Built in 1794 according to the designs provided in the 1779 Penitentiary Act, this house of correction held 384 prisoners of both sexes. It had 232 single cells and radial wings consisting of two stories of sleeping cells above a vaulted ground floor.

The prisoners were provided with an infirmary, religious instruction and employment. The use of solitary confinement in order to force prisoners to reflect on their sins proved controversial, however, and there were complaints that inmates suffered from cold, hunger and abuse.

Clerkenwell.

The Middlesex house of correction was originally built in 1616, and was rebuilt in 1774-75. It held many more prisoners than New Prison, the county prison intended to hold prisoners awaiting trial in Middlesex. This house of correction often contained more than one hundred prisoners at a time, and numbers increased with the inclusion of prisoners sentenced to hard labour following the suspension of transportation in 1776. John Howard found 171 prisoners when he visited it in 1779. Unsurprisingly, it proved difficult to prevent escapes, and there was a mass escape in 1782. In 1794, it was replaced by Cold Bath Fields.



Clink, Southwark.

Originally used principally for religious prisoners sentenced from the court of the Bishop of Winchester, in the eighteenth century the Clink acted as the local gaol for Southwark, holding a small number of debtors and minor offenders. Following its destruction in the Gordon Riots in 1780 it was not rebuilt.

Fleet Prison.

Located next to the Fleet River in the City of London, the Fleet was a debtors' prison, not just for those arrested in London but also for those imprisoned elsewhere in the country who were transferred there under a warrant from the high courts. Like most debtors' prisons, within the walls it was a relatively free community of more than 300 prisoners, run by a prisoners' committee. The small number of officers who ran the prison had little power to regulate internal conditions, and most did not even have access to the prison at night. Wealthier prisoners stayed on the master's side, where they had their own rooms and lived in relative luxury, while the poor prisoners lived in squalid conditions on the common side, and depended on prison charities for survival.

In 1729 complaints about oppressive practices by the keeper, Thomas Bambridge, led to the formation of a Parliamentary inquiry into his government of the prison. The committee's report found him guilty of extorting money from prisoners, and blamed the abuses on the system of making keepers purchase their office, which required them to charge substantial fees to the prisoners. Bambridge was also accused of torturing prisoners and was tried for murder and acquitted. He was subsequently also tried for the theft of a prisoner's goods and acquitted. Nonetheless, Bambridge was dismissed from his office and new rules for future keepers were drawn up which included a prohibition on the sale of prison offices.

The Fleet was rebuilt between 1770 and 1774, but when the prison reformer John Howard visited it in 1778 he found it crowded and dirty. The prison was destroyed in the Gordon riots in 1780, though the prisoners were warned in advance so they could remove their goods before the rioters set fire to the prison. Rapidly rebuilt, in the early 1790s there were once again complaints about the prison being in poor repair and escapes.

Because the prisoners were debtors rather than criminals, this was not one of the prisons affected by the late eighteenth-century reform movement, and in 1814 the Fleet was described as "the largest brothel in the metropolis".

It was not only the keeper who was accused of abuses. Indeed, there were complaints that some of the wealthier prisoners exploited the debt laws by moving into the prison, where they could live in comfort, in order to escape their creditors. Fraudulent tradesmen allegedly entered the prison and then took advantage of the periodic insolvency acts to gain their release with their debts cleared. Some debtors imprisoned elsewhere deliberately obtained writs which allowed them to be committed to the Fleet, a more salubrious prison compared to provincial prisons. Similarly, it was alleged that some prisoners used writs of habeas corpus to move between prisons so that they could spend their winters in the warmer Fleet, and their summers in more airy King's Bench prison south of the river. For the resourceful debtor, the Fleet provided a valuable route to survival.

Gatehouse Prison, Westminster.

The Gatehouse held those accused of felonies and petty offences who were awaiting trial in Westminster, as well as, owing to the presence of the royal palace and Parliament nearby, state prisoners. The prison was vulnerable to escapes, and in 1749 was stormed by twenty-four armed Irishmen who released a member of the gang who had been accused of pickpocketing. It was pulled down in 1776 and the prisoners transferred to Tothill Fields.

Giltspur Street Compter.

Located close to Newgate Prison in the City of London, this prison was built on reformed principles in 1791 in order to replace the Poultry Compter and the Wood Street Compter. Intended to hold 136 prisoners, the prisoners were divided into four classes: debtors, felons, petty offenders, and those charged with assault. There were rows of cells for felons, separate buildings for male and female debtors, and separate rooms for those apprehended by the night watch. Despite the aspiration to keep prisoners divided by classification, in practice inmates were moved around the prison regardless of their class according to the space available. In this sense, the prison "marked a perpetuation of the existing regime".

Horsemonger Lane Gaol.

This was the county gaol for Surrey, located near St George's Fields outside Southwark. Built in 1792-99, it was a model prison, with 177 cells in three wings for petty criminals, and a fourth wing for debtors. A control keeper's house oversaw eight separate courtyards, allowing the prisoners to be both separated by sex and offence (felons, petty criminals, debtors) and constantly watched. Two surgeons attended.

Hulks.

Prison Hulks on the River Thames, Woolwich, c.1856.

Created following the 1776 statute which ordered that male prisoners sentenced to transportation should be put to hard labour improving the navigation of the Thames, the hulks were an emergency measure to cope with prison overcrowding following the interruption to transportation caused by the outbreak of war with America. The London focus of the act is evident in the fact the work took place on the Thames, and the influence of reformist principles can



be seen in the fact that prisoners were put to hard labour and subjected to restrictive discipline. The first ships, the *Justitia* and the *Censor*, took on their first convicts in August 1776. The hulks were run by contractors, overseen by the Middlesex Justices of the Peace.

There were difficulties from the start. Crowded and insanitary conditions led to a high mortality rate (from August 1776 to April 1778 176 of 632 prisoners on board died), largely due to gaol fever (typhus).

Belatedly medical treatment was provided, from 1779 in a separate hospital ship. There were mutinies, and many prisoners escaped from the work parties on shore. Problems with prisoner morale led the authorities to offer pardons to well-behaved prisoners; this practice also addressed the problem of overcrowding.

Despite attempts to address these problems, the hulks remained crowded and expensive, and in a sense contributed to the very phenomenon of criminal intransigence they were meant to solve. Their presence led to pressure for the resumption of transportation, but even after transportation was resumed the hulks remained, to be used as a place for confining and punishing prisoners prior to the departure of the transport ships.

King's Bench

As a debtors' prison, King's Bench was largely run by the prisoners themselves, with conditions for individual prisoners depending largely on how much they were able to pay. There were persistent complaints of overcrowding and extortion by prison officers. In 1754, a Parliamentary inquiry prompted by a petition from the prisoners found mistreatment, misbehaviour and overcrowding, and led to an act authorising the building of a new prison. In 1758 the new building in St George's Fields, Southwark, opened (the site was chosen for the fresh air), with 224 rooms and an open courtyard. Despite its size, the prison was soon overcrowded. The open ground outside the prison provided a place for protesters to gather, as occurred when John Wilkes was imprisoned there in 1768 for libel. Radicalism spread inside the prison in 1770-71 when the prisoners campaigned for the abolition of imprisonment for debt and against the prison governors. In 1773 the Marshall petitioned the House of Commons for additional space, noting that there were no rooms for sick prisoners, nor to keep separate the small number of prisoners committed for "capital or high crimes and offences" (who therefore found it easy to escape). The prison was finally enlarged in 1780, shortly before it was entirely destroyed in the Gordon riots, after which it was rebuilt in the same form. In 1792 the Keeper demanded further repairs, in order to prevent escapes and "keep off the mob in case of riots". By the end of the century prison officers were apparently governing the prison more closely, but the prison was still known in the early nineteenth century for the laxity of its rules.

Ludgate

Originally one of the gates in the Roman wall of the City of London, this was used mainly for debtors, but also for petty offenders who were freemen of the City, clergy or attorneys. Prisoners elected the warden and essentially ran the prison. In 1760 when the City walls and gates were demolished, the prisoners were moved to a section of the London Workhouse in Bishopsgate Street.

Marshalsea

A debtors' prison, the Marshalsea was also used for smugglers and those who owed customs and excise fines. Like other debtors' prisons, there were complaints about mistreatment of the prisoners, and the fact that, although required by law, coroners' inquests were not held when prisoners died in the prison. Essentially in competition with the Fleet and King's Bench prisons for the business of wealthier debtors, the Marshalsea lost out in the late eighteenth century owing to its poor state of repair.

Millbank Prison

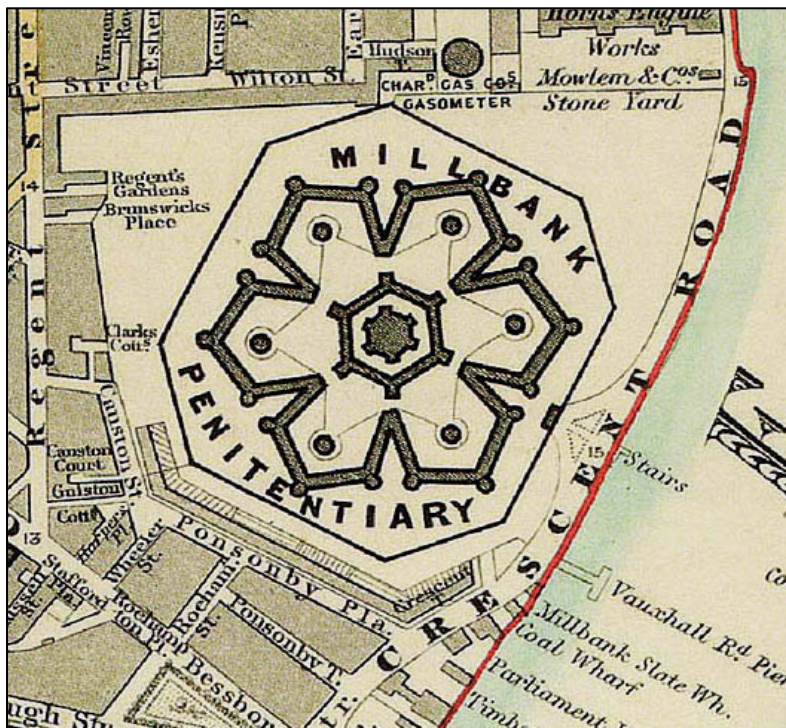
First opened as a penitentiary, for convicts sentenced to terms of imprisonment, or for those sentenced to transportation but had their sentences commuted to imprisonment because they seemed promising material. A cholera outbreak in 1824 meant the prison closed for a short period and the prisoners sent to specially commissioned hulks at Woolwich, the men to the Dromedary and the Ethalion, and the women to the Narcissus and the Heroine.

The Millbank Prison Act 1843 converted the penitentiary into a prison, intended to serve the purpose of a depot for receiving newly convicted felons before dispatching them to other convict prisons, hulks or transport ships to serve their sentences.



The Female Block.

In 1849, Millbank's function changed again and it began to be used for male convicts serving the first (probationary) part of their sentence in separate confinement as well as for those who were in need of another period of separate confinement after misbehaviour at public works prisons (ie. penal class). Female convicts continued to be confined here, all females until the opening of Brixton Prison in 1853, when it was restricted to probationary and penal classes. Between 1849-52, a cholera outbreak at the prison led to the



removal of part of the establishment to Shorncliff Barracks in Kent. In 1870-71, the number of male convicts confined for any time in Millbank was dramatically reduced, in practice limited to who professed to be Roman Catholics and in the probationary class, as well as a small number of all religious persuasions serving the last part of their sentence. At the same time, several pentagons were appropriated for military prisoners.

In 1880, Millbank was selected to receive "star class" convicts (those with no previous convictions) for their probationary period. In 1882, it was decided to convert Millbank into a local prison for use until the completion of Wormwood Scrubs. Military prisoners were removed to Brixton Prison, (lately transferred to the War Office); male convicts in separate confinement were sent to Wormwood Scrubs (leaving only

those involved in industries); local prisoners began to be received from October 1883; and female convicts were removed in 1884. On 1 May 1886, Millbank was officially handed over to the local prison authorities and its convict function ended.

Newgate

The principal prison for holding those accused of serious crimes in the metropolis, Newgate was part of the city wall on the western side of the City of London, next door to the Old Bailey courthouse. In addition to male and female felons, who were generally kept in irons and whose numbers swelled before each meeting of the court, there were separate wards for male and female debtors, both master's side (for those able to pay for their accommodation) and common side. As with most debtors' prisons, the master's side could be very comfortable, but the common side was "hell". Despite the separate wards, prisoners could mix freely with other prisoners and visitors. Rebuilt after the great fire of 1666, the prison was five stories high. In 1726-28, when the prison was extended and the total capacity increased to 150 prisoners, fifteen cells for condemned prisoners were added in order to allow them a period of solitary reflection before their executions. The remaining prisoners were held in large wards; in the mid eighteenth century there were thirteen common wards and four master's wards. Like most eighteenth-century prisons, prisoners' fees paid for running the prison, and much of the day to day government, following the practice at Ludgate, was performed by the prisoners themselves. At the start of the century the prison was run by four partners, prisoners appointed by the keeper, but in 1730 these were replaced by elected officers, who were responsible for enforcing discipline.

Garnish, a fee paid by each prisoner on their arrival, continued throughout the century despite the fact it was a source of frequent complaints. Those who could not afford to pay garnish had to surrender their clothes.

Newgate was frequently overcrowded, particularly just before meetings of the Old Bailey court, and poor sanitary conditions meant that disease was rife, with mortality rates particularly high in winter. In 1726 gaol fever killed eighty-three prisoners, and in 1750 the prisoners brought the fever into the Old Bailey courtroom, leading to sixty deaths, including the Lord Mayor. This disaster led to immediate consideration of plans for rebuilding the prison, though that would not be achieved for almost thirty years.

Although ventilators were added in 1752, between 1755 and 1765 132 prisoners died. Overcrowding also contributed to frequent escapes, most notably that of Jack Sheppard in 1724.

The first stones of a new prison were finally laid in 1770. Opened fully in 1778, the new building had separate quadrangles for debtors, male felons, and women felons. (The use of courtyards to provide fresh air for inmates can also be found in eighteenth-century hospitals such as St Thomas's.) The building held 300 male felons, 60 female felons, and 100 debtors, and included an infirmary. The lack of individual cells for prisoners demonstrates the limited impact around 1770 of contemporary reformist discourses which would radically shape prison building in the 1790s. Shortly after the building was finished it was completely destroyed by the Gordon Riots in 1780. The rioters' support for the prisoners is evident in the fact that they struck off the irons

of the felons who were liberated and prevented the authorities from recapturing them. Popular hostility to the prison can also be seen in the fact that chains from the prison were paraded in triumph the next day. This triumph, however, was short-lived, and the prison was rebuilt to the same design and completed in 1783.

Attempts to reform conditions in Newgate met with little success. In the 1750 a ban on the sale of spirits in the prison was circumvented by visitors who smuggled them in. A 1774 Act which specified rules for cleanliness and ventilation in response to problems with gaol fever was "almost a dead letter". Similarly ineffective were the 1784 Act requiring the classification of prisoners and a 1791 act requiring regular visitations of the prison. In the 1780s the sheriffs sought to introduce new regulations concerning prisoners' clothing but these were rejected by the inmates. When the taproom was closed, prisoners simply purchased beer from passers-by on the street through the grates.

The tradition of prisoner self-management clearly led to a strong culture of prisoner initiative and collaboration. Prisoners knew how to elicit sympathy from those who visited the prison, extracting food, money, and drink from visitors. They also collaborated in developing methods of obtaining the most favourable sentences and verdicts when they appeared in court. From the 1780s, those convicted of forgery helped each other write petitions to the Bank of England soliciting financial support, a plea bargain, or a reduction of their sentence, many of which were successful. In 1789, groups of prisoners anxious about the prospect of transportation to Australia conspired together in agreeing to refuse the royal pardon. In addition, the open nature of the prison allowed radical prisoners, such as John Wilkes, to coordinate their political campaigns from inside the prison. In the 1790s, partly stimulated by the presence of Lord George Gordon, a heterodox republican and Jacobin culture developed in the prison, which formed networks and even published radical literature.

New Prison

Located in Clerkenwell, New Prison held those accused of petty and serious crimes in Middlesex while they awaited trial. Owing to overcrowding at Newgate, those who were to be tried at the Old Bailey were not transferred to Newgate until just before the start of the sessions. The original prison was extended in 1773-75 in order to accommodate more felons, but there were nonetheless escape attempts in the 1780s.

POULTRY COMPTER

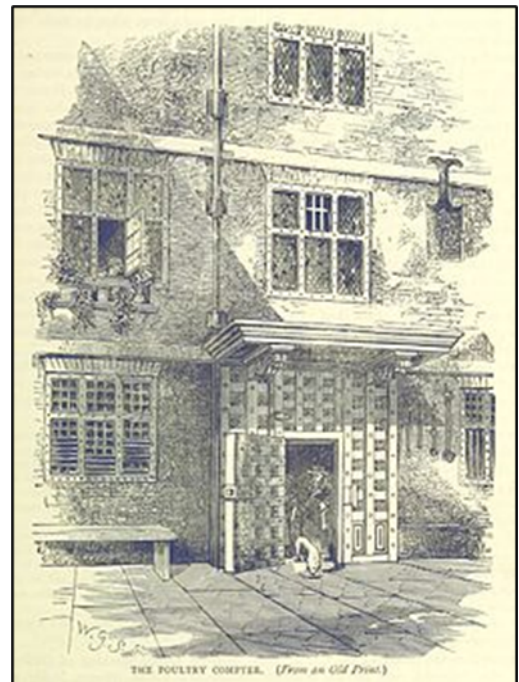
Poultry Compter (also known as Poultry Counter) was a small prison that stood at Poultry, part of Cheapside in the City of London. The Compter was used to lock up minor criminals and prisoners convicted under civil law and was run by the City's Sheriff. It operated from the 16th century until 1815. It was pulled down in 1817 and replaced with a chapel.

Also based in Cheapside, Poultry was so-named because of its proximity to the poultry market. Compters did not officially have specialities, but Poultry was known for its Jewish and black inmates. The former was probably simply due to its proximity to Jewry with its concentration of Jewish residents.

It is said that the Compter escaped attack during the Gordon Riots of 1780 because Lord Gordon had strong Jewish sympathies. The black prisoners were almost all ex-slaves, whose status was under law ambiguous.

Their owners claimed that they were still slaves, while reformers and the men themselves, reasonably argued that there was no slavery in Britain and therefore once on British soil they had become free men. It was shortly after an ex-slave James Somerset won his freedom in just such a case in 1772, that the poet William Cowper wrote: ***"Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs imbibe our air, that moment they are free".***

The Compter was used to house prisoners such as vagrants, debtors and religious dissenters, as well as criminals convicted of misdemeanours including homosexuality, prostitution and drunkenness. For example, on 1 August 1772, The Craftsman reported that "a well-dressed man was detected, near Lombard-street, in an unnatural crime, and immediately committed to the Poultry Compter." On 5 July 1799, a Friday evening, at 7 o'clock, a naked man was arrested at the Mansion House and sent to the Compter. He confirmed that he had accepted a wager of 10 guineas (equal to £1,039 today) to run naked from Cornhill to Cheapside.



Prisoners were not segregated and conditions in the small gaol were described as poor. In 1776 William Smith said it was a place where "riot, drunkenness, blasphemy and debauchery, echo from the walls, sickness and misery are confined within them". Another contemporary account said:

"The mixture of scents that arose from mundungus, tobacco, foul feet, dirty shirts, stinking breaths, and uncleanly carcasses, poisoned our nostrils far worse than a Southwark ditch, a tanner's yard, or a tallow-chandler's melting-room. The ill-looking vermin, with long, rusty beards, swaddled up in rags, and their heads —some covered with thrum-caps, and others thrust into the tops of old stockings. Some quitted their play they were before engaged in, and came hovering round us, like so many cannibals, with such devouring countenances, as if a man had been but a morsel with 'em, all crying out, "Garnish, garnish," as a rabble in an insurrection crying, "Liberty, liberty!" We were forced to submit to the doctrine of non-resistance, and comply with their demands, which extended to the sum of two shillings each".

Certainly, the state of the prison was giving considerable cause for concern and, in 1804, an official report said the prison was:

'In such a state of decay, as to become inadequate to the safe custody of the debtors and prisoners therein confined, and extremely dangerous, as well to the lives of the said debtors and prisoners as to other persons resorting thereto'.

This report was contained in a preamble to the London Debtors' Prisons Act 1804 enabling the City's authorities to move inmates to another City prison (Giltspur Street Compter), although this purpose was not achieved until 1815, following the passage of the Debtors Prison for London and Middlesex Act 1815. The Poultry Compter was demolished in 1817.

The Poultry Compter and Slavery.

The Poultry Compter was linked to the early struggles to abolish slavery and end British involvement in the slave trade. Granville Sharp, the first English campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade, made several visits to the Compter to gain the freedom of several confined African slaves.

Sharp's connection with the Poultry began in 1765 when he obtained the freedom of John Strong, a young black slave from Barbados. Strong was a mistreated slave who had been abandoned in London by his cruel owner, David Lisle, a lawyer. After Sharp found Strong, he helped him recover from his injuries and found him employment with an apothecary. However when Lisle discovered that Strong was alive and healthy, he got the keeper of the Poultry, John Ross, and William Miller, an under-Sheriff for the Lord Mayor of London, to kidnap Strong. While Strong was imprisoned in the Poultry, Lisle sold him for £30 to John Kerr, a planter in the American Colonies. But Sharp eventually had Strong released from the Compter after successfully appealing to Robert Kite, London's Lord Mayor, that no warrant had been issued for Strong's arrest and confinement.

Poultry Compter was pulled down in 1817.

Notable inmates of the Poultry Compter.

Samuel Boyse (1708–1749); a poet and acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, Reverend John Bradford; martyr. William Carter (c. 1548–1584); a Roman Catholic English printer and martyr. Thomas Dekker (1570–1632); dramatist and rival to Ben Jonson, imprisoned for debt in 1599. John Gerrard (1564–1637); an English Jesuit priest. Captain James Hind; highwayman. John Penry (executed 25 May 1593); Welsh martyr.

Rowland Taylor; martyr. John Traske; Sabbatarian. Thomas Tusser; (c.1524-1580); Author, chorister, farmer.

SURREY GAOL.

This prison held those accused of crimes and awaiting their trials from Surrey, as well as convicts awaiting transportation. In 1770 it was the subject of a grand jury presentment which described it as "too small, unhealthy, inconvenient and unsafe". Although enlarged in 1771, it was replaced with the Horsemonger Lane Gaol in 1791

SAVOY.

Built in 1695 as a military prison, the Savoy held deserters and military offenders.

Once a fortified palace, the area of the Savoy is here taken up by a prison and prison yard, barracks, a hospital and a French church. The palace structure was badly damaged during the Peasant Revolt of 1381, and in 1505 Henry VII ordered the palace to be rebuilt as a hospital, with St John the Baptist as its patron saint. By the 16th and 17th centuries the hospital was being misused. Stow wrote that vagabonds often spent the night at the hospital after idling in the grounds during the day. The hospital was first used for soldiers in 1627 after the expedition to La Rochelle to help the Huguenots. By 1695 Sir Christopher Wren had built a military prison on the site. In 1661, after the Savoy conference about religious problems, French Protestants were given the use of the little chapel, rebuilt by Wren in 1685. The site was cleared from 1816 to 20 to make the approach to Waterloo Bridge.

However, due to poor management, the regime was changed in 1850 and the Bridewell then housed only women and convicted boys under the age of seventeen.

Except in the City, where beadle could also make commitments, offenders were typically committed to houses of correction by Justices of the Peace, who used their powers of summary jurisdiction to order immediate punishment for those accused of minor offences. In the Middlesex and Westminster houses of correction in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the most common charges against prisoners were prostitution, petty theft, and "loose, idle and disorderly conduct" (a loosely defined offence which could involve a wide range of misbehaviour). Some of these offences, particularly the thefts, were actually indictable as felonies, but plaintiffs and Justices of the Peace appear to have preferred the quick justice of a summary conviction and stint in a house of correction to more formal judicial procedures. In addition, a small number of prisoners were simply committed because they were unable to find sureties to guarantee their appearance at Sessions. The second prison was closed in 1877, when prisoners were transferred to Millbank Prison, and was demolished in 1885. Westminster Cathedral, started in 1895, now stands on the site. The prison's foundations were re-used for the cathedral.

Notable inmates:

Edward Marcus Despard. Gregor MacGregor, accused of fraud by means of the Poyais emigration program. James Tilly Matthews. John Trumbull for alleged treason (1780-1781). Samuel Drybutter for attempted sodomy (1770-1771).

The stone gateway is all that remains of the early 17th century Westminster House of Correction or Bridewell later known as Tothill Fields prison. The gateway was resited here by the Greater London Council in 1969.



Also known as Tothill Fields Bridewell, Westminster Bridewell and the Westminster House of Correction. It was one of the less severe places of incarceration, as one of the main punishments was not being allowed to talk to other prisoners. Following demolition, its foundations were re-used for Westminster Cathedral which now occupies the site.

TOWER OF LONDON

The Tower of London, officially His Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London, is a historic castle located on the north bank of the River Thames in central London. It lies within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, which is separated from the eastern edge of the square mile of the City of London by the open space known as Tower Hill. It was founded towards the end of 1066 as part of the Norman Conquest of England. The White Tower, which gives the entire castle its name, was built by William the Conqueror in 1078 and was a resented symbol of oppression, inflicted upon London by the new ruling elite. The castle was used as a prison from 1100 (Ranulf Flambard) until 1952 (Kray twins), although that was not its primary purpose. A grand palace early in its history, it served as a royal residence. As a whole, the Tower is a complex of several buildings set within two concentric rings of defensive walls and a moat. There were several phases of expansion, mainly under kings Richard I, Henry III, and Edward I in the 12th and 13th centuries. The general layout established by the late 13th century remains despite later activity on the site.

The Tower of London has played a prominent role in English history. It was besieged several times, and controlling it has been important to controlling the country. The Tower has served variously as an armoury, a treasury, a menagerie, the home of the Royal Mint, a public record office, and the home of the Crown Jewels of England. From the early 14th century until the reign of Charles II, a procession would be led from the Tower to Westminster Abbey on the coronation of a monarch. In the absence of the monarch, the Constable of the Tower is in charge of the castle. This was a powerful and trusted position in the medieval period.



In the late 15th century, the castle was the prison of the Princes in the Tower. Under the Tudors, the Tower became used less as a royal residence, and despite attempts to refortify and repair the castle, its defences lagged behind developments to deal with artillery.

The peak period of the castle's use as a prison was the 16th and 17th centuries, when many figures who had fallen into disgrace, such as Elizabeth I before she became queen, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Elizabeth Throckmorton, were held within its walls. This use has led to the phrase "sent to the Tower". Despite its enduring reputation as a place of torture and death, popularised by 16th-century religious propagandists and 19th-century writers, only seven people were executed within the Tower before the World Wars of the 20th century. Executions were more commonly held on the notorious Tower Hill to the north of the castle, with 112 occurring there over a 400-year period. In the latter half of the 19th century, institutions such as the Royal Mint moved out of the castle to other locations, leaving many buildings empty. Anthony Salvin and John Taylor took the opportunity to restore the Tower to what was felt to be its medieval appearance, clearing out many of the vacant post-medieval structures.

In the First and Second World Wars, the Tower was again used as a prison and witnessed the executions of 12 men for espionage. After the Second World War, damage caused during the Blitz was repaired, and the castle reopened to the public. Today, the Tower of London is one of the country's most popular tourist attractions. Under the ceremonial charge of the Constable of the Tower, and operated by the Resident Governor of the Tower of London and Keeper of the Jewel House, the property is cared for by the charity Historic Royal Palaces and is protected as a World Heritage Site.

WATCHHOUSES.

Every parish had a watchhouse, where those apprehended by the night watch could be kept overnight before they were examined by a Justice of the Peace in the morning. While facilities varied, watchhouses typically had a public room, where the keeper profited from the sale of drinks, and holding cells.

The watchhouse was known by the poor as a place where emergency relief could be obtained, but conditions in the cells could be horrific, particularly when overcrowded. In 1742 four women suffocated to death in the St Martin's Roundhouse and the keeper, William Bird, was put on trial for murder at the Old Bailey.

WHITECHAPEL DEBTORS PRISON

This prison held debtors sentenced by courts serving the manors of Stepney and Hackney. An attempt by the constables and other officers of the Tower Hamlets to obtain permission to use it also for petty criminal offenders, to save them the trouble of carrying prisoners all the way to the Middlesex house of correction or New Prison in Clerkenwell, was rejected by the Middlesex Justices in 1707, but it is possible that in spite of this ruling such prisoners were held here.

WHITECROSS STREET COMPTER

Whitecross Street Prison was a debtors' prison built 1813–15 to ease overcrowding at Newgate Prison. It had a capacity of 400 prisoners. It closed in 1870, when all of the prisoners were transferred to the newly built Holloway Prison.

WELLCLOSE SQUARE PRISON

This small prison, essentially just an ordinary house, served the Tower Liberty. In 1792 it was described as being in "ruinous" condition.

WOOD STREET COMPTER

Opened 1555 – Closed 1791.

The Wood Street Compter (or Wood Street Counter) was a small prison within the City of London in England. It was primarily a debtors' prison, and also held people accused of such misdemeanours as public drunkenness, although some wealthier prisoners were able to obtain alcohol through bribery. The prison was built and opened in 1555, replacing the earlier Bread Street Compter, from which many prisoners were transferred. Wood Street was closed and replaced by Giltspur Street Compter in 1791.

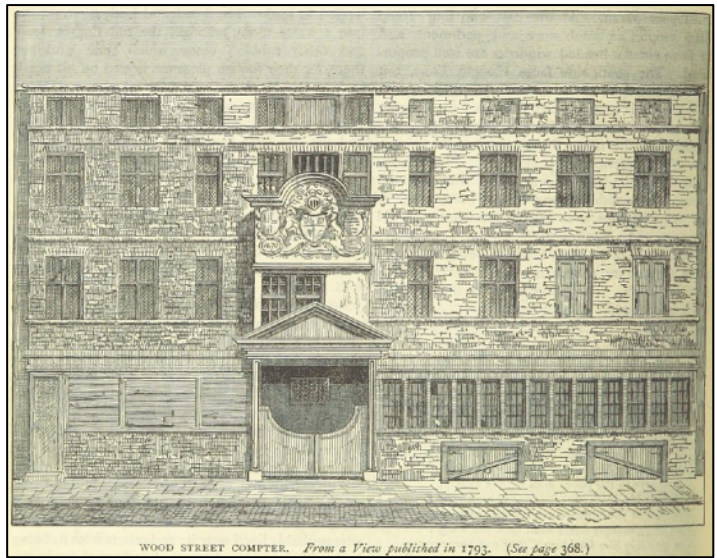
The Compter was originally one of two prisons, the other, the Poultry Compter, located on the Poultry. Both were destroyed during the Great Fire of London in 1666, although the Poultry Compter was rebuilt, and another Compter, Giltspur Street Compter was constructed in 1791.

The Wood Street Compter was still active in 1727 when The London Gazette (6 July p4) listed 13 insolvent debtors awaiting court on 25 August. During the closure of the Compters, debtors were held in prisons in Southwark, including the Marshalsea and King's Bench Prisons, Borough Compter and Horsemonger Lane Gaol.

Some wine cellars on Mitre Court were marketed as a party venue under the name of "The City Compter" but these appear to date from the mid-18th century; no sign of the prison was found during archaeological investigations of the site of a new office block at One Wood Street.

Notable prisoners:

Robert Wedderburn (radical). Captain George Orrell. The Catholic martyr George Napper. One of the Gunpowder Plotters, Robert Catesby (for his part in Essex's rebellion, 1601). The Sabbatarian dissenter John Traske. The poet Edmund Gayton. A young Jonathan Wild; and highwayman James Hind. Compters were run by a sheriff and his staff, all of whom were essentially a law unto themselves, parliamentary inspectors having no jurisdiction whatever within the walls. They charged inmates for everything essential to survival and comfort: food, drink, clothes, bedding, warmth, medicine – the lot. Many prisoners – by definition already having money problems – often found themselves in a downward spiral of increasing poverty and squalor. In theory they



could take in work from outside – tailoring, shoe repairing and the like – but this seems rarely to have happened in practice. At their height in the 17th and 18th centuries, Compters would often lose half a dozen inmates per week to disease, but there was no shortage of re-supply. These institutions were notorious even in their own time with constant complaints from reformers and former prisoners via Parliament, newspapers and pamphleteering, to little avail. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1712 designed to alleviate the plight of demonstrably irredeemable debtors – it had little effect. It was not until the groundswell of Victorian reform was sufficiently powerful that Compters were finally shut down for good in the 1850s.

...when a gentleman is brought in by the watch for some misdemeanour committed, that he must pay at least an Angell before he be discharged; he must pay twelvecence for turning the key at the master-side dore two shillings to the chamberleine, twelvecence for his garnish for wine, tenpence for his dinner, whether he stay or no, and when he comes to be discharged at the booke, it will cost at least three shillings and sixpence more, besides sixpence for the booke-keeper's paines, and sixpence for the porter. ..

Wood Street Compter was burned down in the Great Fire and rebuilt within a few years. It was eventually closed in 1791 and its inmates transferred to the new Giltspur Street Compter.

REBUILDING AND REFORM

While the late eighteenth century is recognised as a period in which a substantial amount of prison rebuilding took place, London prisons experienced change throughout the century as a consequence of a series of parliamentary statutes and local government decisions which sought to regulate existing prisons and facilitate their repair or rebuilding. As early as 1698, the Gaol Act gave Justices of the Peace the responsibility for repairing and building county gaols and dictated that those accused of murder and other felonies should be held in those gaols (rather than in private lockups). Occasional parliamentary investigations, such as the ones conducted into the Fleet and Newgate prisons in 1729, led to prohibitions of the sale of prison offices and other reforms.

The pace of reform quickened, however, in the 1770s. Following the publication of an English translation of Cesare Beccaria's *Of Crimes and Punishments* in 1767, which argued that punishments should attempt to reform the mind and not the body of the criminal and be proportionate to the severity of the crime, there was renewed interest in the reformatory potential of imprisonment. In the 1770s Jonas Hanway argued that, if prisoners could be put to hard labour, kept in solitary confinement and subject to religious instruction, imprisonment had the potential to reform offenders. At the same time prison investigators called attention to the poor conditions in many existing prisons. John Howard's published account of his prison visits (*The State of the Prisons*, 1777) called attention to the insanitary and crowded conditions of many prisons, and in 1774 the Health of Prisoners Act mandated the appointment of a surgeon or apothecary for each prison, and the creation of separate prison infirmaries for men and women.

In response to all these concerns, and to the interruption to transportation in 1776 which placed extreme pressure on the prisons, the Penitentiary Act was passed in 1779. This act authorised the building of one or more national penitentiaries and increased the length of sentences at hard labour.

Although these prisons were never built, the Act stimulated further interest in prison reform and influenced the design of new prisons built in the 1790s, as explained below.

In 1780, perhaps reflecting widespread popular anger about prison conditions, the Gordon Riots resulted in the destruction of at least eight London prisons and houses of correction: Newgate, the Fleet, Clerkenwell House of Correction, New Prison, Surrey House of Correction, the Clink, King's Bench Prison, and the Borough Compter. All but the Clink were immediately rebuilt. Reflecting both the urgency with which the rebuilding took place and the fundamentally pragmatic approach of most magistrates, however, there were few changes to the design of these buildings.

But further reforms came in 1784, with the passage of an act which required regular inspections of county gaols, the segregation of prisoners by category, and the creation of separate infirmaries, chapels, and baths. Gaolers were to be paid salaries and not live off the fees charged to prisoners, and liquor and gambling were prohibited.

A series of prisons built in the 1790s according to the plans set out in the Penitentiary Act demonstrates just how much had changed over the course of the century. Cold Bath Fields, the Giltspur Street Compter, and the Horsemonger Lane Gaol all segregated prisoners according to sex and category of offence, put prisoners to hard labour, provided separate cells for felons and included high levels of surveillance by prison officers.

Prisoners and the Making of the Modern Prison.

As the above narrative suggests, accounts of prison reform can easily be told from the top down, ascribing the impetus for change to reform ideologies, heroic prison visitors, parliamentary statutes, and the decisions of magistrates. But this is only part of the story. Given the reluctance of many of those in government to spend money, it took the actions of the prisoners themselves to force the pace of change.

The simple fact of the growth in the number of prisoners, even before the interruption to transportation in 1776, and the consequent overcrowding, frequent escapes, and disease made some kind of rebuilding inevitable. While a number of political factors contributed to the passage of the 1779 Penitentiary Act, for example, the most pressing reason for its passage was clearly stated by William Eden: "the fact is, our prisons are full". Given its potential to spread beyond the prison walls, as occurred when the judges in the Old Bailey courtroom were struck down in 1750, fear of the spread of contagious disease was a particularly strong motivation for reform. Prisoners' persistent demands for medical care thereby acquired a new force.

The fact that prisoners largely ran their own affairs inside prisons added to the pressure for change, both because prisoners knew how to make complaints which would excite the attention of the government (complaints of extortion and mistreatment by prison keepers were particularly effective) and because the alternative political culture of the prisons came to be seen as a challenge to the authorities.

At the same time, improvements were often effectively resisted by prisoners as well as prison officers, both of whom sought to protect their traditional privileges, identities and customs.

Prisoners were thus not merely the passive recipients of prison reform; in their numbers and by their actions they forced the pace of change and shaped its direction.

THE CRIME AND THE PUNISHMENT.

Convicted criminals were sentenced to their punishments by Justices of the Peace at sessions and the judges at the Old Bailey. There were a number of possible punishments to choose from. While some were dictated by statute for specific offences, the Justices and judges often had the opportunity to use their discretion, as they attempted to match the punishment to the individual circumstances of the criminal and the crime. Sentences were not always carried out, however, owing to the widespread use of royal pardons, which introduced a further element of discretion into the process. While convicts had little power to determine these outcomes, they and their friends could petition the Justices or the King for a pardon or reduced punishment.

Punishments, particularly for felons, changed dramatically during the century. While some changes, such as the reduced role of the death penalty and the growing use of imprisonment, can be attributed to cultural developments such as a decreasing tolerance of violence and a renewed belief in the reformatory potential of hard labour, a major stimulus for change was the repeated crime waves which Londoners experienced (or thought they experienced) during the century, which led politicians and the judicial authorities to search repeatedly for new, more effective methods of reducing crime. It was the pressure of London crime, therefore, which forced the pace of change in national penal policy. Also important were the various acts of resistance to penal innovation by convicts, which helped shape the limits of the possible.

For Misdemeanours

The vast majority of those convicted of petty offences were fined, with the level of the fine determined by statute or by the discretion of Justices of the Peace, according to the nature of the offence and the sex and social status of the offender. The most frequently levied fine in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was 3s 4d (three shillings and four pence, or one quarter of a mark), with 84 per cent of all fines amounting to 13s 4d (one mark) or less. Occasionally much higher fines were levied, usually in an attempt to force the convict to reach a private agreement with the prosecutor over the payment of damages, in which case the fine was significantly reduced. Other punishments for petty offenders included committal to prison or a house of correction, whipping, the pillory, or to be required to provide sureties for good behaviour.

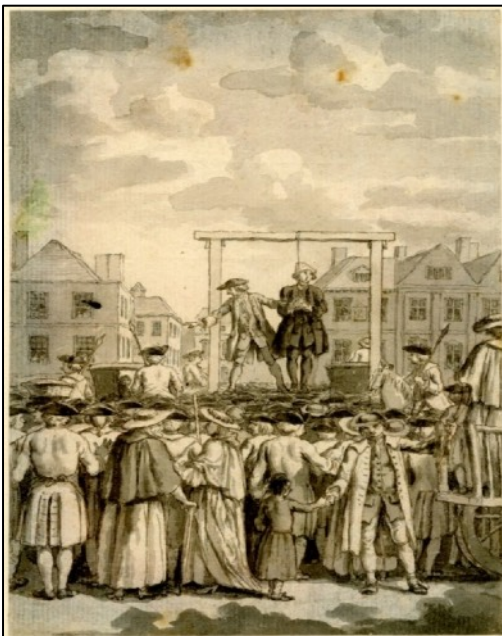
Death

Historically, felons were punished by death, but the King was able to pardon those offenders he did not wish to see executed. The availability of benefit of clergy significantly reduced the number of felons executed, but fears about the growth of crime during the eighteenth century led to the withdrawal of many offences from benefit of clergy, and the creation of new capital offences, creating what became known as the bloody code. Nevertheless, counteracting this trend, over the course of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a growing unwillingness to see large numbers of offenders executed meant that increasing numbers of felons were spared death by being convicted on a reduced charge or pardoned.

There was still support for the execution of the most serious offenders, however, and in certain contexts, such as the 1720s and 1780s, which both experienced crime waves and political instability, the proportion of convicts executed increased. In selecting those to be hanged the King and his cabinet (which reviewed the cases of all those sentenced to death in London) paid attention to the nature of the offence, the character of the prisoner, and the state of crime at the time. There was a particular concern to punish members of criminal "gangs".

By mid-century, fears about the growth of violent crime and concerns that the death penalty was not working to deter it led to the passage in 1752, in the middle of a post-war crime wave, of the Murder Act. This mandated that those convicted of murder should be executed within two days of the trial, and that their bodies were either to be delivered to surgeons to be "dissected and anatomized" or publicly hung in chains. The delivery of the bodies of executed murderers directly to the surgeons helped prevent the riots over the custody of bodies which had frequently occurred following executions.

John Perrott hanged at Smithfield - A crowd can be seen in the foreground with gallows visible behind, where the executioner gestures to the crowd while holding victim, who has rope around neck.



Samuel Wale. 'John Perrott hanged at Smithfield. c.1761-1786 (a pen and ink study for Tyburn Chronicle, Vol IV, p162). British Museum, Binyon 15.

Worries about the conduct of execution crowds continued, however, as it was thought that the crowds sympathized with the convict, treated the event as a carnival, and failed to learn the right lessons. This contributed to the removal of executions from Tyburn (where Marble Arch stands today) to in front of Newgate Prison in 1783.

The often disorderly procession carrying the condemned from Newgate to Tyburn in carts was abandoned, and executions were carried out earlier in the day and more efficiently. The introduction of the drop led the condemned to die quicker with less struggle, giving them less chance to elicit sympathy from the crowds.

Nonetheless, by the late 1780s public unease about the death penalty placed severe constraints on its use. Victims of crime, reluctant to be responsible for executions, often either refused to prosecute or charged the accused with a non-capital offence.

Despite serious concerns about crime in those years, the authorities limited the number of offenders actually executed because they feared that too many executions would not only antagonise the respectable classes but also lead to popular disorder. This is the background to the remarkable episodes in 1789 when nineteen convicts essentially dared the state to execute them by refusing to accept the royal pardons offered to them, in full knowledge that the authorities did not want more executions.

Transportation

Concerns about the failure of the death penalty to deter crime, and a desire for a substantial alternative punishment for serious offenders who were not executed, led to a dramatic increase in the use of secondary punishments in the eighteenth century. At the start of the century those who received benefit of clergy or conditional pardons were typically branded on the thumb, but this was seen to be an insufficient deterrent to crime. Transportation dates from the seventeenth century, but the number transported was relatively low, because the cost of the voyage had to be paid for either by the convict or a merchant or shipowner. The key innovations of the 1718 Transportation Act⁵ were that judges could directly order transportation as a punishment, and that the state would pay for it. The act was passed during a period of political instability, following the Hanoverian Succession, and during a period of intense concern about crime in London. Lobbying by the City of London, and particularly its Recorder, William Thomson, was instrumental in the passage of the act. Similar concerns contributed to the passage of a new Transportation Act in 1784. Following the outbreak of the American War in 1776 transportation to America had to be abandoned, and male offenders were sent to the hulks instead.

Crowded prison and hulks, leading to high mortality rates, escapes and mutinies, highlighted the need to resume transportation, particularly for what were perceived to be incorrigible offenders who were too dangerous to release. Following the Gordon Riots in 1780, and the crime wave which followed the end of the American War in 1783, pressure for the resumption of transportation increased, and the courts began to sentence offenders to transportation even before the government had decided where they should be sent; these convicts languished in Newgate Prison. The pressure created by overcrowding in Newgate directly led to the government's search for a new destination. In this way, crime in London became the driving force behind the reintroduction of transportation, and indeed in subsequent years London convicts were proportionately much more likely to be transported than those from the rest of the country.

Transportation was often resisted by convicts, who feared the consequences of a long sea voyage and of being put to forced labour in a strange foreign land. Many petitioned the king asking for a lesser punishment or a free pardon, and an unknown number were successful, thus explaining why some convicts sentenced to transportation, such as John Page, remained in London and subsequently appeared at the Old Bailey charged with another crime. In addition, some of those who were transported returned early.

During the eighteenth century 243 men and women were tried for returning from transportation at the Old Bailey, approximately 1.6% of the number sentenced to transportation from that court. These numbers peaked in 1783-84 when new destinations for tranpotees were experimented with, including the West Coast of Africa, causing intense anxiety among convicts and leading to mutinies on two convict ships. In 1785 Henry Aikles, who failed to fulfil the condition of his pardon and transport himself to America, was acquitted of the charge of returning from transportation on the grounds that he was unable to travel due to ill health, thereby establishing some legal limits on the practice of transportation. Unwillingness to travel to a place where they would 'be devoured by savages' lay behind the convicts who refused the royal pardon in 1789.

Imprisonment

Prisons traditionally were places for holding accused criminals and convicts while they waited for their trials to take place, or sentences to be carried out. Run by keepers who charged fees for almost every service provided in order to make a profit, prisons were relatively open places where prisoners and visitors intermingled. Along with the serious and petty criminals, some prisons held large numbers of debtors, whose poor chances of release probably contributed to their reputation, and the reputation of prisons more generally, for disorderly behaviour. The idea that incarceration at hard labour could actually contribute to the reform of offenders dates from the sixteenth century, but at that time this was only thought possible for petty offenders, such as vagrants and prostitutes, who were punished in houses of correction. The first attempt to reform felons through imprisonment at hard labour occurred in 1706, when an act, in response to a petition from the City of London, authorised incarcerating felons who were granted benefit of clergy in houses of correction, where they were to be put to hard labour. The act was not a success, because no extra funding was given to the keepers to provide the extra security needed for holding felons, and owing to concerns about the failure of houses of correction to reform prisoners and prevent escapes. Following the passage of the Transportation Act in 1718, convicts granted benefit of clergy were transported instead.

A number of factors led to renewed interest in imprisonment as a punishment for felons in the 1770s. There was growing dissatisfaction with both transportation and the death penalty, both of which had manifestly failed to prevent repeated increases in crime. Second, there was growing belief in the merits of imprisonment at hard labour as a means of reforming offenders.

But the most important stimulus to the use of imprisonment in the 1770s was the collapse of transportation in 1776: the number of convicts sentenced at the Old Bailey to a term of imprisonment increased from 14 in 1775 to 135 the following year when war broke out.

The number of convicts sentenced to imprisonment dropped when transportation resumed in 1787, but it did not fall back to pre-1776 levels. While it was still thought that the most serious offenders who were not executed needed to be exiled from the country, the belief remained that less serious felons, especially the young, could be reformed through a period of incarceration at hard labour.

Pardons and Pleading the Belly.

Following the conclusion of each sessions at the Old Bailey, the Recorder of the City of London sent a report to the crown on all the convicts who had been sentenced to death, recommending some for pardons. Convicts could also appeal their sentences by petitioning the King directly for a pardon. On the basis of this information, the king and his cabinet regularly reviewed all death sentences from the Old Bailey, identifying the most egregious cases for execution while pardoning those for whom there were mitigating circumstances. It was important to ensure that the number of executions which took place in the metropolis was neither too few as to undermine the deterrent function of the punishment nor too many as to constitute a threat to public order.

Large numbers of offenders were pardoned, either with a free pardon, or a conditional pardon, which commuted the sentence to a lesser punishment. Decade by decade, between 42 per cent and 77 per cent of those sentenced to death at the Old Bailey were pardoned, an average of just over 60 per cent for the whole of the eighteenth century. The decision to grant a pardon was taken on the basis of the state of crime at the time, the nature of the offence, the sex, age and character of the offender, and the status of those who petitioned on his or her behalf.

Women had an additional opportunity to avoid execution, by pleading that they were pregnant. Such women were then examined privately by a jury of matrons, chosen from women who were present in the courtroom, who were asked to determine whether the woman was "quick" with child (if movement could be detected, signalling the start of life). If so, the woman's punishment was respited until the child was delivered, at which point in most cases, but not all, the woman was given a full pardon.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries around half of all women sentenced to death pleaded their bellies, and almost two thirds were found quick with child and their punishment was respited. The remarkably large number of women who avoided punishment in this manner suggests that some women were making false claims, and that, as one observer complained, they found sympathetic female friends who made themselves available to serve on the jury of matrons, and colluded with them.

After 1725, however, the proportions both of women making this claim and of those who did being found quick with child declined dramatically, such that by the last quarter of the century only 2 per cent of those sentenced to death pleaded their bellies, and only 25 per cent of these claims were found to be true. The cause of this dramatic change is unknown, but it may be that the authorities exerted greater control over the selection of juries of matrons, or perhaps pregnant women were excluded from the judicial process before the trial and sentence took place. Certainly, the general trend in the late eighteenth century was for greater sympathy to be shown to mothers, not less.

Refusing the Royal Pardon.

While for most of the eighteenth century most of those sentenced to death actively pursued a royal pardon in order to save their lives, in 1789 a remarkable reversal took place when seven women and twelve men who had been sentenced to death refused to accept the royal pardon which had been offered to them. The pardon was conditional upon transportation to Australia, and to accept the pardon meant to agree to be transported to the other side of the world to a place where, according to reports from the first fleet which had just arrived in London, conditions were difficult and the natives were murderous.

Encouraged by a belief in their own innocence, and their anger at conditions in the overcrowded Newgate Prison, these convicts decided to create a dilemma for the authorities by claiming that they would prefer to be executed rather than submit to transportation. They were fully aware that public hostility to the large number of executions meant that the authorities were loathed to carry out more executions. While the convicts' defiant behaviour attracted widespread attention, eventually all the convicts caved in and accepted the pardon. Nonetheless, this revolt prompted the authorities to revise the processes of sentencing and pardoning in order to reduce the amount of discretion exercised, both by the courts and by convicts. From 1797, conditional pardons were tantamount to orders: it was no longer necessary for convicts to accept a pardon in order for it to take effect. Once again, pressures created by those accused of crime helped shape the evolution of the criminal justice system.

THE PRISONERS.

The Death Sentence.

MARGARET LARNEY, c. 1724-1758.

Irish Coiner and Mother of Five Children.

A poor woman, Margaret Larney resorted to filing coins to supplement her income, a capital offence. Female convicts who were pregnant at the time they were sentenced to death were normally eventually pardoned, but Margaret Larney's crime was deemed so serious that her sentence was carried out following the birth of a son.

Margaret Larney and her husband Terence came from Ireland to London sometime between 1748 and 1752. Margaret is said to have been born in County Wicklow around 1724. It is suggested in the Ordinary of Newgate's Account of October 1758 that at that time she had been married to Terence for 19 years; this would mean that she married him in 1739 when she was only 15 or 16 years old. They lived in Dublin, where Margaret kept a public house and worked as a nurse for several gentlemen's families. In 1744 she had the first of her five children. Financial problems brought them to London, where they had friends. The Larneys lived at various addresses, including Drury Lane and at least two lodgings in Holborn. Terence was a labourer who sometimes worked for a hatter, making ladies' straw hats, for which he could earn 15 shillings a week. Margaret did washing and "plainwork". During the daytime she had to employ another woman to take care of her smaller children when she was out. In order to supplement the family income Margaret was in the habit of filing gold sovereigns, selling the filed dust to a Jew, Abraham Jacob, for about £3 per ounce, and passing off the "light" coins. She obtained the sovereigns from pawnbrokers in exchange for silver coins or clothes that she pawned.

She does not seem to have been involved in melting the filings to create new coins. She was known to be poor, and to borrow money from anybody she could. When friends came over from Ireland to London, she would beg money from them, telling them it was easy to make more money than the worth of the coin they provided.

Trial for "Degrading the Coin of the Realm"

On 13 January 1758, she was tried at the Old Bailey for degrading the coin of the realm, a charge of high treason. The main witnesses against her were Alice and John Diamond. Margaret had known Alice (as Alice Boyce) since their childhood. The Diamonds had themselves been apprehended for passing off "light" sovereigns and guineas but had been discharged by the Justices, to be used as witnesses for the prosecution in similar cases. In addition to giving evidence against Margaret Larney, the Diamonds were witnesses on the same day in a similar case against Alice Davis, who was found guilty and also executed.

The Diamonds' evidence in Margaret Larneys case was confused and somewhat insecure. It is not surprising that her defence should have begun with the words, "I am as wrong'd as much as any creature that ever was before you". She later said that confusion was caused by her trying to protect Alice Diamond, since Diamond was fully involved in coin degradation and had been apprehended previously; Larney felt that Diamond was vulnerable to extreme punishment, while she herself would be let off lightly.

However Margaret was found guilty, and since the crime of which she was convicted was defined as treason, the sentence prescribed was death, preceded by being drawn on a hurdle or sledge to the place of execution and, because she was a woman, burned at the stake rather than drawn and quartered. She "pleaded her belly" and was found to be pregnant. This meant that her execution would be delayed until her child was born. She remained in Newgate Prison from January to October 1758.

The Fate of the Family

At the point of Margaret's conviction, her husband Terence appears to have absconded. On 14 February 1758, two of their children, James, 5 years old, and Elizabeth, 3 years old, underwent a pauper examination in the parish of St Martin in the Fields. Evidence was given that the Larneys had no settlement in England and had not tried to gain one. James and Elizabeth were admitted that day into the St Martin's workhouse. Elizabeth died there on May 20th of the same year, and James died just over a month later on July 2nd 1758.

Their mother clearly had little idea where her children had ended up. She seemed certain that James had been admitted to the Foundling Hospital in February when she was first incarcerated in Newgate. A petition from her to the Governors of the hospital states confidently: "I had a child put in here before when I was sent here [to Newgate] his name is James Larney". By the time she presented this petition, she had given birth in Newgate to another son, John (who the newspapers called "a fine boy") and asked for his admission to the hospital, poignantly and pointlessly requesting the Governors to "let them know one another".

Death for Endangering the Economy.

Having given birth, Margaret Larney's death sentence was confirmed on 26 September 1758. The Ordinary of Newgate records her hope that, after such a long wait, she would be spared death and face a sentence of transportation to America instead. But, he pompously says, she had contravened a law "so important and necessary to the preservation of the current coin of the nation entire and undiminished, on which the public credit, commerce, national justice, and the facility of dealing do greatly depend", that her death was necessary. He had seen a slight chance of converting her from her Roman Catholic faith since she attended Anglican worship in the prison, but was thwarted by visits of her priest, and his account of her life descends into a lengthy diatribe against the nefarious practices of Rome.

She was executed on 2 October 1758, continuing to protest strongly that false witness had been given against her by the Diamonds, much to the distaste of the Ordinary who wanted her to accept her fate. However, the delay in her execution did benefit her in one way--there is no evidence that she was drawn to the place of execution, nor burned at the stake.

SARAH MALCOLM, 1710-1733.

Laundress and Infamous Murderess.

Known only for her participation in a horrific crime, Sarah Malcolm mounted an audacious defence, both at her trial and in print.

Childhood in County Durham and Dublin.

Sarah Malcolm (sometimes called Mallcom or Mallcomb) was born in County Durham in 1710. Her parents were known as a respectable couple, her father having an estate worth about £100 a year. However, he was an extravagant man, his money ran out, and the family moved to Dublin since her mother was Irish and able to acquire accommodation and work there. Her father established a business in Ireland. And according to the Ordinary, Sarah was given a "good education at school in Reading, Writing and such other Things as are proper for a Girl, above the meanest Rank of People".

Working in London.

When Sarah reached young womanhood, she accompanied her parents to London where they had business to deal with. She went into domestic service in a series of "good" families where she gave satisfaction in carrying out her duties. Her father returned to Dublin where his main business lay, and shortly afterwards her mother died. Sarah fared less well on her own. She obtained employment serving in a "low" public house, the "Black Horse" in Boswell Court near Temple Bar. Then she became laundress to a number of residents who lodged in chambers above the Inns of Court in the Temple, amongst whom was a Mr. John Kerrel (or Carroll) where she appears to have had the use of a room, although she may have generally lived in Shoreditch. At this time she made the acquaintance of Mrs. Mary Tracey, and her friends, the young brothers James and Thomas Alexander. They often pressed her to cheat and steal from her employers since she had easy access to the places where they lived.

The Temple Murders.

Sarah Malcolm eventually agreed to assist them to rob a lodger in one of the Temple chambers, a rich, 80 year old, infirm woman, Mrs. Lydia Duncomb, for whom Sarah had worked in the past. Mrs. Duncomb shared her lodgings with a long term companion, 60 year old infirm Mrs. Harrison, and her young servant, 26 year old Ann Price. The robbery was planned on 28 January 1733 and scheduled to take place the following week. On the 4th of February, late at night, Sarah managed to introduce the Alexanders into Mrs. Duncombe's lodging where they hid until the residents were asleep. They then let Mary Tracey in while Sarah remained on the stairs as lookout. She insisted she remained there until the other three came out with their booty - £300 worth of currency, silver ware and other items. Then they went outside to share out their gains.

The dead bodies of the three women were discovered the following afternoon. Ann Price's throat had been slit in a savage manner and the older women had been strangled. When Sarah's master, Kerrel, found a silver tankard and blood stained clothing in her room, he called the watch and she was taken into custody. (Tracey and the Alexanders were also apprehended and held, but after Sarah's death they were released without charge.)

Bloody Clothing is Proof of Guilt.

Sarah Malcolm was indicted for the murders and the robbery, but was tried for murder only, at the Old Bailey on 23 February 1733. Her trial lasted five hours and was reported at length in a sensational manner.

She defended herself strongly, admitting to participation in the robbery (a capital crime in itself) but emphatically denying the murders, of which she said she was unaware until they were later discovered (since she was only the lookout).

Her defence was based on the fact that the blood on her clothing was her menstrual blood and not that of Ann Price. This may have done her more harm than good, as she spoke unashamedly of a taboo subject in the

manner of a "loose" rather than a "virtuous" woman. The jury took only fifteen minutes to find her guilty and she was sentenced to death.

Newgate and Execution.

Awaiting execution in Newgate, Sarah received the customary instruction in the Christian faith from the Ordinary, James Guthrie. In his Account, he points out, with some distaste, that she was a Roman Catholic, and his instruction to her, soundly Anglican, underlines the view that her being "of a different Communion" added to her guilt and unrepentant state.

She received other visiting "gentlemen" who wished her to issue a confession which might make a sensational story to sell. She maintained her innocence of the murders to the end. She was particularly distressed that her execution was to take place in Fleet Street, near the Temple Gate, where her acquaintances and neighbours would witness it. Two or three days before her death, she was visited by the painter William Hogarth who sketched her and then painted her portrait. She was executed on Wednesday, 7 March 1733.

Infamy.

The infamy of "the Irish Laundress" grew after her death, with the publication of copies of Hogarth's painting and engravings, the Ordinary's Account, and her final confession, which she entrusted to the Revd. W. Piddington, Lecturer at St Bartholomew the Great. In this rare example of a first person narrative by a female criminal, published at her request, she maintained her innocence of the murders, while confessing to participation in the burglary. It was reported that Malcolm had an amorous connection with Piddington, who was with her on the scaffold. The story of this crime was repeated in numerous publications in the ensuing decades, in which the impression of Malcolm as an "evil, barbaric, and stubborn woman" dominated.

ANN HURLOCK, 1736-1760.

A Servant who Panicked after she Gave Birth to a Bastard Child.

Faced with the shame and uncertainty of what to do with a new-born bastard child, Ann Hurlock murdered it.

Early Life.

Ann Hurlock was born in August 1736 at Tower Hill. Her father was a packing porter to the East India House and died when she was just eight. Her mother worked to care for her and her elder sister, teaching them needlework and how to read. When Ann was twelve, she was sent to become a servant to a friend living in the neighbourhood where she stayed for two years until her mother's death.

She moved to work in Goodman's Fields for two and a quarter years and then lived with a Mrs L-r-ce, a school mistress near Aldgate, for a year and a quarter. From here she went to Mitcham in Surrey, where she was a servant to a Mrs S-v-ny, a leather-dresser, and was seduced by a fellow servant, Joseph H-d who promised her marriage. She left Mitcham in approximately 1759, staying at her sister's during an illness and visiting Joseph when possible, by whom she fell pregnant. She claims that he did not know of the pregnancy.

Birth and Infanticide

Six weeks before the birth, she was living in Soho Square with her mistress Mrs. Legross, before moving with her mistress to lodge in Mr. Dudman's house in Paddington. On the morning of Tuesday 8th April, between three and four am, Ann walked downstairs into the kitchen and gave birth to a baby girl. It was born living, as it cried. She took a kitchen knife and slit its throat, causing a wound three inches wide and four inches deep, almost severing the head from the body. She then hid the body in the cellar.

She complained to Mr. Dudman's servant Sarah Lydburn, who was sleeping in the same room, that her belly ached. She asked Sarah to mop the floor of the cellar and kitchen, where she found blood. Sarah Lydburn called her mistress, stating that she believed Ann had miscarried or was in labour, after which Susannah Derwood (a midwife), and Mr. Gibbs (a constable), were called.

Susannah Derwood examined Ann, and concluded she had recently given birth. She found the child with its head almost cut from the body and a knife in the kitchen covered with blood. When accused, Ann confessed to murdering her living new-born baby, saying "she did not know what to do with it".

Trial and Punishment

Ann was taken to Justice John Fielding, to whom she confessed her crime. She was committed to Bridewell, residing there until May 15th when she was moved to Newgate Prison for her trial. During the trial, she recanted her previous confession, claiming that she did not take the knife to murder the child, but to "part the burden" from it. She denied ever hearing it cry and later stated it had a "monstrous ... deformity" and "could not bear to look upon it herself, or let it be seen by others in that detestable view".

On Thursday 22nd May 1760 she was found guilty. Following the provisions of the Murder Act, she was sentenced to be executed two days later, and her corpse was to be dissected by the surgeons. According to the Ordinary of Newgate, she looked "confounded and thunder-struck" upon receiving her sentence, and she wrung her hands, wept and wailed.

Newgate and Execution

While awaiting her punishment in Newgate, she was examined by the Ordinary several times, praying and reading the Bible between each examination. She became increasingly penitent, crying when made to read the ninth chapter of Genesis in the chapel.

She was executed on Saturday the 24th of May at Tyburn.

CHRISTOPHER PLUMLEY (d. 1780)

Tailor, husband, father... and a drunk?

Since Christopher Plumley was a master tailor, it is difficult to understand why he was also a recidivist thief; gambling and drunkenness provide possible explanations.

Early Life and Bastard Child

Little is known about Plumley's early life. The first reference to a Christopher Plumley is on a petition from Journeymen Tailors agreeing to a change in regulated pay and working hours, showing that he was working as a tailor as early as 1764.

In December 1773 it was alleged he fathered a female bastard child called Ann. The mother, Elizabeth Brigden, claimed to be a domestic servant in Middlesex, although this part of the bastardy examination was later crossed out. Elizabeth claimed she fell pregnant after he slept with her several times in December 1772, giving birth to Ann in September in the parish of Saint Clement Danes. It was reported Plumley knew he was the father but he had 'run away'. The report also confirmed Plumley was a tailor.

He allegedly had four aliases: John Williams, and 'Hughes... Spencer... Grant', and may have been living under such names throughout his adult life.

Criminal Activity

It appears Plumley was involved in an incident outside of the 'Bull and Gate Inn' in Holborn October 1774 involving another man named John Walworth when Martha Keppel's apron was stolen. Keppel alleged that Plumley 'knocked her down with great violence' whilst Walworth tore off her apron. No information could be found on the verdict of the case (which may have been tried at the Middlesex Sessions), or the other man.

In December 1778 Plumley was tried at the Old Bailey for an incident involving the stealing of a bay gelding from one Thomas Smith on the 23rd of October. Smith lent a chaise to Plumley - after hearing he had a good character - when Plumley needed it to travel to Epsom common. The Morning Chronicle would later claim 'Plumley is one of those worthies known by the name of swindlers, and had been down to Epsom with a lady of pleasure', one Sarah Rawlins. After losing all his money, the Chronicle went on, Plumley decided to recoup his losses by selling the borrowed chaise. Smith found his horse and chaise in the possession of someone else a few days later. Plumley, it appeared, had attempted to sell them on, but being 'exceedingly drunk' the broker, John Burton, did not want to deal with him, suspecting this was a borrowed item. Burton claimed Plumley was 'very drunk at all the different times that I saw him.' Despite this the broker declared that he believed Plumley 'meant to return it when he was sober'. Plumley was found not guilty, seemingly thanks to the good character references he received including one calling him an 'honest industrious man'.

But Plumley was involved in another incident in April of the following year. This time he was indicted for stealing a pair of silver shoe buckles and a pair of plated spurs after going to look at a lodging in Great Marylebone Street. He was eventually convicted of stealing the spurs to the value of 10 pence from one John Savin who was staying at the house at the time after the spurs were found in the inside pocket of his coat by a constable. The men who apprehended him told the court that Plumley had tried to bribe them to simply turn him over to the army as punishment; Plumley also told the jury he would be 'willing to serve his Majesty if I am found guilty in any capacity the court may think proper.' During times of war, sending convicts into the armed forces served as both a punishment and a valuable resource to the army. Plumley, committing his theft in the middle of the War of American Independence (1775-1783), evidently thought this could be his chance of escape. This was not to be the case, and Plumley was sentenced to be whipped. The other man involved was not prosecuted.

When visiting the lodgings Plumley had claimed to be a master tailor who had two lodgings and a 'house of his own'. In his defence statement he mentioned he had a wife and was a tailor who had been contracted to work by a man living in the building in which the crime took place. Whether Plumley's claims were true, or simply a ruse to gain access to the house by appearing to be respectable is unclear, but if Plumley was in a financially sound position it seems unlikely that financial gain was his motive for crime.

Sentenced to Death

A year later, in February 1780, Plumley was convicted and sentenced to death. A week earlier he had been involved in the theft of a quart tankard (value of 5s.), a silver pepper castor (value of 12s) and a silver spoon (value of 5s) from John Abbott in his dwelling house, the Buffalo's Head. The incident again involved another man, but his name was not reported. Plumley and the other man, who had been drinking a 'couple of tankards of beer', climbed out of the window of the house, making off with the items. However they were spotted by passers-by including the servant William Legg who believed 'there was some mischief done' when he saw the two men run off leaving the empty room. When asked if Plumley had been drunk, Abbott claimed he was not the least 'disguised in liquor'. Plumley said he would leave himself to the mercy of the court after the tankard was found in his coat pocket. Despite receiving a good character reference from a woman named Ann Bird, who confirmed he was a master-tailor, he was sentenced to death.

Plumley Reprieved...But not for long.

Despite his death sentence, the judgement was 'respited' during the king's pleasure, and he was 'ordered to remain' in prison. In June 1780, the Gordon Riots shook London and Plumley and the other inmates were 'set at liberty by the mob who burnt Newgate.' His freedom did not last long.

Sentenced to Death - Take Two.

Three weeks later, Plumley was arrested for stealing a tankard (value of 5s) from one Alexander Sutherland in his public house. Plumley and another man came to the public house asking for a tankard of beer and a light. Whilst Alexander Sutherland was out of the room his wife Martha Sutherland witnessed Plumley putting the tankard under his coat. She grabbed his collar when he tried to escape and was dragged along two streets but would not let go. He attempted to slip his coat off but failed and was held by Martha Sutherland until he was arrested. In court, Plumley claimed he was 'much in liquor' at the time of the offence, but the Prosecutor denied this to be the case, and Plumley was sentenced to death a second time. Underneath his sentence, the Old Bailey Proceedings confirm Plumley had indeed been set free by the rioters. It is unclear why Plumley repeatedly returned to crime; since he appears to have been well employed a financial motive seem unlikely. However if the Morning Chronicle's assertion that he tried to sell on Smith' a chance to recoup his lost winnings is correct, perhaps a gambling habit may have prompted him to steal, although there is no other mention of Plumley's gambling to back this up. Drunkenness seems to have played a large role, with Plumley claiming to have been drunk in nearly all of his defences, although prosecutors denied this several times. Whatever prompted this respected tailor to steal is uncertain, but ultimately, it cost him his life.

Execution.

Plumley was sentenced to hang at Tyburn on the 13th July, the same day that those convicted of partaking in the Gordon Riots were also executed. 4 The large number of hangings which took place that day meant that the sheriff and his officers had to meet Plumley on the way to the scaffold, as they returned from the other executions.

The St. James Chronicle gave this account of his final moments: "he prepared himself for death with a mix of manly resignation and unaffected penitence that made a deep impression on the surrounding multitude. When the executioner put the rope about the neck of Plumley, the latter was so engaged in his Devotions, that he seemed insensible of this awful Circumstance. A friend ascended the Cart, and took an affecting leave of him; after which, he was turned off."

EDWARD KIRK, 1684.

Vintner and Wife Murderer.

Edward Kirk was a vintner, and he and his wife Joan lived with his master. Joan was a servant at a gentleman's house in Old Fish Street. In the eyes of the Ordinary of Newgate, Edward's guilt in murdering Joan was compounded by his subsequent attempts to deny responsibility for the crime.

An Afternoon Walk.

According to Sarah Miller, a fellow servant to Joan and witness at the subsequent trial, Edward came to their master's house on Sunday 25 May, sometime between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Edward asked his wife to come with him and see a cousin who lived at Fields-Side. Joan refused to go as she "had not Cloaths good enough to go a Visiting".

Edward explained that this cousin was leaving for the country the next day, and that he was not ashamed of her clothes. Joan agreed to go after borrowing a hood and a scarf from Miller. Miller noted that before leaving for Fields-Side, Edward had insisted that Joan bring her wedding ring with her.

Joan did not return that Sunday evening. After several days Miller went to see Edward to enquire what had become of Joan and the hood and scarf she had borrowed. Edward told Miller that he had returned Joan to her master's door on Old Fish Street that same Sunday night and had not seen her since. An unspecified time after her disappearance, a mower found Joan Kirk dead in a field near Paddington. The mower stated that she had her throat cut and that her face and head looked like they had been beat and bruised.

Suspicion was cast upon Edward as he was the last to see her, and he was arrested and brought to Newgate Prison. Upon arrival in Newgate a knife was found in Edward's pocket and removed for fear he might take his own life. Edward apparently confessed to the crime during an investigation by Captain Richardson. The Ordinary reports that Edward told him "that he would at his Tryal Plead Guilty, and beg, God and the Kings Mercy".

The Trial.

However, when Edward Kirk was tried at the Old Bailey on 2 July 1684 for the murder of his wife, he pleaded not guilty. Sarah Miller provided the first evidence with her account of Edward's behaviour on the Sunday afternoon he took Joan out. This was followed by the evidence of Edward's former master. He explained that he had given Edward the day off and that Edward had left home at two o'clock and did not return until seven o'clock that evening. He observed that when Edward returned he was "in a very great Heat, and like a discomposed Person".

The main evidence emerged from the mower, who had found alongside the body "the Ferrel of a Stick or Cain" - a metal band to prevent the stick from splitting. The ferrule fitted a cane which, the master vintner confirmed, he had lent to Edward that day. He went on to say that Edward had brought the cane back "without a Ferrel, and on it some Specks like Blood". Captain Richardson said that during Edward's initial confession he had stated he beat Joan with that cane and used the same knife taken from him in Newgate to cut her throat.

In his defence, Edward argued that he was drunk when he had made his earlier confession. He restated that he had gone away from the field with Joan and that he left her outside his master's house. Edward testified that four or five people saw him with her outside his master's house, but they were all in the country and so could not give evidence till the next sessions.

The jury decided the evidence weighed too heavily against him and he was found guilty of wilful murder and sentenced to death.

Motivation for the Crime.

In the Account of the case published by Samuel Smith, the Ordinary of Newgate, Edward's motivation for the murder is explored. According to Smith, Edward had been in the crowd at the execution of John Gower on 23 May. Gower, who was hanged for the murder of his wife, caused dismay by his initial reluctance to admit to his crime on the scaffold.

Edward told Smith that after Gower's execution, having returned home from Tyburn, that "Satan suggested him to Murder his own Wife within one hour after". Initially Edward refused this suggestion and prayed against the temptation, though he admits to Smith "not so fervently as he ought".

Edward's change of mind occurred at six o'clock in the morning on Sunday. "He then contrived how to draw her out in the After-noon to walk with him into the Fields." The Account details how, having lured his wife into a gravel pit, they had begun arguing and he beat her with his cane. Edward then threatened her with his knife and Joan pleaded "Lord have Mercy on my Soul, Was ever a Woman so barbarously Murdered?"

Following the crime Edward acted as if nothing had happened. This was most worrying to Smith: not only did Edward repeat the crime of someone he had seen executed, but he successfully hid the crime for weeks. This explains why almost an entire edition of the Ordinary's Account was dedicated to the case.

Future Warnings.

Smith emphasised that Kirk seemed "more affected with his Horrid Crime" after his trial than he had done before. Most of the material in the Ordinary's Account was apparently printed at the request of the penitent Edward. He left Smith with two prayers which he "desired might be Printed with his Advice to Youth". The "advice to youth" takes the best part of a page and implores others not to repeat his actions.

At the end of his Account Smith seemed delighted at the penitence shown by Kirk. Nonetheless, he warned his readers that his impunity in denying his crime in court was almost as bad as the crime itself. Despite this, he concluded, Kirk "had some Ground to Expect a happy Eternity, for he said that his Sin was so great that he deserved to Dye; and desired not to Live".

GARRET LAWLER, 1725-1751.

Member of a Gang of Irish Thieves.

To trace the short but active criminal career of Garret Lawler is to discover a violent and complicated world of accomplices, criminal loyalties and betrayals, aliases, perjury, and false alibis, which led not only to his own execution but also to that of his brother.

Early Life.

Garret Lawler was born in 1725 in Dublin. He had a brother named Laurence, who was born roughly a year later. There is no mention of their mother, so she must have died soon after their births or abandoned them.

Garret was brought up by his father who was, by all accounts, a respectable man who earned a living as a butcher.

When Garret was old enough, he was apprenticed to his father for seven years. For the first three years he worked well, and, according to the Ordinary, he "Increased the Business by his Diligence and good Behaviour".

His Descent Into Crime.

Around 1748 Garret fell into trouble. He got into a dispute with some neighbours, and "he had recourse to some unlawful means of being revenged". He was sent to Newgate Prison in Dublin while awaiting his trial, where he became acquainted with "a notorious set of sharpers". His father managed to get him bail, but Garret was nonetheless indicted at the next sessions, convicted, and imprisoned for six months. This affair cost his father financially and emotionally, and he fell ill and died shortly after.

Move to England.

With nothing to keep him in Ireland, Garret moved to England as soon as he was released, arriving in Liverpool in early 1749. He won a considerable sum gambling and "went on board a privateer" until he finally reached London. In London he met up with some of the people he knew from prison in Dublin, and started thieving, especially house-breaking. His first crime was stealing from a house in Bloomsbury Square, but Garret and his confederates were disturbed by the watch who noticed an open door to the house. The watchmen ordered the thieves to surrender, but were attacked. In the resulting mêlée Garret was wounded in the head, but his accomplices beat off their pursuers and helped him escape. Soon Garret resumed stealing, committing highway robbery, burglary and petty larceny in "nightly expeditions". He also made money by cheating people in a game called "Old Nobb".

Encounters with the Law.

Not long after this initial foray into crime, an expedition went wrong when, one of Garret's accomplices, Thomas Jones alias Harpur, was caught and incarcerated in the Gatehouse Prison. In a violent attack, the gang managed to rescue him, but one of them decided to turn king's evidence and inform on the others. The gang were warned, and Garret managed to escape back to Ireland, but a "hue and cry" followed him. He was apprehended and committed to Newgate in Dublin, and transferred back to London in October 1749.

Two months later he, together with an accomplice not apprehended, was indicted for two burglaries which had taken place a year earlier. But he was found innocent as the only evidence against them was the testimony of an accomplice. The keeper of the Marshalsea Prison in Dublin, Thomas Stanley, swore that Garret had been incarcerated when the crime had allegedly occurred.

Garret's Brother.

One of the defence witnesses for Garret was his brother, who had gave his name as Laurence Savage. He had reason to attempt to hide. Unfortunately for him, a man in the public gallery recognised him as the man who had robbed him of a watch. Laurence was found to be Garret's brother, and was indicted for the robbery, convicted and executed on the 7th of February 1750. As the Ordinary commented, "'T'was indeed a brotherly Kindness to run the risque of losing his own Life to save his Brother's".

That same month Garret and seven others were also tried for rescuing Harpur from the Gatehouse, who had been committed there for stealing a watch. Thomas Stanley once again offered an alibi for Garret, but another witness, the keeper of Newgate Prison in Dublin, contradicted his evidence. Punishment was respited, but in April 1750 he was sentenced to be branded and imprisoned for one year.

Conviction and Execution.

Garret was discharged in April 1751, and immediately returned to his life of crime with a former accomplice named Thomas Masterson. On May 26th the two were arrested by the watch and some soldiers after committing a violent assault on William Couty with a cutlass and stick and stealing his hat and periwig. Under the alias of John Tompson, Lawler was tried for highway robbery on July 7th 1751. Once again, he found witnesses to provide an alibi, but the alibi was contradicted by another witness and Garret was convicted and sentenced to death. While in prison a man came to see Garret and Masterson, claiming that he could, and would, swear that they had stolen from him too. Garret grew angry and hit him on the head with a bottle, which knocked him out.

Prior to the execution, Lawler's wife, who was under an accusation of shoplifting, was moved from the Gatehouse Prison to Newgate, so she could see her husband before his execution.¹ On July 29th Garret, with eight others, was taken in a cart to Tyburn and executed. According to the Ordinary's Account he and his fellow condemned prisoners "behaved as became their circumstances". When their friends crowded around the gibbet pressing to obtain their corpses for burial (in order to prevent the bodies from being taken away by the surgeons for anatomy lessons), the under-sheriff forced them to wait in turn until each of their bodies was cut down and handed over to the friends. This "prevented a good deal of hurry and disturbance".

But Lawler's name continued to appear in the Old Bailey Proceedings. In October, Anne Lewis was indicted for perjury for her testimony at Lawler's trial in May, when she had attempted to provide the alibi.

Given Garret's criminal record, and the behaviour of his accomplices, this was not an implausible accusation, but the evidence against her was insufficient and she was acquitted.

GEORGE COCK, (1720-1748).

Thief with an Unusual Method.

George Cock had an unusual, but not particularly successful, method of thieving.

Early Life and Apprenticeship.

George Cock, the son of William and Mary Cock, was born on 12 June 1720 in St. Botolph Aldgate.

At the age of 14 he was apprenticed to a barber and peruke maker. He did not enjoy his apprenticeship, eloping many times within the first year before finally quitting completely. For the seven years after his apprenticeship, he earned a living taking jobs such as errand boy and livery servant.

Thief.

In his confession to the Ordinary of Newgate, he stated that ten months before he was tried at the Old Bailey, being unemployed, he began pilfering and thieving. He claimed that his method was to:

"Go into any Neighbourhood, and by Enquiry, to find out if any Person who lived thereabouts was gone to Sea, and to make himself as much a Master of the Time when they went, where bound to, and other Particulars, as might enable him with an Air of Truth to talk to his Wife or Family, to tell them, he had seen him abroad lately, and that he begged him to call with his Love, Respects, &c. and so watch his Opportunity to lay his Hands on a Silver Cup, a Watch, a Spoon, or any other Moveable that came in his Way".

Before long he was caught. In February 1748 he was apprehended stealing Mary Pinnell's silver spoon in Streatham, and was committed to Bridewell for hard labour for three months before being released.

He was not out long before he was back in jail, but this time he was committed for trial at the Old Bailey. In two trials on May 26 George, described as a "gentleman's servant", was indicted for stealing a silver watch from James Jones and another silver watch from George Stead, both using his usual method, and both on May 19th.

Despite character witnesses including Thomas Shaw and Elizabeth Trueman, who testified that he was an honest fellow, he was found guilty on both charges and sentenced to death.

Executed.

On June 22nd 1748 at 9 am, he was taken from Newgate to his place of execution. He repented his sins before his death, claiming that he had lived with a woman out of wedlock for some months before marrying her. He also claimed to have a second wife, and had "used her ill" as she was blind. No record could be found of these marriages.

GEORGE LOVELL, alias Gypsy George, c. 1742-1772.

Gypsy Thief.

The life of George Lovell fits many of the stereotypes concerning eighteenth-century gypsies, but those stereotypes may have also shaped his treatment by the courts.

Early Life.

George Lovell, alias "Gipsy George", was born in Rumford, Essex around 1742, into a gypsy family. During his childhood he followed the tinker trade of his family. In the summers he would ply his trade in the village, and during the winters he went to earn money in London. Lovell lodged in the parish of St Giles in the Fields during these stays and it was here that he first became acquainted with his future accomplice Thomas Crookhall.

This can be seen as the beginning of his descent into crime, as Lovell was introduced into the world of organised theft. It was here that he, in his own words, "commenced thief".

Manslaughter.

Lovell's first criminal trial at the Old Bailey did not occur until he was about 26. In 1768 he was tried for his role in killing a man named Richard Berry, another gypsy, in a fight near Tottenham Court Road. The court heard that after an arranged fight involving Berry and another man, Lovell and Berry exchanged "some words", and a second fight ensued.

The men stripped and were surrounded by a ring of spectators. The fight was "thought to be a very fair battle". Lovell knocked his opponent down, and jumped for joy at his apparent victory, but Berry's second encouraged him to resume the fight. After a short spell Lovell struck Berry in the face, caving in his temple. Berry died about half an hour later. Lovell admitted his involvement in the fight and, as was typical of jury verdicts on arranged fights, was found guilty of manslaughter only. He was sentenced to be branded on the hand and imprisonment for six months in Newgate Prison.

Highway Robbery.

Lovell should have been released around March 1769, and less than a year later he was mentioned in the trial of John Murphy for burglary. Murphy was charged with stealing from the house of a gentleman on Southampton Row, and Gipsy George was named by Thomas Crookhall, who had turned king's evidence, as

the man standing watch. Though no proceedings were brought against Lovell at this time and Murphy was acquitted, this trial probably reflects the company Lovell was keeping at this time.

The allegations may well have been true, as less than two years later Lovell was before the court again for his involvement in two highway robberies on consecutive days in June 1772. The first of these was successful. Lovell and his acquaintance, Benjamin Murphy, robbed Jeremiah Godwin, a collar-maker, at gun point of four guineas when he was crossing the fields leading from Paddington to Marylebone. (The two thieves were described as footpads.) The next day, Lovell and Murphy attempted a similar robbery of Thomas Collier, a coachman, on the Islington Road, although this crime was unsuccessful. Even under threat of being shot, Collier was unwilling to succumb to the robbers and threw Lovell to the ground, as Murphy ran off. Collier then "collared" Lovell and took him to the nearest town and constable, though not before Lovell could dispose of his gun. Collier then reported the robbery to Sir John Fielding.

At the Old Bailey.

Lovell was tried separately for each robbery. In the first trial, Godwin testified that Lovell presented a pistol to him and said "your money! your money! or you are a dead man". Godwin complied, and testified that he was not frightened. His companion, Elizabeth Hull, described Lovell as having "a very swarthy face". In his defence, Lovell could only say "My Lord, they have sworn very falsely".

In the second trial it was more difficult for Lovell to deny the facts, since he had been apprehended in the act, so he only said, "I hope to be recommended to the mercy of the court. I am a tinker by trade." He was nonetheless convicted of both crimes and sentenced to death. It is possible that in his treatment by the criminal justice system Lovell was the victim of prejudice against gypsies. Since the Old Bailey Proceedings reported Lovell's previous appearance at the Old Bailey when he was convicted of manslaughter, it is also likely that the jury and judge both knew about his past, making them less likely to show any mercy. But in any case since crimes involving violence were seen as particularly egregious, the court was unlikely to show mercy.

Execution.

George Lovell was executed by August 5, 1772. In the last surviving Ordinary's Account published, the Ordinary reported that before his execution Lovell acknowledged to him "that he been concerned in many robberies, though he had done very little in house-breaking", meaning that he had only stolen things of small value. He said that his "chief business" was "in picking pockets, and that he used to attend at the play-houses for that purpose. He said that he had been twelve times before the Justices, but had always escaped, as there was not sufficient proof against him." He identified Benjamin Murphy as his acquaintance, but it is not known whether this was the same man as his 1770 accomplice John Murphy. Lovell and Murphy were never charged at the Old Bailey with picking pockets.

The Ordinary, John Wood, was shocked by Lovell's ignorance and lack of religion. He could neither read nor write, and told the Ordinary he had never been to church. "He said, that he had scarce ever heard of Christ... And when spoken to, before admitted to the Lord's table, ... he knew not what it meant."

Wood claimed some success in educating Lovell, for on the day of his execution Lovell told him: "that his sentence was just; and that he had no other hope or dependence for pardon and salvation, but the death and merits of the Lord Jesus; and that he should die in peace with all men, freely forgiving the greatest enemy he had".

Lovell was executed along with one other convict, John Devine, also accused of robbery. The papers reported that at Tyburn the two "behaved with great decency, and acknowledged the justness of their sentences". They had, in fact, every right to be bitter, given that they were the only two men who were executed out of ten who were capitally convicted at the July sessions. But perhaps Lovell had given the authorities plenty of reasons to execute him.

Two months later, his accomplice Benjamin Murphy was tried for the robbery of Thomas Collier. Following the apprehension of Lovell, Collier claimed he was not "desirous to have him", but after Murphy's arrest Fielding sent for Collier and he identified Murphy as the other man who had robbed him. With positive identifications from both Murphy and his companion, Murphy was convicted and sentenced to death. He was executed on November 18th.

JAMES CLUFF, c. 1698-1729.

A Miscarriage of Justice?

Tried and acquitted of murdering his lover in 1729, James Cluff was forced to undergo a second trial, when he was found guilty and condemned to death. He maintained his innocence, however to his dying breath, and even beyond the grave.

Early Life, Education, and Employment.

James Cluff (sometimes spelt "Clough") was born around 1697. As he told the Ordinary of Newgate, his parents were honest people who ran a public house near Clare Market. Cluff was taught "Reading, Writing,

Cyphering, and such things as were proper to make him fit for Business". When he reached the age of thirteen he was apprenticed as a vintner at the Swan on Tower-Street in London. He successfully completed his apprenticeship and went on to work in various taverns all over London, including the Horseshoe in Blow-bladder Street, near Cheapside, where he spent two years, earning the good-will and approbation of his master. By this point, according to the Ordinary, Cluff was "addicted to Drinking, Whoring, Swearing, and such other Vices", and he had acquired some small debts, which "he was not capable, though willing to discharge".

Life with Mary Green at the Green Lattica.

At some point in 1727 Cluff began working as a drawer for John and Dianna Pain at the Green Lattica (also spelled Lettice) in St Andrew Holborn. Whilst working at the Green Lattica, Cluff met and subsequently began a relationship with his fellow servant Mary Green.

The relationship was clearly turbulent. According to a pamphlet published after his death, "some suggested he had an affection for her, but whether that were so or not, did not very clearly appear". Cluff maintained that "they were very loving together", and "tho' they had had high Words, yet they never had had blows". Others differed. Ann Duncarton, a friend of Mary, stated that she saw Cluff beat Mary in the back-kitchen seven weeks prior to her death. After the beating Mary spoke to Ann and explained why Cluff had beaten her, stating "she had taken some Sticks to light her Fire, that (Cluff) had laid by to light his".

Mrs Groves, who washed for Mary's mistress, recalled a conversation with Mary about these beatings only six weeks prior to her death. During this conversation, Mary "showed her Head, and there was a great Bump upon it as big as an Egg". On another occasion, Cluff apparently threw a candlestick at her, narrowly missing, whilst she was treating the bump with rum. Groves reported that she overheard Cluff remark once to Mary that "If you do me a Mischief, if I do not live to see it, I have those that will live to see you hanged".

Mary even went to her mother, Elizabeth Green, due to the beatings. Elizabeth said that Mary came to her on Easter Tuesday, days before the murder, and told her "I have been wild, and have not kept my Places, but now I am used so barbarously by my Fellow-Servant that I cannot bear it". Mary's mother was going to tell her employer, but was persuaded against it by Mary, who could not afford to lose the work.

The Death of Mary Green and the First Trial.

On the 11 April 1729 around two o'clock, Mary and Cluff were sitting for dinner in a box in the Green Lattica. Four to five minutes after Cluff had sat down in the box he called out "Madam Pray come here" to his mistress. Upon entering the box Mrs Pain saw Mary on the floor with Cluff holding her up by the shoulders with blood rushing out of her. Mrs Pain asked Cluff if he had done this, Cluff explained "No; but he saw her in the Cellar with a Knife in her Hand". Mr Pain ran and fetched an apothecary, who when he arrived quickly realised that Mary was dead. Cluff was immediately arrested.

Cluff was tried at the Old Bailey on 16 April 1729 for the murder of Mary Green. During the trial all the earlier details of Cluff and Green's relationship emerged, but to begin with the trial focused on events that occurred on the day of the murder.

Mrs. Pain deposed that ten minutes before the crime occurred, she saw Cluff take a pot of drink out and saw Mary go down the cellar and bring two pints up, one for herself and one for a customer. After Mary and Cluff entered the box, she neither saw nor heard anything else. Mr. Pain saw a similar set of events, but specified that when Cluff entered the box "he threw the Door with an uncommon Violence". He testified that though he stood near the box, while they were inside he heard no noise, and that he did not see Mary carrying a knife with her when she left the cellar. Mr. Pain instead recounted something that happened earlier that day.

At about nine o'clock that morning, a man who claimed to be Mary's sweetheart came in. Having finished mopping upstairs Mary went and sat with this man. Pain claimed that whilst he watched they sat at the bar and "the Man did kiss her, or whisper'd with her". According to Pain, Cluff was also a witness to this act, and whilst Mr Pain did not know of any relationship between the two he "saw an Alteration in the Prisoner's Countenance, and that he looked ruffled".

This episode was further expanded by the testimony of Mr. Baldwin, who was also at the Green Lattica at nine that morning. He overheard a conversation between Cluff and Mary, in which Cluff said "She knows what's what" and whilst walking upstairs Mary replied "I never had a Bastard". When Mary returned downstairs, with Mr Pain having gone out, she remarked "He was always out when he was most wanted". In response to this comment Cluff apparently hit Mary on the backside with a poker and said "You Saucy Slut must my Master give you an Account?". Baldwin thought Cluff had a malicious look on him and concluded that he "thought him to be an ill-natured Fellow".

In his defence, Cluff maintained that he did not realise he touched her with the poker. He stated any concern on his face when Mary was with the man at the bar was because "he only desired him not to give her more Drink than would do her good".

Cluff's description of the events appears slightly contrived, but it is a story he maintained consistently both immediately after the crime and during the trial. He stated that they were both in the box eating dinner when they were interrupted by their duties. When Mary came down to the cellar Cluff noticed she had a knife and asked what it was for, to which Mary replied "What is that to you James?" He then left the cellar and the building to carry the pot of drink outside. He believed that Mary had stabbed herself while in the cellar as when he returned to the box he saw Mary leaning with her head on the table and saying "I am a Dead Woman". Upon asking Mary what was wrong with her, she collapsed and Cluff called for his mistress. This narrative was challenged as soon as it was first told, just after her death. Thomas Saunders, who was sitting at the bar throughout the evening, stated that he saw no knife. Mr. Pain lit a candle and investigated the basement and found no trace of blood.

The most significant evidence of the first trial comes from Mr Cox, the surgeon who first arrived at the Green Lattica just after the death. Investigating the body, Cox found that Mary had died when her femoral artery had been cut from a "Wound on the Right Thigh, of the Breadth of one Inch, and Depth of five Inches". He found a bloodied knife amongst the items on the table, and believed it to be the murder weapon as it matched the cut on Mary's clothes. It was a broad-pointed knife and Cox imagined that a great deal of force was needed for it to penetrate through Mary's clothes (an apron, a quilted coat and a stuff-petticoat) and still penetrate into her flesh five inches. He doubted that Mary could muster such a force in the position she was sitting in.

Cox also calculated that the severity of the wound meant that Mary would have only lived for two or three minutes once it had been inflicted, meaning that Mary could not have inflicted it upon herself in the cellar. Cox found the knife four feet away from where Mary was sitting; he doubted she could have moved once the wound was inflicted. Finally Cox found marks of previous violence on her chin, elbows and under her left ear. Cluff stood by his story and provided several witnesses to "prove that he did not seem to be any ways out of Temper that Day". The jury, hearing all this evidence, acquitted him.

A Second Trial.

Mary Green's relatives were not satisfied with this outcome. William Green, Mary's brother, launched an appeal against the sentence, and it was granted due to the severity of the crime and the contradictory nature of the evidence. William was granted the appeal at the May sessions of the Old Bailey. The trial was meant to take place in the same session, however there was difficulty in finding jurors and so the trial was delayed until the next sessions. Cluff was tried again at the Old Bailey on the 9 July 1729. Whilst much of the same evidence was repeated, some new questions were asked.

Mr. Pain repeated his account, but acknowledged that when he saw what had happened, he called Cluff a "villain" and asked Cluff to explain his actions. Asked about Mary's behaviour on that day, he deposed that "She was Singing and merry as she was doing her Business". This damaged Cluff's case that Mary committed suicide.

The surgeon, Mr. Cox, provided valuable additional information. When asked if Mary could have thrown the knife onto the table, he responded saying she could only achieve that by a miracle. Another surgeon, Mr. Denis, confirmed Cox's evidence. He said the cut was so severe that Mary could not have inflicted it in the cellar or thrown the knife as a "Person having received such a Wound, falls immediately into Convulsions, and grows insensible". Denis even mentioned he learned this, saying "he had try'd the Experiment on a Dog".

Numerous others provided the same evidence about Cluff's misbehaviour towards Green in the weeks before the murder occurred. Cluff's council tried hard to defend him, but ultimately could only do so by "remarking on the Testimony of the Appellant's Witness whatsoever they thought might make to the Advantage of the Appellee". Perhaps influenced by additional evidence provided by the surgeons, this time the jury returned a verdict of guilty, and Cluff was sentenced to death for murder.

In Newgate Prison.

After receiving his sentence, Cluff was moved into Newgate Prison, where he was expected, under the guidance of the Ordinary, to admit his guilt and behave penitently until he was executed. It is clear from the Ordinary's Account that Cluff refused to comply with this, maintaining his innocence up until and even after his death. On the morning of the execution, the Ordinary commented that "rarely any Malefactor hath been seen (at least) apparently so unconcerned and indifferent".

At some point the Ordinary felt like he was on the verge of receiving a confession. None came beyond Cluff's admittance that he had often stuck Mary, but only that he had only done so as she was a "very Ill-natured Girl, that she swore and cursed often". Nonetheless, he refused to blame those who testified against him, saying "He own'd, that his Master and Mistress were very Kind to him, that he had been a very dutiful

Servant, having never given any Occasion of Discontent to them, and that he could not think they entertained any Prejudice against him".

During his time in Newgate Cluff was visited regularly by his friends, much to the Ordinary's annoyance. The Ordinary accused these friends of giving him false hopes and preventing him from finding forgiveness. In fact, they were gathering material for a pamphlet maintaining his innocence, to be published after his death.

The Execution.

On the way to Tyburn, Cluff requested the cart he was in stop at the Green Lattica, where he Cluff "called for a Pint of Wine, and desired to speak with" Mr. Pain. When Pain stepped out Cluff told him,

I am going to suffer an ignominious Death, and for what I declare I am not Guilty of, as I am to appear before my Great Judge in a few Moments to answer for all my past Sins: I hope you and my good Mistress will pray for my poor Soul: Pray God bless you, and all your Family. Cluff further subverted the events by taking it upon himself to order the carmen to take him off to Tyburn.

The Ordinary was impressed with Cluff's ability to maintain his composure at Tyburn, stating "the like is Seldom seen in those unfortunate People at their last Moments". He called for Psalms to be sung, and made two speeches to the crowd, expressing his innocence and his conviction in being saved by God. Cluff apparently overheard someone in the crowd mention his mistress was present, which may explain his continued display. He even requested that his friends carry him to Hand-Alley in Holborn and bury him next to his brother.

The hanging took place on 25 July 1729.

After his Death.

Following his death, the case continued to attract attention. Two pamphlets were published about the case, and it featured in collections of the most notorious trials which took place at the Old Bailey.

One pamphlet, *A True Copy of the Paper Delivered By James Clough*, was apparently written by him. It starts with a declaration of innocence: "I am not (nor at any time whatsoever confessed myself) guilty of that crime". The account provides Cluff's narrative of the events, and identifies what he believed was the misinformation that caused the jury to find him guilty: that he had spent four minutes in the box with Mary rather than the one minute he himself claimed to have spent.

He admits that he did hit Mary with a Poker earlier that day, but states "it was done only, by way of a joke, and I cannot but think, the person who swore it believed the same". He complained that his testimony had been misconstrued; he did not claim or imply she stabbed herself in the cellar. He only mentioned that he had seen her with a knife, which she could have brought with her into the box and then stabbed herself. The final part of this pamphlet is the most intriguing: Cluff states that since being in prison, Mr Pain defamed his character, claiming "that I have before been in Newgate for a robbery".

Another pamphlet, *The Whole Life of James Cluff, Character, Birth, Parentage, and Conversation, Last Dying Speech, and Confession of James Cluff* was also published in the year of his death. This provided a chronicle of his life along with a copy of a letter he sent to a friend and one sent to a cousin.

Finally, the case was reprinted in 1735, albeit in a form shaped by an assumption of his guilt, in the third volume of *The Lives of the Most Remarkable Criminals*. Even this account, however, still highlights the uncertainties a case could create in the eighteenth century when an individual claimed his innocence so vehemently.

JOHN GOWER, c. 1658-1684.

Bigamist, Wife Murderer, and Penitent.

The case of John Gower illustrates how important a public confession of one's sins was in the ritual of execution in early modern England. The attending crowd, however, did not always learn the right lessons from this display.

Early Life

John Gower was born around 1658 at an unknown location outside London, and it is not known when he came to the capital. Around 1681, apparently before he moved to London, he married a woman who is never named. The marriage was kept secret whilst Gower completed his apprenticeship as a coachmaker.

Trial for Murder

On the 16th of March 1684 his wife's body was discovered, "having been shot in the back part of the Head with a Pistol Bullet", at Green-Berry Hill in the parish of Hampstead, then a village just north of the metropolis.

On 23 May 1684 he was tried at the Old Bailey for her murder. During the trial it emerged that since coming to London, Gower had married a second woman, whose name is also never mentioned in the records. In a later pamphlet it is revealed that this woman was a maid to Gower's master. According to the Old Bailey Proceedings sometime in March 1684 he invited his first wife to come to London from the country, lodging her

in a house near Knightsbridge, though the later pamphlet says that she came on her own initiative, having heard that he had completed his apprenticeship.

During the trial evidence of a poor relationship between Gower and his first wife was produced. Shortly before she arrived he was alleged to have said "if they came together there would be Murder". He apparently also offered a "young fellow" five pounds to sleep with her, so he could then legitimately divorce her.

The main evidence against Gower at the trial was that a number of people had seen him walking with his wife prior to her disappearance. Moreover, his wife's landlady testified that Gower had tried to cover up her disappearance. He told her he had moved his wife to another address, but upon investigation this proved false. He gave more excuses to the landlady, claiming that he nor his wife could come in person due to being "ill with sore eyes".

Gower gave no real defence, attempting to stall the court by saying that he needed time to produce more witnesses. The court believed that this was only an excuse, as Gower had been held at Newgate Prison since the last sessions, giving him ample time to gather witnesses. He was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death by hanging.

The Penitent Sinner and the Public Spectacle.

Before his execution Gower spent three days with the Ordinary in the chapel at Newgate. Gower refused to confess to the murder of his wife, but willingly acknowledged "that he had been a great Sinner, and an evil Husband, in Marrying another Woman while his former Wife was Living". After taking the sacrament on the day before his execution, Gower finally admitted to the murder of his wife. In doing so the Ordinary said Gower "discovered the greatest outward appearance of a Penitent Sinner".

However, at his execution, after witnessing a fellow convict's confession to the crowd, Gower once again refused to acknowledge his crime. Since acknowledging one's guilt was an important part of the execution ritual, the Ordinary delayed the execution trying to persuade Gower to confess publicly. After more warnings about endangering his eternal soul, Gower would only confess quietly into the Ordinary's ear. The sheriffs pressed the Ordinary to allow the execution to continue as it had taken far longer than usual. The other convict suggested that they sing psalms, for fear that Gower's unwillingness to admit guilt would damn his soul as well. Determined to get Gower to publicly acknowledge his crime, it appears the Ordinary spent a further fruitless hour leading prayer before he left.

Upon the Ordinary's exit, a number of the crowd called on Gower to admit whether he did or did not kill his wife. This seems to have finally persuaded Gower to confess. The Ordinary returned and Gower publicly confessed that he had shot his wife with a pistol. After further prayer, Gower expanded his confession, adding his poor behaviour as a young apprentice and misbehaviour during the Sabbath, and calling upon others to avoid repeating his mistakes. Finally, he admitted to having two wives, stating explicitly that his wife in the city had no role in the murder, or knowledge of his first wife in the country. Having proved himself penitent publicly, Gower was hanged.

Execution was not a Deterrent

Despite the lengths the Ordinary took to secure a public confession from Gower, it failed to prevent similar crimes. In July 1684, two months after the trial of Gower, Edward Kirk was tried and found guilty of killing his wife. In his confession to the Ordinary, Kirk admitted that he had witnessed Gower's execution and after returning home "Satan suggested him to Murder his own Wife within one hour after", which he did. Public confessions of guilt aimed at preventing crime could just as easily inspire people to copy them.

JOHN RANN, (d. 1774).

The Life and Death of "Sixteen String Jack"

John Rann alias "Sixteen String Jack" was one of the first criminal celebrities. Rann knew how to foster public interest in his life and crimes, but he could not control the manifold representations of him which appeared in print. Partly as a consequence, it is difficult to disentangle truth from fiction in the accounts of his life.

Early Life.

It is not clear when or where John Rann was born. There are two contrasting accounts of his early life which appear in pamphlets published after his death. In one, *A Genuine Account of the Life of John Rann, alias Sixteen String Jack*, Rann is described as having been born in a village somewhere outside Bath, to "poor, but honest and industrious parents". His early life was spent peddling goods in and around Bath, and when he was twelve he was apparently taken into the care of "a lady of distinction, who happened to be in Bath for the benefit of the waters". While in this care Rann became his mistress's fondest servant. After he moved to London, he was employed first as a stable hand at Brooke's Mews, where he is described as both honest and industrious. He then became a coachman to several noblemen. But some of the men he served were less than honest, a fact later used to explain Rann's descent into criminality. In about 1770, Rann became coachman to a wealthy merchant who lived near Portman Square. He became this man's favourite and was given money

and allowed to dress far above his rank. It is through this extravagant dress that Rann earned his nickname. He wore silk stockings and silk breeches, and the breeches had eight silver-tipped strings on each leg below the knee, hence his moniker "Sixteen String Jack". This pamphlet finishes the account of his early life by explaining that Rann had gained many female admirers, naming one specifically, Catherine Smith.

Another pamphlet, entitled *An Account of John Rann, Commonly called Sixteen String Jack*, provides a different account of Rann's early life. Here he is described as having been born on 15 April 1752, in St. George Hanover Square, London. In this account his parents were criticised for not having educated John to any decent degree. Rann was apprenticed as a coachman at the age of fourteen to a Mr. Dimmock of Grosvenor Square, and was described during his apprenticeship as generally honest and held in "the most grateful acknowledgement and regard" by his master. This pamphlet emphasises that Rann was only a common hackney coachman and it specifically states that some other pamphlets are mistaken in thinking he ever served a nobleman. Like the previous pamphlet, this one also notes that it was Rann's womanising that contributed to his growing criminality, but the woman identified as his lover is named as la Roache. Despite the irreconcilable contradictions in these accounts, both conclude that Rann's life as a hackney coachman did not earn him enough money to fund his womanising and that thus he turned to crime.

Petty Thievery and Early Run-ins with Sir John Fielding.

Both pamphlets allege that Rann started off by picking pockets, conceding that he was rather successful: "by his clandestine practices he was enabled to appear in all the dress of a gentleman". He became a very extravagant dresser, wearing all manner of colourful garments (which sometime later were to help his victims identify him). His crimes did not go unnoticed, however, and he was caught picking the pocket of a gentleman and brought before Sir John Fielding. Fielding apparently wanted to commit him, but no prosecutor could be found, so Rann went free. Apparently this occurred three or more times, but since the cases never came to trial there is no record of them, especially as Fielding's own records were destroyed in the Gordon Riots just prior to his own death.

Fielding did manage to have Rann sent to Bridewell for examination on one occasion, after Rann robbed a house in Hill Street, Berkeley Square. Once again, Rann escaped from being charged due to "the prosecutor not being positive, as to the identity of the person". On another occasion, Rann was committed to Bridewell suspected of robbing a coach on Hounslow Heath, but once again the prosecution could not identify him. During his time in Bridewell Rann befriended some of other criminals who were subsequently also set free due to lack of evidence, including William Clayton, Nathan Jones and James College (apparently known as "Eight String James"). Though accounts of his crimes in the pamphlets vary in their specific details, they agree that after his time in Bridewell, Rann turned to highway robbery. The *Genuine Account* states that after robbing a coach on Hounslow Heath, Rann and his accomplice Timguard Collier attacked two graziers in Smithfield. The graziers fought back, but Rann and his accomplice eventually won the day. After robbing the graziers for very little money, Rann "jocesly [joyously] wished them a good journey".

Though the pamphlets are full of unverifiable claims concerning these crimes, they imply that Rann had a substantial criminal career before he was finally brought to trial.

A Night of Mischief and an Easy Acquittal.

On the night of Saturday 13 November 1773 John Rann along with David Monroe, William Davies alias Scarlet, John Saunders and John Scott, committed a spate of hold ups and robberies in and around Hampstead. Eventually the group were arrested by John Clarke and Richard Bond for being disorderly as they sat in the Three Tuns pub in Soho. One of Rann's accomplices, John Scott, a tin plate worker from Rupert Street, was admitted as king's evidence by Sir John Fielding, who "Looked upon him to be an honest man; he was in his working dress". Scott deposed that on the 27th of November at about six pm, the group robbed "a foreigner" on foot in a field leading to Hampstead, but only gained "some Farthings and Half pence". Consequently the group moved on to rob some gentlemen in a coach on its way to London near Chalk Farm. Monroe went to the side of the coach and was given by the gentlemen inside "one Guinea in Gold and Six Shillings and Six pence in Silver". Despite the success of this robbery, the group continued and attacked another man standing by his horse. Unfortunately, the man had no money and instead offered the group a handkerchief, which they declined. In one final act of mischief the group went to a field and fired off two of their pistols. After this, the group descended upon the Three Tuns on Peter Street in Soho to divide the money.

We learn about the rest of the night's happenings from the trial account, when the case was brought before the Old Bailey on 8 December 1773. While the group was in the Three Tuns, the men who were in the coach, Robert Simmonds, Joseph Davies, and their driver Thomas Shed, informed Sir John Fielding of what had occurred. Fielding dispatched two of his Bow Street Runners to deal with the situation. Clarke and Bond

surveyed the road where the robbery had occurred. They found no one on the road and decided instead to search the "disorderly houses", including the Tree Tuns, where Rann and the group had been since 10 pm, in a little room behind the bar. Clarke searched David Monroe and found some shot in his pocket. Bond also found a loaded pistol in the room, which Scott claimed was his during the trial.

The group was "charged then as disorderly", and taken to Fielding. Without Scott's evidence, it would have been impossible to link the crimes to this group, as the only evidence was the seized pistol and also a sword that was alleged to have been wielded by one of the group. The crime they were tried for was the robbery of Robert Simmonds, a vintner from Hampstead, of £1. 3s 6d. Simmonds claimed the group "behaved exceeding civil, and rather begged for the money than used any violent means". Similarly, Shed, the coachman, testified that even though one of the men pointed a gun at him and threatened to "blow his brains out" if he did not stop, when he "desired him to put the pistol down; he did, and behaved exceeding civil".

The trial collapsed owing to difficulties in making positive identifications of the culprits. Simmonds deposed that although it was light, he could not observe their faces, nor could he remember their dress. Despite having the best view, Shed could not identify the men. Even Davies struggled to maintain that the man he saw was Monroe: "I am not positive; he answers much to the person; it was only star light". While all four men maintained their innocence, all but Rann brought character witnesses to attest to their honesty. Rann's only defence was to say "I know no more of the matter than the child unborn", a line he was to repeat in a subsequent trial, though rather less successfully. All four men were acquitted of robbing Simmonds, and Rann was again acquitted in the subsequent trial for the robbery of Davies, in which no evidence was given.

Further Trials and Acquittals.

The pamphlets provide further evidence of trials which led to acquittals which do not appear in London Lives. But Rann does appear, along with Catherine Smith, in a trial seven months later for the robbery of John Deval, with Rann charged with highway robbery of a watch worth ten pounds and seven guineas in money, and Smith charged with receiving the stolen goods. When arrested for this crime and brought before John Fielding at Bow Street, Rann entered the office with [more] audacity than was ever observed in any other person in the like circumstances; his irons were tied up with blue ribbons, and he had an enormous bouquet of flowers affixed to the breast of his coat. His answers... seemed rather calculated to convince the auditors that he possessed a matchless share of effrontery, rather than extenuate his guilt. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he was committed to Newgate to await trial.

Whilst in his previous crime Rann had been accompanied by four men, he now seems to have had only one partner, who remained unidentified throughout. Deval testified that on Saturday May 21 at around 9 pm, somewhere around the nine mile marker between the City and Hounslow, he was accosted by two horsemen. He gave one man seven guineas and the other his watch. But once more he had difficulty identifying the culprits, saying "it was so dark; I could not distinguish even the colour of their clothes".

Following the robbery, Deval had his watch maker, John Allam, advertised the missing watch with a reward of four guineas for its safe return. A woman named Eleanor Roach, identified in other accounts as one of his mistresses, brought the watch into Allam's shop, and, as was proved in court, it had the same number on the back as the receipt that Deval possessed.

Roach explained how she obtained the watch, and in doing so, indicated that Rann was responsible for the theft. She stated that she had been at Catherine Smith's house the night the crime occurred. On that night Catherine told Roach that "Jack was gone out upon the road to get her some money". Roach acknowledged to the court that she understood that this meant Rann was out stealing, though during her interview with Sampson Wright before the trial she had been far more explicit, saying she was told he "was gone out to rob on the Highway". She told the court that Rann returned by coach at about ten o'clock, and ran up to Smith's bedroom and gave her the watch and five guineas.

After Rann was arrested, Smith's lodging were searched by John Fielding's runners, and to avoid the watch being found Smith handed it to Roach, who hid the watch under a cushion. Roach was angry at Smith for giving her the watch, since if it had been found she "might have been brought into danger". Apparently in response Smith expressed her love for John and defended her action by saying "as you do not live with him, if I had given you fifty watches you could come to no harm". After John arrived that evening Roach left the house with the watch and brought it to Allam's shop.

The trial's success or failure seemingly came down to Roach's testimony, which was portrayed as being motivated by ill-will she felt towards both John and Catherine. This was the defence which Rann used successfully to prove his innocence. Rann stated that he had known Roach for a long time and argued that she probably acted out of malice as "she has often applied to me to take her; I had refused". He said he had "sometimes let her have things; I gave her some shoes".

He finished his defence damningly by concluding "It is all out of revenge because I would not keep her".

Smith claimed that she had received the watch in payment from an unnamed gentlemen, who she had met in the Strand. The gentleman took her to a tavern and having no money to pay, left the watch in her care until he came back with money. She claimed that Roach had "extorted it from my maid, with whom I left it in case the gentleman called for it". Both these defences worked and both Rann and Smith were acquitted.

During this trial Rann seems to have played to the gallery, cultivating a growing reputation for outlandish behaviour. According to one pamphlet, he came into court adorned with blue ribbons, with an enormous bouquet of flowers underneath his coat. Rann was said to have conducted himself during the trial with "an air of gaiety and affection, ill becoming his situation".

Extravagant Tales.

Rann's confidence was apparently encouraged by his second acquittal and the events recounted in the accounts become more exaggerated. He began to boast about his crimes and say "I have so much money, I shall spend that and then I shan't last long". At one point Rann proudly predicted his own death before Christmas.

Two or three days after his acquittal he was on Bow Street trying to climb into the window of an unnamed woman. In doing so he attracted the attention of a watchman who immediately secured him and delivered him to Sir John Fielding. The unnamed woman came forth in his defence saying that he could not be charged if he were only trying to get into a place where he knew he'd be a welcomed guest, adding "he would have readily gained admission, had she not unluckily fell asleep". The Sunday following Rann apparently appeared at Bagnigge Wells, a fashionable spa, dressed "in a scarlet coat, tambour waistcoat, white silk stockings, laced hat etc. [and] publicly declared himself to be a highway man". Rann then proceeded to get drunk and fight with the local men. Apparently Rann later found himself again in a debtors' prison, this time on Fleet Street for the sum of twenty pounds of unpaid bail money. He "was visited by great number of ladies with easy virtue", and soon after these visits his debt was paid and he was released.

Rann was regularly described as inverting notions of social order. On one occasion he was in a public house on Tottenham Court Road when two sheriff's officers entered with a writ against him. Rann was unable to pay the debt, but two of his friends offered three guineas and Rann gave his watch instead. This came to more than the amount of debt and Rann persuaded an officer to buy the company a bowl of punch with the surplus. Rann then accused the men of treating him in an ungentlemanly fashion. Eventually after the officers left, Rann simply rode up the road and robbed a nobleman to replace the lost sum. On another occasion he appeared at the races at Barnet "dressed like a sporting peer of the first rank". He also apparently went to Tyburn in a coach and rode into the constables' ring requesting "that he might have a good view of what passed", because it was proper that "I should be a spectator on this melancholy occasion".

The Robbery of a Clergyman and a Final Trial.

Three months after his last trial, Rann appeared again at the Old Bailey in October 1774, when he was tried with William Collier for robbing the Reverend Dr William Bell on September 26th. The two men were tried alongside two women who were accused of receiving the stolen goods: Eleanor Roach (now a defendant rather an informer) and Roach's servant Christian Stewart.

Dr. Bell testified that on September 26 he was travelling to Gunnersbury and at about quarter past three as he was riding through the town of Ealing, he noticed two men, both on horseback, riding very slowly one behind the other. Bell thought something looked odd about one of the men and, after putting his spectacles on, investigated. He noticed that one of the men had "the flap of his hat let down all round, probably without strings, and a red handkerchief upon it". He described the man riding behind as "clothed in a lightish coat, a hat flapped bound, a great deal of black hair hanging loosely about his head, and his horse was something of a kind of brown". Furthermore, "that his boot was shorter than boots commonly are, and ... were very dirty". Bell said that at the time he did not suspect that the two men were highwaymen, but he clearly thought that there was something strange about them.

Bell rode on until, about a quarter of a mile down the road, he heard the noise of two horses. He immediately found himself between two horsemen, one of whom he instantly recognized as "the man I passed first at Ealing town". The men then asked him for his money. Bell stated he was hesitant at first until one of them motioned toward a pistol and threatened "I will blow your brains out". Bell searched in his pocket and found he had only eighteen pence, but whilst looking he held out his watch in the other hand. The men took both the money and the watch, before riding off.

John Cordy, a pawnbroker from Berwick Street, testified that the same day that Dr Bell was robbed, Roach and Stewart came to his shop at about 8 or 9 pm trying to pawn a watch. Cordy asked how they had acquired this watch, and they answered "a gentleman left it with them". Cordy said that he could give the pair no money from the watch unless he saw the man. Cordy deliberately let the women go as he knew where they lived, and after they left he went straight to Sir John Fielding. Cordy and some of Fielding's men went to Roach's house,

where they held the two women until a constable came. They searched the house and found the watch, which during the trial was confirmed as Bell's. They also found a pair of dirty boots.

The dirty boots became the focus of the trial, as the only way of linking the men with the stolen watch. Blanchville Clarke, one of Sir John Fielding's runners, had found the boots and stated during the trial that they were "quite wet and dirty, as if they had been wore that day". But the most crucial evidence concerning the boots came from William Hill, who was a post-boy of Princess Amelia. Hill first gave his evidence in an information on 5 October, when he said he was in Acton on the day of the robbery and saw John Rann ride through with another man at about ten minutes past three. During the trial Hill was asked if the other man was Collier. Hill was unsure as "I did not take particular notice of their clothes: I know Rann by sight very well". When asked about their boots he stated "their boots were very dirty; one of their boots was rather shorter than the other", thus confirming Hill's earlier evidence.

Another man who testified for the prosecution was William Halliburton, another of Fielding's men, who had stayed at Roach's house after the others had returned to Bow Street. At about quarter past ten, Rann and Collier came back to Roach's house only to be caught and tied up by Halliburton who had been waiting for them.

Whilst in previous crimes Rann had escaped through the absence of an identification, Fielding had deliberately invited Bell to Bow Street on Wednesday 28 September, three days after the crime, to identify the men. During the trial Bell was asked four times if he believed Rann and Collier were the men who robbed him. Bell was sure that Rann had robbed him, but less so of Collier saying "I would hardly from the nature of things say it can be so equally clear, but the remarkableness of the person of William Collier is so very great, that I think myself very clear".

The final evidence against Rann came from Hannah Craggs, who lived in the same house as Roach and Stewart on Berners Street. Craggs also gave information before the trial, recorded in the Old Bailey Sessions Papers. Craggs stated that the morning of the robbery she let Collier into the house. She also saw Roach bring two horses outside the house at about eleven or twelve. She saw a man, who she later identified as Rann, pay for the horses. Craggs was asked to describe the appearance of Collier and Rann on the day. Though she did not remember the former she said the latter was "dressed in reddish coloured clothes". Finally she was asked about the colour of the horses; though she was not confident she stated that "one seemed of a blackish colour, the other rather brown". These colours matched Bell's earlier testimony.

Rann appeared flamboyantly at the trial, wearing "a new coat and waist coat of pea green cloth". He apparently was so confident of his acquittal that he organised entertainment for himself and his associates after the trial. He began his defence by saying, once again, "I knows no more of it than a child does unborn", but this time Rann felt the need to expand his defence. He stated he had never seen Dr. Bell before and essentially sought to cast doubts on the identifications. Reflecting public interest in the case, Rann's plea was emotive enough to be printed "verbatim et literatim", in the Proceedings. Collier's defence was to deny everything up to the point at which he went to Roach's house in the evening only to be arrested by Halliburton.

Roach's defence echoed Smith's from the previous trial, offering an alternative narrative. She said two men had come by her parlour, dripping wet and covered in dirt. Roach offered them clean clothes and for payment they gave her the watch. She ended by saying "if I had known the watch was stolen I should not have offered it to a pawnbroker I had dealt with a great while". Stewart's defence was largely a reiteration of Roach's story. She argued she did not know who the men were, and she went with Roach to pawn the watch only because she was a good servant. Stewart's defence was the only successful one, and she was acquitted. Both Rann and Collier were found guilty of highway robbery and sentenced to death. Unlike Rann, Collier was recommended for a royal pardon. Roach was sentenced to fourteen years transportation, and in December was sent to America on the *Justitia*. While one pamphlet claimed that following his conviction Rann became penitent and regretful of his life of crime, another reported that Rann's behaviour did not change after the sentence. While in Newgate "not less than seven girls pined with him; the company was very cheerful". Rann was described as "insensible to the dreadful situation his crimes have brought him into". He was executed on 7 December 1774.

Reputation.

Not least owing to Rann's own efforts, this case attracted considerable public attention, with two portraits of him published as well as three pamphlets. In one print he was depicted as young and with curly hair, and fashionably dressed wearing a shirt with ruffled sleeves and a neck cloth. But why were the public so interested in this case, and what did they make of it? Clearly the story was entertaining, and the reports of Rann's exploits and amours, however exaggerated, made for enjoyable reading. Beyond this, the public must

have been fascinated by his uncertain social position, as he was sometimes depicted as a gentleman, following in the tradition of "gentlemen highwaymen" like James Maclaine, and at other times as an ordinary criminal.

But despite being entertained by the case, contemporaries demonstrated some scepticism about his claims to gentility. The Ordinary of Newgate, John Vilette, described him as "straight, of a genteel carriage, and making a very handsome appearance", but he stopped short of calling him a gentleman. James Boswell called him a "fop", implying that his behaviour was effeminate and pretentious. It is likely that some of the interest in the case also reflected contemporary anxiety over criminals who were acquitted due to lack of evidence only to subsequently re-offend.

JOHN TRANTUM OR TRANTRUM, 1701-1721.

Short and Fatal Criminal Career.

John Trantum was one of two brothers executed for their crimes.

Early Life.

John Trantum was christened on 9 March 1701 in the parish of St. Ann Blackfriars, London, the fourth child of Thomas and Abigail Trantum.

As he later told the Ordinary of Newgate, he was "not of any Business", but had gone to the East-Indies and China as a servant to someone on board a ship, and had stayed there for four months while the ship was loaded with cargo. On his return to England he was paid over £80 but he quickly spent it all and "took to vicious Courses". He related that his mother "sometimes told him, she feared he lived Dishonestly, and begged him not think of subsisting on the Ruins and Spoils of innocent People, for it would terminate in Misery and Destruction". She would prove to be right.

At the Old Bailey.

John is first mentioned in the Old Bailey Proceedings at the age of 20 in the trial of John White for a burglary committed in April 1720. William Field, White's accomplice who had turned king's evidence, explained to the court that Richard (Dick) Trantum and John Trantum had also been involved in the crime. The four of them had sold the stolen property to a Mrs. Glanister, whose husband and son were to be convicted of receiving stolen goods in 1722. In the October 1721 Sessions, John Trantum was the defendant in two separate trials. Firstly he pleaded guilty to three counts of burglary and one of theft. In a separate trial he and Philip Storey, together with Christopher Leonard who was still at large, were accused of a further six counts of housebreaking. Trantum pleaded guilty to all six and was sentenced to death. It was unusual for defendants to plead guilty at this time, since conviction meant a virtually certain death sentence, but perhaps he felt that the evidence against him was overwhelming.

He was executed on 23 October 1721.

London Metropolitan Archives, Parish Register of St Ann Blackfriars.

Parish Register of St Ann Blackfriars, MS 4508/2. Thomas Trantum and Abigail Gainsford were married at All Hallows, London Wall on 3 October 1689.

Between 1694 and 1703 they had five children, two of whom would be executed as criminals: Thomas, Elizabeth, Richard (executed on 25 May 1723), John (executed on 23 October 1721), and Stephen.

JOSEPH GUYANT, c. 1738-72.

Victim turned Postal Thief

Victim turned criminal, the story of Joseph Guyant highlights one of the possible causes of theft in the eighteenth century.

Early Life.

Joseph was born in approximately 1738 in Essex to "industrious and hardworking parents". According to the Ordinary of Newgate, he was given as much education as his parents could afford before being apprenticed to a smith. No further details are available as to the occupation of his parents or whether he had any siblings, although a John Guyant (possibly his Grandfather) from Edmonton is cited as being the victim of a theft in February 1700.

Marriage and Work.

Guyant completed his apprenticeship and went on to become a master smith and farrier, settling in the town of Edmonton with his wife. The Ordinary alludes to his having children, although no names or details are given. At this time he appears to have been well settled and a law-abiding citizen: indeed, in 1769, he helped to apprehend a horse thief in the area, and appeared as a witness at the trial. As such, there was little to suggest his later criminal actions.

The Turning Point

At some point during this period, Guyant became the victim of a crime. One night, after receiving a large sum of money ("sixty guineas and a half in gold, eight shillings and six-pence in silver, and nine-pence in copper"), he was stopped by two men, tied to a tree and robbed. In his endeavours to sue the county to regain the lost

money, he became bankrupt and ended up in the Fleet Prison as a debtor. When released, he returned a changed man, and began to live a life of crime.

After his release, he began to collaborate with his journeyman, Joseph Allpress, and began committing various thefts, ranging from deer stealing to robbing the church at Edmonton. When the Ordinary asked him why he robbed, he replied "to pay his debts to the full--and to have money to carry on his business".

Theft from the Post

The most serious of Guyant's crimes, and the one for which he would eventually be convicted and hanged, was the theft of mail from a postal cart on October 13, 1771. Along with his journeyman Allpress, he stopped the cart as it made its way out of London at four in the morning. With one of the pair threatening to "blow the brains out" of the coachmen, the cart was diverted into a field, and the drivers tied up. Unable to find a key for the contents of the cart, one of the pair broke open the door with an axe before loading the bags onto their horses. The two left, leaving the coachmen tied up, and unable to break free until morning.

It took quite some time before Guyant and Allpress were arrested - indeed, it was not until the discovery of correspondence between the two in March of the following year that they were apprehended. A warrant was issued for Guyant's arrest on March 13, 1772, when he was taken by the Bow Street Runners. The trial took place on 3rd of June, with Guyant and Allpress charged "that they on the king's highway, on Thomas Eversage, did make an assault putting him in corporal fear and danger of his life, and stealing from his person sixty leather bags, value 20s the property of our Sovereign Lord the King." A wide array of witnesses were called, including post-office clerks, neighbours, and the constables who made the arrests. Guyant said nothing in his defence except "I desire the mercy of the court". Witnesses for Allpress attempted to prove he had not gone out on the night of the crime. But both defendants were found guilty and sentenced to death. The trial account is particularly detailed, and gives a good insight into both the crime and the procedures followed at a criminal trial at the time.

Execution.

Guyant and Allpress were executed on the 8th of July 1772. Guyant was ill on the morning of the execution, but apparently repentant. While on the scaffold he confessed to the Ordinary where he had hidden one of the mail bags. He and Allpress "acknowledged the justice of their sentence, and confessed, that they well deserved the death they were going to die". Guyant was 34 years old and Allpress was 27. Their bodies were hung in chains on Finchley Common, near the place where the robbery took place. The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser reported that "a great concourse of people assembled on Finchley Common, to see the bodies of Guyant and Allpress". This did not have the desired effect of deterring crime, however, as three pickpockets were detected among the crowd. The placement of the bodies proved controversial, as a gentleman living nearby asked for them to be removed a mile away, only for another gentlemen to demand that they be moved back to their original place.

JOYCE HODGKINS, c. 1672-1714.

Husband Murderer Burned at the Stake

In modern parlance, Joyce Hodgkins may have been a battered wife, but mistreatment by her husband did not in any way reduce the punishment she received for killing him, a crime which was a form of petty treason.

Early Life and Marriage.

According to her testimony to the Ordinary of Newgate, Joyce Hodgkins was born around 1672, but it has not been possible to confirm this. She said she was born in Staffordshire, but while still a child she moved to London, and was brought up in the parish of St. Paul Shadwell, in East London.

She resided in Shadwell for fifteen years, but was removed from the parish to the neighbouring parish of Limehouse. It is not apparent why this occurred, however we do know that around 1700, whilst living in Limehouse, Joyce met and then married John Hodgkins, a shoemaker. She later described John to the Ordinary of Newgate as "a very cruel Husband to her all the time she was his Wife, which was Fourteen Years".

On the 18th of August 1714 the two quarrelled, and John was stabbed with a large knife, dying instantly.

Trial for Murder.

On 8 September 1714 Joyce Hodgkins was tried at the Old Bailey for murdering her husband John. During the trial the first witness, who was lodging in the same house at the time, testified that she heard "a great Noise and Scolding between the Prisoner and the Deceased". Having heard the noise, this lodger investigated and saw Joyce run at John with a knife.

A second witness, who lived across the road, had similarly heard a disturbance and investigated. When this witness arrived "she heard the Man groaning, and saw the Blood run violently out of his Breeches". When she asked Joyce what had happened, she replied by pointing to a large butcher's carving knife saying

that "that cursed knife had done it" and "that he would have stabbed her with it". The surgeon testified that after he arrived and found the man dead, he asked what had happened and "she said he did it himself".

Joyce spoke in her own defence, and admitted that they had been arguing about how to keep John's mother. She maintained that John had picked up the knife and threatened her with it, and that "she running away to avoid it, when she turned back again saw him bleed, and that he did it himself".

The jury found Joyce guilty of petty treason, a more severe crime than ordinary murder. Because a wife was subordinate to her husband, murdering one's husband was viewed as an aggravated form of murder, as it was a crime against the social hierarchy. After the trial Joyce pleaded her belly; upon inspection by the jury of matrons she was found not to be pregnant, and her sentence was upheld.

Imprisonment and Execution.

While imprisoned in Newgate Prison awaiting her execution, Joyce was under the care of the Ordinary, the prison chaplain. In his account of her case, he notes that she denied committing the crime even after her sentence was confirmed. Eventually she did admit to the murder, but she argued that she did it in a passion and that "she gave him the Wound he dy'd of, but did not design to have killed him".

Joyce maintained that John was "such a wicked Person as she had represented him, who dealt very ill with her, in using her most unmercifully", but accepted she shouldn't have killed him. She expressed regret that she had not gone to the minister of her parish in an effort to improve his temper. Having acknowledged her faults, the Ordinary found Joyce to have "Guilt and Trouble upon her, more than she ever had before". She regularly attended Church but she was unable to read and couldn't understand the Bible and gain the "Advantage of understanding Good Things". The Ordinary found it very difficult to console Joyce, due to her being "ignorant in Matters of Religion".

On Wednesday 22 September 1714 Joyce was executed by being burned at the stake, the punishment for women convicted of petty treason.

MABEL HUGHES, c.1678 -1755.

Workhouse Pauper who Killed a Boy in Her Care.

Whether Mabel Hughes's cruelty towards Alexander Knipe amounted to murder is doubtful, but for its critics this case epitomised the cruelty and inefficiency of the parochial workhouse.

Early Life and Marriage.

Mabel Hughes was born in Greenwich between around 1678 and 1680, and was apprenticed as a spinner and winder of silk in the parish of St Botolph Aldgate. She was married to Dannel Hughes, by whom she had two children, both of whom had died by the spring of 1739.

Pauper in Old Age.

On the 4th of February 1739, Mabel and Dannel were passed from St Saviour's parish, entering the workhouse belonging to St Botolph Aldgate.

In the workhouse register Mabel's age is recorded as being 60, while Dannel's was 57.

She would later explain to the Ordinary of Newgate that she entered the workhouse because she was unable to provide for herself during the notoriously hard winter of 1739. Dannel died within a month of entering the house, on 2 March 1739, and Mabel was put to work supervising the boys who wound silk there. Finding it difficult to control the boys and frequently beating them, they often played tricks on her.

Murder.

One Sunday afternoon in July 1755, some fifteen years after Mabel became a resident, half a dozen children were playing in the workhouse garret after having eaten their dinner. According to one of them, John Travilian, aged 13, Mabel Hughes "fell a licking" all the children, but particularly an eleven year old called Alexander Knipe. Knipe had been born with a hernia and, according to Travilian, Hughes stamped on him and kicked him in the groin, knowingly rupturing the hernia. Knipe spent an agonising night, groaning and crying with pain. Several workhouse inmates tried to comfort him, but he was dead before morning. At least seven inmates gave evidence against Hughes at her trial. Eleanor Fitzter said Hughes was "a very hard-hearted and barbarous woman", and another, John Cox, said he had seen Hughes beat the children. Knipe was described as a mild tempered and cheerful child who "would not hurt a worm" by the workhouse mistress, Sarah Cole, who said that there was no reason for Hughes to have beaten him. Hughes claimed that the children were being very noisy, and that Knipe had fallen between two trunks. She also said that the children were apt to take her work and spoil it, even dropping it into the vault or privy. She also brought several character witnesses who testified to her good character. None were from inside the workhouse.

She was found guilty of murder and executed on Monday 15 September, at the age of 77. Following the provisions of the 1752 Murder Act, her body was delivered to Surgeons Hall to be dissected and anatomised. The act also dictated that she should be executed without delay. In the short spell (two days)

between conviction and execution, the Ordinary of Newgate did his best to save her soul, but he found her ignorant, illiterate, "scarce escaped from being an ideot", and "unfit to have the management of children".

MARY ELLENOR, 1684-1708.

Servant and Murderer of her Bastard Child.

Young women such as Mary Ellenor who became pregnant out of wedlock faced an impossible choice. If the infant lived, they would lose their job, endure public shame, and probably be unable to support themselves and the child. If they chose infanticide, however, the repercussions could be still worse.

Early Life and Immigration to London.

Mary Ellenor, the daughter of Phinice and Catherine Ellenor, was christened on 5 October 1684 in the parish of St. James the Apostle, Dover. Like many young women at this time, she moved to London at the age of around seventeen to become a domestic servant.

Life as a Domestic Servant.

During her time in London she was servant to several "honest" families and in her later words to the Ordinary she described herself as "faithful to her master's and Mistresses".

At some point during this time she met a young man who was an apprentice coach-maker. This young man is referred to in the Ordinary's Account as T.F., in an effort to conceal his identity, "being more desirous to bring him to serious Consideration and Reformation, than to Shame and Confusion". Having promised Mary that once he had finished his apprenticeship he would marry her, he "prevailed with her to commit Lewdness with him". Mary told the Ordinary that she "never knew any Man besides him in that foul carnal way".

During this relationship Mary was living as a servant in the parish of St. Olave Silver Street in the City of London. On 23 September 1708 she was taken ill, complaining to her mistress of a "Pain in the Arm". Her mistress believed this to be rheumatism and gave her the appropriate treatment. Mary continued to be ill until the morning of 25 September, when she was discovered showing signs of childbirth. Upon a search of the house privy, "a Child was found newly thrown in".

Inquest and Trial

Mary was indicted at the Old Bailey for the murder of her bastard child after a Coroner's Inquest. The inquest jury determined that upon the delivery of a healthy bastard child Mary "did afterwards throw the said Male Bastard Infant, alive into a house of Easement Filled with Piss dung & other Filthy matter".

At the trial Mary pleaded not guilty, testifying that the baby had miscarried, but according to the Old Bailey Proceedings "sufficient Proof being given that she went full time", she was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Whoredom and Ignorance of Religion.

Mary was taken to Newgate Prison where she came under the care of the Ordinary (chaplain).

According to his account of their conversations, Mary accepted that she had indeed given birth to a healthy baby and that she killed it by throwing it into a vault, adding one further grizzly detail that "with a Broom-stick she kept him down, till he was quite dead".

Under the Ordinary's influence, Mary identified the cause of her inhumanity as that the "Devil had too much power over her". She acknowledged she was guilty of the sins of whoredom and uncleanness. According to the Ordinary, she could not resist these temptations since "She was very ignorant, and could not so much as read". Nonetheless, he believed that she acted very penitently.

On the morning of execution the Ordinary was meant to provide the Eucharist to those who he believed were truly penitent. On this occasion he indicates that he did not give mass to some prisoners contrary to certain reports, as they had not confessed to their crimes. Even though she had confessed, Mary was also denied, since she was "so ignorant of that Ordinance, as not to be able to discern the Lord's Body". While he clearly believed that she was very sorry for her crime, he thought she was far too ignorant of the Lord's word to be saved.

Mary was executed at Tyburn on 27 October 1708.

MARY KNIGHT, c.1685-1716.

Prostitute and Thief.

Ruined by a bad marriage, Mary Knight claimed she turned to prostitution and theft in order to "keep herself from starving".

Early Life, Apprenticeship, and Marriage.

Mary Knight was born around 1685 in Yarmouth. Presumably an orphan, she was raised by her uncle in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. In the early 1700s she moved to London and became an apprentice to a fish woman in Billingsgate, where she remained for seven years. She set herself up in the trade in Billingsgate,

soon marrying a seaman "who proved a bad husband" and who helped reduce her to poverty. She claimed that poverty-stricken, she was driven to follow an "ill course of life".

Prostitution.

The first evidence of her prostitution comes on the 19th of October 1705 when she was committed to Bridewell and put to hard labour for being a "lewd person" and a "common nightwalker". She was soon back in Bridewell, committed again on November 5th of the same year for "being taken with a strange man in an alehouse in a private room the man confessing before Sir Richard Levet she picked him up in the street". At this point she was sent to St. Bartholomew's Hospital to treat "her deplorable Condition being almost eaten up with the foul Disease" (venereal disease), returning to Bridewell once cured.

She then disappears from the records for almost ten years. It is possible that improved economic circumstances meant that she did not need to return to prostitution, or that she was dissuaded by the unpleasant treatment she received for venereal disease. (It is also possible that the Mary Knight sent to Bridewell in 1705 is not the same woman as the one who appears in the records in 1715 and 1716).

The situation changed, however in 1715. In January 1716 she confessed to the Ordinary:

That she had for these 12 Months past been a very loose Woman, a Night-walker etc., and, that she had deluded as many Young Men, and others, as she met with in her Way, and could persuade to go along with her: That being sometimes taken by the Watch, she was carryed to the Bridewell in Clerkenwell, from whence (after some slight Correction) being discharged, but not reformed, she returned to her former vicious Life.

Correspondingly, she appears on the calendars of prisoners at New Prison and the house of correction in Clerkenwell three times in 1715, in February, May, and September. Each time she was discharged when sessions met, and ordered to pay a discharge fee of one or two shillings.

Trial and Execution.

In January 1716, Mary, along with Margaret Hopkins, was indicted for stealing nine guineas and fourteen shillings from William Cane, a seaman, on 10 December 1715. Cane claimed that when walking home whilst slightly drunk, Mary offered to take him home, but instead led him to the Ship tavern in Church Lane, where he fell asleep and she robbed him.

Having confessed their crimes before a Justice, both women were found guilty and sentenced to death. Both "pleaded their bellies", but only Hopkins was found to be pregnant by the jury of matrons, and Knight's sentence was confirmed.

She was executed at Tyburn on Friday 27 January 1716.

MARY NICHOLS, alias Trolly Lolly, c. 1685-1715.

Thief with the Alias of "Trolly Lolly"

Mary Nichols claimed she was driven to steal by her poverty. Her use of an alias during her final trial at the Old Bailey may have been an attempt to hide her previous convictions.

Early Life and Marriage.

In the Ordinary's Account of her life, Mary Nichols was described as aged 30 (in 1715), having been born in Deptford, Kent. Like many young women, she came to London when young, though we do not know when. When in London she married a butcher. Initially she earned an honest living selling meat (provided by her husband) and sometimes fish, eggs, butter and fruit, on the streets of London and Southwark.

Turns to Crime.

Around 1713 she started stealing. Mary told the Ordinary there were two reasons she turned to crime: the cost of taking care of herself and her children and the fact her husband had begun to mistreat her. These circumstances led her to "extreme Poverty, and by that driven to Stealing".

Trial and Branding for Thievery.

Mary Nichols first appears in London Lives after she was apprehended for theft and tried at the Old Bailey on 9 December 1714. Nichols was listed as living in the "precinct of St. Katherines" (by the Tower), though this is likely to be where the crime occurred. She was accused of stealing a brass kettle worth 5s and other goods out of the house of Edward Blount on the 9th of October.

Blount deposed that after he lost these goods, Nichols appeared and for the payment of a crown, told him where the items had been sold. By going to that place, Blount discovered that Mary herself had actually sold the objects. (Mary's attempt to extort further money from the victim of this crime was clearly ill-advised, and may reflect desperation.)

In her defence, Nichols argued that she had been given the items by a sailor. However she could not provide any proof of this, nor could she produce anyone to her reputation and good character. She was found guilty and sentenced to be branded.

Trolly Lolly.

Nine months later she appears at the Old Bailey again, this time using an alias, Trolly Lolly. Now listed as from the East End parish of St. Mary Whitechapel (which again, may only be the location of the crime), she was indicted for breaking into the house of Christopher Hurt on 22 July 1715 and stealing "1 Pair of Flaxen Sheets, value 10s. and other Goods".

Hurt testified that early that morning he had been awoken by a noise, and looking out his window saw Nichols leaving his house with the stolen items. Hurt then ran after Nichols and apprehended her. Hurt's lodger stated that he had left early that morning to attend to business and was sure he locked the door behind him, leaving the key underneath it.

Having been apprehended with the stolen goods, there was not much Mary could say in her defence, so she attempted to prove that she hadn't broken into the house, and thus could only be convicted of a simple felony, not burglary. She said "she was going a hay-making and saw the door wide open". Deemed a "very poor" defence, her evidence was contradicted by the lodger's testimony that the door had been locked.

Nichols was found guilty of burglary and sentenced to death. She pleaded her belly, but was found by the jury of matrons not to be pregnant was therefore conveyed to Newgate Prison to await her execution.

Confession to the Ordinary.

Mary confessed her guilt to the Ordinary of Newgate, adding that she had been burned in the hand for a previous conviction, and was guilty of "several felonies" besides. Paul Lorrain, the Ordinary, "found her very ignorant; yet, I hope, she at last became sensible of the heinousness of her sins, so as to repent of them in good earnest".

Mary Nichols was hanged at Tyburn on Wednesday 21 September 1715.

NATHANIEL HAWES, c. 1701-1721.

Young Thief with Gentlemanly Pretensions.

A juvenile delinquent who perhaps initially benefited from mercy shown by the court, Hawes was seduced by the myth of the polite and courageous gentleman highwayman and paid the ultimate price.

Childhood and Early Life.

Nathaniel Hawes was born around 1701 in Norfolk. His father was a rich grazier, but he died before Nathaniel was a year old. Nathaniel was placed in the care of relations in Hertfordshire, and later sent to London to be apprenticed to an upholsterer.

Downfall.

After about four years in London Hawes fell into "expensive company". This led him to steal from his master, which he did several times before he was discovered. He was apparently dismissed from service and went to another master, Gladwell Peyton. After only three months in service "upon liking", Peyton noticed several goods missing. Hawes then left his service, saying he was going to another master, and was seen "flush with money" and wearing "laced ruffles". Peyton instigated a search of the house of John Phillips, one of Hawes's acquaintances, and discovered several stolen goods, including seven and a half yards of satin, five yards of mohair, and 47 yards of camblet. Hawes confessed the thefts and said he had sold the stolen goods to Phillips. But when Hawes was tried at the Old Bailey in October 1720 the jury treated him leniently. Although the stolen goods were valued at almost eight pounds, the jury committed pious perjury and found him guilty of stealing goods to the value of 39 shillings only (less than two pounds), thereby sparing him the death penalty. He was sentenced to transportation instead.

Betrays.

He was not, however, transported. Instead, he was pardoned and burned in the hand after he managed to shift the blame for his crimes onto Phillips, who had allegedly encouraged him to steal from his master. Phillips was then indicted in April 1721 as an accessory to the crime (receiving stolen goods) for which Hawes was convicted. Hawes testified that "he keeping idle company and wanting money one time, took a few remnants and carried them" to Phillips, who bought them from him, and that Phillips subsequently "encouraged him by bidding him bring what goods he would and he would buy them". Despite the fact that Phillips called several witnesses who testified that he had examined Hawes as to whether he had come by the goods honestly, and described his character as "an honest, industrious man", Phillips was convicted and sentenced to transportation.

Although Hawes equivocated in the trial, also testifying that he had told Phillips that the goods he was selling were his own, Hawes had clearly learned that betrayal was an important survival strategy for thieves.

Later that same year he turned on another accomplice, John James, with whom he had "hired their Horses in Bedfordbury, and had committed 11 Robberies in a Fortnight". Hawes told the thief-taker Jonathan Wild of one of the crimes he and James had committed. James was tried in October 1721 for a highway robbery on Hanwell Heath. The two robbers had fallen out over whether they should return a ring to the victim who begged for it, claiming it had sentimental value. This was something gentlemen highwaymen were expected to do, and Hawes had accordingly returned the ring, but James grabbed it back. James was convicted and sentenced to death. He was executed on October 30, having asked his friends "to purchase him the privilege of going in a coach".

"Thefts Every Night"

Hawes did not learn from the misfortunes of his accomplices. He appears to have been committed to New Prison, but he broke out, encouraged, he claimed, by a woman, "who instructed him and another in the means, and furnished them with requisites; to whom he said they were so grateful, that they first helped her over the walls, and afterwards escaped themselves." His male accomplice, William Burrige, later reported that "they did it by cunning, having opened the door, and so made the best of their ways over two or three walls". He told the Ordinary that following his escape:

'Every night from Monday to Friday, from the time he broke out of New Prison to the time he was taken [one week later], he robbed on Hackney Road, with the person who broke out with him, not missing one night, the last robbery being a gentleman's coach, with 4 ladies in it, from whom they took a wedding ring, 40s in silver, a silver snuff-box, and a snuff-box with mother of pearl. In another crime, committed with John James and Richard Jones (who was known as Dick the Countryman) on the 31st of August, he showed more evidence of his gentlemanly pretensions. The victim was a man going to market to sell hats, and when it was discovered he had only eighteen pence in farthings, they returned the money to him'.

His final crime was on November 24th, when he uncharacteristically committed a crime on his own. He approached Richard Hall on Finchley Common and held to a pistol to his breast, telling him to get off his horse. After Hall handed him four shillings, he managed to wrest the pistol and apprehend him. According to the London Journal, it was his desire to steal not only the money but also Hall's horse which proved his undoing.

Refusing to Plead.

At his trial for highway robbery Hawes at first refused to plead, another sign of his gentlemanly pretensions. He told the court that 'as he had lived like a man, he was resolved to die so, and not be hanged in such a shabby coat as he then appeared in. That he had left a good suit of cloaths at his lodging, when he was apprehended, which he prayed might be returned; and till this was granted, he positively refused to plead. Hawes was one of a number of highway robbers who adopted this strategy at this time as a means of expressing their courage and their contempt for the court, but like all the others he was eventually forced to relent.

Hawes later justified his behaviour by saying he was "a man of courage and bold spirit, and if the court was so uncivil as to deny him his own cloths, he had no business to oblige the court, in pleading". He complained that the Old Bailey "used to be a Court of Justice, but was now a Place of Injustice".

Following normal practice at the time for those who refused to plead, his thumbs were tied together and "the cord pulled till it broke several times". When he still did not relent, he was subjected to the ordeal of peine forte et dure. He was forced to lie down on the prison floor and 250 pounds in weights were placed on him. After seven minutes, he relented and pleaded not guilty. At the trial he mounted no defence, only saying that he wanted his clothes back. Needless to say, he was convicted and sentenced to death.

Execution.

The Ordinary reported that initially following his death sentence Hawes "showed a great levity of behaviour, insensible of the wretched state he was in", but while in Newgate he began to show signs of repentance. He admitted some crimes and was keen to exonerate those who were accused of crimes he himself had committed. He pleaded that his story should serve as a warning to all youths who were so daring as to follow his path.

After receiving the sacrament Hawes was hanged at Tyburn on the 21st of December 1721, when "he was not 20 years old".

PRISCILLA MAHON, alias Trilcourt, c. 1716-1741.

Minister's Daughter, Prostitute and Betrayed Wife.

Priscilla Mahon (sometimes spelled "Mabon") appears in the London Lives records briefly, but they reveal that she led an eventful life. Though she started life as a minister's daughter, she ended as a prostitute betrayed by her husband.

Early Life.

All of our information about Priscilla's early life comes from the Ordinary's Account. In 1741 Priscilla told the Ordinary, James Guthrie, that she was aged twenty-five, meaning that she was born sometime in 1716. She said she was born in Cumberland, to good parents. According to Guthrie she received a very good education at an unnamed school where she learned "to read, write, and learn all Sorts of Needlework, and was instructed in the Christian Religion". She spent much of her youth in Dublin, where her father moved as he "kept a Presbyterian Meetinghouse". Her father was of a high status and as Guthrie remarks, was "a noted Man amongst the Dissenters".

Move to London and Slide into Depravity.

When Priscilla was thirteen years old her father died and rather than stay with "the old Gentlewoman her Mother" she went to London. She soon became a servant and "served in some good Families with Reputation".

Sometime during her service she met a man, only described in the Ordinary's Account as a "Doctor of Physick". Apparently at some point she "gave Way to his Solicitations" and ended up having two children with this man, though she never married him. After about three years of living with the Doctor, she left him to pursue a more interesting life, as she "began to think that she was not made for one, and that her Life was too confined". However, according to Guthrie she ended up "little better than a common Prostitute, and took up with the vilest of Company".

Sometime in 1736 she met John Mahon, who had similarly left a reputable family in Dublin for London. Soon after the pair met they married, and as Guthrie notes added "Adultery to the rest of her Crimes". According to Guthrie, their life together was full of "Lewdness, with the vilest Company in Town".

Theft and Betrayal.

On the 23rd of October 1740 John Layton was going down Haymarket at about seven or eight in the evening when he met Elizabeth Fox in the middle of the street, who offered him a "Dram of very good Rum". Though initially reluctant to do so, Layton followed Fox into a house, with Priscilla following closely behind. Layton sought to leave the house after he and Fox had "drank three Quarterns". When he went to the door the pair seized him, broke a stick he was carrying, and, as he later testified, "they struck and punched me, and made my Cheeks bleed". The women stopped the attack when the house's landlord emerged. While Layton wanted to take the women to the watchmen's roundhouse, the landlord persuaded him to come back and sit and drink with him. Apparently the two women, Priscilla's husband John, John Elvar, and a man called Richardson joined them, and the whole group continued to give Layton more drinks.

This drinking culminated when the group offered Layton a large glass of plain gin which though Layton "drank a little" the group "insisted that I should drink it up". Layton then attempted to leave again and was attacked again by the two women, as well as John Mahon, Elvar, and Richardson.

During the scuffle Layton stolen "five 36s. Pieces, and a 18s. Piece" from his pocket. When the group tried to flee, Layton gave chase and managed to catch Priscilla and inform the watch what had occurred. The watchmen eventually managed to capture Elvar and Fox. John Mahon successfully fled to Dublin with "the 9 or 10 pounds" the group had stolen, leaving Elvar, Fox and even his wife Priscilla to face trial.

The Trial.

Priscilla, Elizabeth Fox, and John Elvar were tried at the Old Bailey on 16 January 1741 for assault and theft from William Layton in "the dwelling-House of a Person unknown". Priscilla was listed with an alias of Trilcourt, which was perhaps her maiden name. Richardson appears to have turned king's evidence and testified for the prosecution. He said he returned home to find the pair busy at work trying to rob Layton, but he claimed nothing occurred whilst he was in the room. Priscilla's only defence was to claim that she was drunk, and was not in the room when she heard Layton fighting with the landlord. She also said that she was caught by Layton, not by the watchmen, implying that the evidence of Layton, who was drunk, could not be trusted. All three were found guilty of the assault and sentenced to death.

The Ordinary's Account.

Once in Newgate, Priscilla gave an account of her life to the Ordinary, James Guthrie. Guthrie found her to be from a good background, but noted she was guilty of adultery among other sins. He noted that she did not confess to any other crimes beyond the robbery she was tried for, but she did acknowledge "that she had been guilty of innumerable other wicked and indirect Practices".

Guthrie gave Priscilla extra attention the Friday before her execution as she was sick in her cell. Priscilla found it difficult to see any way of being forgiven as she had sinned so badly despite been "bred in the strictest Way of Religion". Despite the Ordinary's attempts to reassure her, she still "cried bitterly, lamenting in a deplorable Manner her sinning" up to her execution.

The Ordinary's account includes a letter addressed to Priscilla from her sister, Elizabeth Holford. Holford offered her sympathy and even expressed her intention to "send a Minister, if he can be admitted". It is not recorded whether this minister came to Priscilla's side during her time at Newgate.

Priscilla Mahon was executed at Tyburn on 18 March 1741. Guthrie reports that she "was very serious, and so desirous of prayers, that she called me out of the coach to pray by her, and behaved very penitent".

RICHARD TRANTUM or TRANTHAM, 1698-1723.

Serial Burglar.

Richard Trantum, the second member of his family to be executed for theft, was a member of a gang which committed a series of burglaries between 1720 and 1723.

Early Life and Family.

Richard Trantum was christened on 15 January 1698 in the parish of St. Ann Blackfriars, the third child of Thomas and Abigail Trantum. At his execution Richard described his parents as "honest" and "prayed that no Reflections might be cast on them for his untimely Death". He was the second of their children to be executed, following the hanging of his younger brother John in 1721.

At the time of his death Richard was married with one child, and his wife was pregnant with a second.

Crimes.

Trantum was tried at the Old Bailey in July 1720 for stealing a box of clothes the previous month, and sentenced to transportation. His punishment was then commuted to being burnt in the hand. He and his brother John had also been involved in a burglary in April 1720, for which John White was tried at the Old Bailey in March the following year. The fourth member of the gang, William Field, turned king's evidence and claimed that he, White and the Trantums had committed the break-in. Richard was also one of the gang who burgled Mr. Folwell's house on 28 July 1721. According to the evidence given by Christopher Leonard, he, Mary Darbieau and Trantum carried out the burglary and sold the goods to Thomas Glanister, a notorious receiver of stolen goods. Richard was not taken and tried for this offence until the April Sessions 1723, when he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

With the Ordinary in Newgate.

The Ordinary of Newgate described Richard as having a "Grave and Sober Deportment" and very attentive in chapel. He was expecting a reprieve as the crime had been committed nearly two years before the trial. He spent much of his time in Newgate reading books brought in by his friends. Shortly before his death he confessed to the Ordinary that he had been involved in several other burglaries - "A House near the Waterside, in George-street, York-Buildings. The House of the Reverend Mr. Raymour Curate of St. James's Westminster. A Merchant's House in Winchester-street. Brigadier Grove's House near, St. James's. A Stone Cutters House in Chiswell-street, and Mr. Folwell's in Spittle-Fields".

Trantum was executed on 25 May 1723. His body was intended for burial in Mitcham, Surrey, where he had a house.

RODERICK AWDRY, c. 1698-1714.

A Juvenile Delinquent in a Criminal Family.

One of three brothers executed at Tyburn in 1714-15, while only a boy Roderick Awdry committed a series of substantial thefts in several different places in the metropolis, using similar methods and always stealing valuable items, primarily silver. Although he always worked with accomplices, he did not steal with his brothers. Treated with mercy by the court no doubt due to his young age, he avoided a death sentence until at least his fourth appearance at the Old Bailey.

Early Life.

Son of Mary Awdry, Roderick was born in the parish of St Giles in the Fields around 1698. After his father died when he was young and his mother remarried he was "turned out of doors" and forced to fend for himself. He was poorly educated (according to the Ordinary of Newgate he, "could read very little") and brought up without a trade. According to the Ordinary, he put together a livelihood by stealing and pilfering. He started by robbing orchards but proceeded to commit a number of large thefts and robberies.

Appearances at the Old Bailey.

He was tried at the Old Bailey on four occasions. His first appearance, at the age of no more than 12, was on the 6th of September 1710, when Roderick and a William Meekins were charged with stealing twelve shillings and sixpence from a box in a cellar whose door had been apparently left open. Perhaps because he was so young, the jury committed pious perjury and convicted him of petty larceny only (theft of goods to the value of less than a shilling).

A year later he was tried with two other men from St James Westminster for breaking into a dwelling house and stealing silver spoons, forks and a cup, by using a hook fastened to a stick to remove the items through a kitchen window. Henry Sweet was convicted, but the evidence against Awdry was deemed insufficient and he was acquitted. Four months later he was once again in the dock, this time with William Yarwood, and described as being a "boy" from the parish of Whitechapel, on the other side of the metropolis

from Westminster. Once again he was charged with stealing silver, this time to the substantial value of £30, from a parlour. The boys were taken up by a coachman near Aldgate on suspicion they were up to no good, and when they were searched their profits from selling the stolen items (£8) were discovered. This time Awdry pleaded guilty, but once again he appears to have secured the mercy of the court and he was sentenced to be branded. Later in 1712 he was described as one of the accomplices of another boy who was tried at the Old Bailey, but Awdry did not appear on this occasion because he had not been apprehended. His accomplices were new, but the crime was familiar, once again involving the theft of silver from a house through a window, but this time in Kensington on the western side of the metropolis.

His final trial took place in May 1714, when he was accused with a different accomplice, William White, of stealing in yet another part of the metropolis, this time in the parish of St. Margaret Lothbury in the City of London. Once again he stole silver from a house, this time being caught red handed when a servant returned home. The jury found both guilty on a new statute, 12 Anne c.7, which made the theft of goods over the value of 40 shillings from a house a capital offence without benefit of clergy. Perhaps because he was caught red handed, or perhaps owing to the contemporary panic over theft from houses, he was convicted on the capital offence and not pardoned. It seems likely, though there is no evidence to confirm this, that the jury and/or judges were aware of Awdry's substantial criminal record.

Roderick was hanged at Tyburn on the 28th of May 1714 at the age of no more than 16. According to the Ordinary, he died penitent.

Crimes not Prosecuted.

While awaiting execution, Roderick provided the Ordinary with a detailed, and possibly exaggerated, list of the sins and crimes he had committed since about the age of 12. It is an extraordinary list, comprising 38 substantial thefts committed in almost every neighbourhood of London. The Ordinary reported: "To these Robberies he said he might add a great many more, if he could remember all he had committed, but they were now out of his Memory." Some of his accomplices were also eventually hanged, and in their accounts to the Ordinary they mentioned the crimes they committed with Awdry. Christopher Moor told the Ordinary he and Awdry had stolen some plate from Lady Edwin's House in March 1714. While he avoided prosecution for the vast majority of these crimes, Roderick was apprehended and punished more often than the account of his Old Bailey trials given above suggests. According to the Ordinary:

He was several times committed to Newgate, and once to the Prison in the Marshalsea. He was twice sent to the Bridewell in Tuttle-fields, Westminster, thrice Burnt in the Hand, and thrice ordered to the Bridewell in Clerkenwell; and no sooner was he sent to those Houses of Correction, but he presently broke out, and returned to his wicked Trade. Records of these commitments may survive in house of correction calendars, and in the manuscript sessions and Old Bailey indictment rolls. The Old Bailey Proceedings (OBP) are missing for several sessions between 1710 and 1714.

Roderick also added sexual immorality to his sins, telling the Ordinary that he had engaged in "Whoredom, Adultery, and all manner of Lewdness". Although he clearly revelled in telling the Ordinary about his wickedness, he did claim that he was prompted to steal by "notorious Receivers of Stolen Goods, and known Thieves", and given his young age, it is possible that older thieves had taken advantage of him.

A Criminal Family.

It is likely that he was also encouraged by his family. Roderick was part of a criminal family which appears to have specialised in thefts from houses and shops, particularly of silver goods. Although both his older brothers and his mother also appeared at the Old Bailey, it would appear almost as likely that Roderick led the others astray as vice versa, since Roderick had the longest and most substantial criminal record in the family. It is notable however, that there is no evidence that the brothers stole together.

According to the Ordinary Roderick's brother John, who was ten years older and had been in the navy for sixteen years, was involved in several felonies and burglaries, had once been convicted and branded, and on another occasion was committed to a house of correction. He first appears in April 1712, when he confessed to stealing several silver items from a cheese monger, but perhaps because he informed on the man who melted the silver down knowing the goods to have been stolen, he was spared prosecution. Only seven months after Roderick was executed, John was accused of breaking into a shop and stealing a large amount of butter, cheese, and bacon, and delivering them to their mother Mary, who was charged with receiving stolen goods. Another brother, Samuel, who was three years older than Roderick, testified against John, but absolved his mother. Other witnesses testified similarly, indicating that she did not know that the goods were stolen. While John was convicted and sentenced to death, she was acquitted. John Awdry was executed on December 22nd.

Four months later it was Samuel's turn to be capitally convicted, this time for "privately stealing" a silver-hilted sword. As the Ordinary commented: "And though this Samuel Awdry had the Example of his two Brothers' shameful Death before his Eyes, and even was an evidence against the latter of them, viz. John Awdry, yet he would not take warning by them, but followed the same wicked Way that had brought them to such a sad and untimely End. **Samuel Awdry was executed on May 11th, 1715.**

SAMUEL BADHAM, 1692-1740.

Beggar and Wife Murderer.

Early Life.

Samuel Badham was born on the 27th of May 1692 in the parish of St. Mary Overy, Southwark. He attended the local parish school where he learned to read and, quite unusually, gained a substantial knowledge of the scriptures. At the appropriate age Badham was apprenticed to a shoemaker by the name of Matthew Bird in Thames Street in the City of London. He completed his apprenticeship and subsequently worked at this trade, keeping a stall in Tooley Street, where he claimed he "took fifteen or twenty shillings a week for second-hand shoes, and for mending jobs". Employment in his early life allowed Badham to maintain a fairly comfortable lifestyle.

Marriage and Children.

It is unclear when Badham married and his wife's name is equally unknown. He told the Ordinary that they had several (at least 5) children together, all christened in the parish of St. Olave's, London. Sadly only one of their children, a son, was still alive in 1740 (when he was 24). The son appears to have followed his father's footsteps in the profession of shoemaking. The family lived on St. Olave's Street in Southwark, just southeast of London Bridge.

Illness.

Shortly after the early death of his wife around 1730 Badham was seized by an unknown illness which badly affected his feet. After this illness Badham was unable to wear shoes so instead walked with a thick bundle of rags tied under the soles of his feet and with the aid of a stick in each hand. This illness, coupled with his decaying business, thrust Badham into extreme poverty, and he began to work for his father's brother in the business of coney-wool cutting (preparing rabbit fur for hatters). But this work "not answering my expectation" he chose to resort to begging for charity on the streets.

Badham's ragged appearance combined with his substantial knowledge of the scriptures learned in childhood made him rather successful at begging, a "profession" which he continued throughout the rest of his life. Appearing essentially healthy, he "fitted the stereotype of the essentially healthy (despite his feet) adult male beggar, who used his intelligence, his ability to weave the right words into a subtle plea, in order to wrest a meagre income from well-to-do Londoners".

Relationship with Susannah Hart.

During these years of begging Badham travelled across London, staying in cheap lodging houses wherever he happened to be at night. In one such house, the Crooked Billet in Hog Lane St. Giles, he met Susannah Hart, a woman who made her living sweeping the entrances of French gentleman's houses in Rathbone Place and by scouring their brass knockers, as well as by going on errands for servants. Susannah's father had earned a good living lending money to soldiers, and Susannah brought a substantial dowry to her marriage to Simon Hart. Having worked through her dowry, however, and passed on his venereal disease, Simon abandoned Susannah in the mid 1730's. Sometime in 1738 Badham moved in with Susannah, to a rented room leased from a Richard Booker on the second floor of his house in Farmer's Court, St. Giles. Their relationship was often quarrelsome, however, due, as Badham told the Ordinary, to Hart's excessive drinking and drunken fits. He claimed that in one such fit she smothered a child he had had by her. She also had a habit of pawning her clothes (perhaps to pay for alcohol) and one day he discovered her wearing a gown provided by the parish. This deeply offended Badham, who said "there's nobody that ever belonged to me ever wore a parish gown" and so he begged money so he could buy her another.

Murder.

On the 20th May 1740, after they had been living together for about two years, Hart returned home in an intoxicated state at around ten o'clock in the morning. Badham, who had spent the previous night in a lodging house, had had no sleep and they quarrelled. After shouting at each other and a prolonged struggle Badham strangled Hart to death with his bare hands, leaving bruises that matched his fingers around her neck. Cries of "murder!" were heard from their room by neighbours and other lodgers but were dismissed due to the frequent outcries heard from the couple. Hart's body was not found until several hours after the attack had taken place. Badham was interviewed by Thomas De Veil and committed to Newgate a week later.

Trial and Execution.

The trial of Samuel Badham took place on the 9th of July 1740. Several witnesses reported hearing Susannah cry out "murder!" that morning but no one intervened, while the marks on her neck suggested that she had been strangled, and Badham had not left the room. He claimed in his defence that she had been very drunk and had previously fallen down the stairs, but this was denied by his landlord, Richard Booker. Badham was found guilty and sentenced to death.

According to the Ordinary, though Badham was unwilling to admit his guilt, he behaved well while in Newgate awaiting his execution. He "talked scripture very much, was willing to be thought penitent, and declared he died in peace with all the world".

His execution took place on Wednesday, August 6, 1740 at Tyburn. The Ordinary reported that Badham's surviving son accompanied him and both displayed a "deep sorrow" which "very much affected the spectators".

SHADRACH GUY, c. 1693-1715.

Page, Ensign, and Thief.

A talented boy from a reputable family with a lust for travel, for unknown reasons Shadrach Guy acquired a thieving habit which led to his eventual downfall.

Early Life and Foreign Travel

Shadrach Guy was born around 1693 in the Parish of St. Thomas the Apostle, London. His family were apparently reputable; his father was a captain in General Tollemache's regiment. Shadrach received a good education. According to the Ordinary of Newgate, "he had learnt to read and write well, his friends sent him to a Latin School; and then he was taught to cast Accompts, and to speak French". He was apparently also an accomplished dancer, and the Ordinary concluded by saying that he could "carry himself handsomely in any Company". Shadrach used these characteristics to become the Duke of Roxborough's page for two years. He then went on to become the Moroccan ambassador's page for three years, which led the Ordinary to worry that he had moved from the service of a Christian to that of a "Mahumetan".

At this point he was persuaded by some friends to travel, which he did for four years, going to France and Holland. During his time abroad he improved his French and learned to speak Dutch, returning to England in 1713.

When asked how he could fund such travels, Shadrach explained he obtained a pass and also ensign's pay from an Irish officer called Major Rhine, all of which his father had arranged for him.

His Crimes

However, Shadrach also had a tendency to steal. He told the Ordinary that around 1709 he was committed to Newgate Prison (before his foreign travels) on suspicion of "having stolen a pair of Sheets from his Landlord". However, his landlord refused to prosecute and he was discharged without trial.

Sixteen months after he returned to England from his travels, he was charged with breaking into the house of Ralph Musgrave on 15 January 1715, and stealing "a Gold Watch and Chain, value 35s. a Pocket-book, two pair of Pistols, and other Goods".

Trial

On 23 February 1715 Shadrach Guy was tried at the Old Bailey for burglary, along with Margaret Cock, who was accused of receiving the stolen goods. A lack of evidence led to Cock's acquittal, but there was no similar lack of evidence against Shadrach.

Musgrave's clerk confirmed that he had locked the door to Musgrave's chambers in Staples Inn at eight o'clock, returning at eleven to find them "broke open, and the Goods taken away". Musgrave quickly had a bill printed and distributed, listing the items stolen and asking anyone to whom Shadrach attempted to sell or pawn the stolen goods to "stop" him. Shadrach was accordingly subjected to a search when he tried to pawn a pair of the pistols. During the search he was found to have the pocket-book that was taken and he was arrested.

Shadrach attempted to deny the charges, claiming he had bought the pistols. He even arranged a witness to confirm his story, but according to the Proceedings this amounted to no more than "an Oyster-woman who swore a sort of a blind Story relating thereunto". This was not enough to persuade the court and Shadrach was convicted of burglary and sentenced to death.

Failed Reprieve.

According to the Ordinary's Account, having received his sentence on 23 February, Shadrach remained in Newgate Prison for unknown reasons "under a Reprieve during pleasure". On 15 June, however, his former sentence was reaffirmed, which the Ordinary notes "he did little expect". Shadrach probably thought that his friends in high places would secure him a pardon.

When told that he would be executed two days later, Shadrach instantly "became very serious, and was very earnest in making Preparation for Death". But when this date turned out to be incorrect, and he

learned his execution would not take place for a week, Shadrach immediately began pursuing a further reprieve and even a pardon. This concerned the Ordinary, who was worried by Shadrach's neglect for his eternal soul and his unwillingness to confess to the crime.

Confession.

Shadrach continually refused to acknowledge his most recent crime, but accepted "he had committed many Faults thro' the whole Course of his Life". He specifically mentioned neglecting his service to God and profaning the Lord's Day, but claimed he never committed a crime.

The Ordinary noted that often Shadrach complained that his prosecutor, Musgrave, had dealt with him too harshly, but was nonetheless resolved to accept his punishment, hoping to be forgiven. He expressed sorrow that he had broken his mother's heart by being a neglectful son. After this revelation, when the Ordinary asked him once more if he had committed the crime Shadrach finally admitted it, and stated that he "That looked upon this his shameful End as a due Punishment to him for his undutifulness and cruelty to his Mother, and wished it might be a Warning to others".

He was hanged at Tyburn on the 22nd of June 1715.

SOPHIA PRINGLE, c.1767-1787.

Servant who Forged to Support Her Lover.

Unable to support her ill lover without resorting to crime, Sophia Pringle's forgeries led to a sensational trial and execution.

Early Life and Domestic Service.

Sophia Pringle was the daughter of a journeyman tailor of Cannon Row, Ratcliffe Highway in East London. She was probably born around 1767. In 1785 she left her father's house and lived as servant to Mrs Meadows, a lady from America, at Duke Street, Portland Chapel. While there, she fell in love with a lottery-office keeper, who is not named in any of the sources. The two seem to have considered marriage.

After a short while, her service with Mrs Meadows ended, and she went to lodge with a friend, William Lewis, a black hairdresser who lived in Oxford Street. Her lottery-office keeper became ill and unable to work, and came to lodge with her.

She made herself responsible for paying board and lodging for them both, but by November 1786, she was no longer able to pay Lewis, and disappeared after telling him she was going to visit friends in Clapham who would give her money.

Forged Powers of Attorney.

In December 1786, she embarked on a bold plan to obtain money by producing a forged power of attorney. She was able, calling herself Elizabeth Winterbourne, to procure the services of a broker to draw up a document to sell £100 of stock which, she said, belonged to her aged father, William Winterbourne. (Winterbourne was actually a sawyer who had lodged for many years in her father's house at Cannon Row). She also said that her father had injured his foot, was with friends in Clapham and could not come to the City, so wanted her to act for him. The power was made out, she tricked a chairman into signing it for her, and then went to the Bank of England, which, without any trouble, paid her the £100.

Spurred on by this success, she made the error of returning to the broker less than a week later to ask for another power to be made out to sell a further £150 of Winterbourne's stock. This was done, but the broker was struck by the fact that she "who had appeared on 13th to 15th December in the habit of a servant, should so recently return... with her muff and feathers and dress which it seemed she could not afford". By the time she presented herself at the Bank of England, their suspicions had been raised. The real Mr Winterbourne was advised and he identified Sophia Pringle as his landlord's daughter.

A Sensational Trial.

The Bank of England's lawyers took over her case with their usual thoroughness, treating her with respect and with as much compassion as they could, both while she was held in the Poultry Compter before her trial and in Newgate Prison thereafter. They paid for her to enter the "state side" (fee-paying) of Newgate, for a woman to attend her and for wine, and ensured that her mother was able to visit her.

Her trial was sensational, attracting huge crowds wishing to view a young woman who faced such a serious charge. The crowds were so large that a key witness, William Winterbourne, was unable to get into the courtroom when called to give evidence. Sophia Pringle was in a pitiful state throughout the trial, fainting, falling to the ground and being attended by the surgeon who called for her to be given wine and water to try to revive her, but she continued to fall "into a... fit". Her head had to be forced up for witnesses to identify her. Sophia was found guilty and sentenced to death. She pleaded her belly, but was found "Not with Quick Child", that is not pregnant.

An Equally Sensational Execution.

On 27 February 1787, Sophia Pringle was executed before huge crowds, who witnessed her acute distress, fainting, and raving, forcing her to be seated in a chair on the scaffold. Despite this, she is reported to have addressed spectators "in a very animated manner, conjuring them to take warning by her sad example and to pursue the paths of virtue...; and cautioned the youthful part of her own sex against improper and vicious connexions". There was a deal of outrage that such a young woman had been executed while the shadowy figure of her lover had gone unpunished. It was suggested that she had been offered a pardon should she impeach her "accomplice" but she refused, saying his life was dearer to her than her own. One report stated that he was so affected by her execution "that he hath ever since been forcibly chained down to the floor from a Delirium occasioned through agony and despair, in one of the dreary mansions, allotted for the confinement of the insane, in the outskirts of London".

No evidence has been found so far of the offer of a pardon to Pringle if she would denounce her lover. But further feeling of this sort appears in a poem by the Reverend William Cole published two years later. In a lengthy work full of pathos, picturesque language and exaggerated sensitivity, he concludes "Mark well the tale, thence dread example take; Reflect, and weep for poor Sophia's sake: Yet act those tears a mean, a mimic part, Which grace the cheek, but not amend the heart.-'Tis persevering innocence alone, 'Tis wedded love, that makes sweet peace your own. Law, mildly stern, and yet severely wise, spare a mean culprit, but a forger dies".

WILLIAM JOBBINS, 1769-1790.

"Little Doctor", Thief, and Arsonist.

Despite his respectable upbringing, William Jobbins' career ambitions were frustrated and he fell into bad company, leading him to commit an egregious crime.

A Clever Boy and a Good Apprentice.

William Jobbins was born in London in 1769. He lived with his father, John Jobbins, a widower employed as an official at the Custom's House. They resided together on the entire first floor of a "double house" on the corner of Goswell Street and Rotten Row in Clerkenwell.

William appears to have been a bright boy. Aged eleven in 1780, he was admitted as a scholar to St Paul's School. He remained at the school for six years. When he left, aged seventeen, his father obtained an apprenticeship for him at the cost of 50 guineas with a surgeon and apothecary, a Mr. Cowley. This apprenticeship progressed well for two and a half years, William being regarded as a studious young man who took well to anatomical science. However, at the end of two and a half years his father decided to end the apprenticeship. The reason given was Cowley's ill-treatment of his son. He tried unsuccessfully to place him in another apprenticeship with a surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Left to his Own Devices.

For the next two years William lived, studied and worked in his father's house, as "his own master". He had a library there, containing his schoolbooks and a number of medical books. He also practised medicine in a small way, prescribing and preparing remedies for a variety of disorders. He was known around Clerkenwell as "the Little Doctor". Money was in short supply both for obtaining ingredients for making medicines and for the kind of life he wished to lead. He fell into the company of a number of young men with whom he spent much time drinking and pipe smoking in the many public houses of Clerkenwell. His new acquaintances included Edward Lowe, James Flindell (or Flindall) and Timothy Barnard, experienced thieves and receivers of stolen goods.

They went "thieving" as a routine matter, often unsuccessfully. Flindell, aged 20 in 1790, had already been tried in court several times for theft and from September to April served six months in prison for entering a dwelling house with intent to steal. William Jobbins' father, out at work between 9 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon, seems to have had little idea of what his son was up to.

"The Great Aldersgate Street Fire" of 16 May 1790.

Jobbins, with Lowe, Flindell and Barnard, spent a considerable time between about the 12th and 16th of May 1790 at Lowe's house off Golden Lane (where Lowe's wife, Catherine, was involved in their discussions) and in the Sun ale house in Cowcross Street, planning how to set fire to a property. Arson was not their main purpose, but the theft which could be carried out in the ensuing confusion. They would pretend to assist the residents of the property by carrying their goods to safety but would in fact hide them to be removed later. They selected the dwelling, office, and workshop of a Mr. Francis Gilding adjoining the Red Lion Inn, with a court letting into Aldersgate Street. They believed, rightly, that these would be easy buildings to set on fire since they included a hay loft where there had been a recent delivery of clover hay.

During this time of planning, they continued their day-to-day thieving activities, and practised setting fire to other properties to see how it might be done. These attempts, one at a printer in Shoe Lane, another at a coachmaker's in Worship Street, were unsuccessful, presumably as they would have been suspected. In the

very early hours of 16 May, with a glove full of rags and wood soaked in turpentine and a lighted clay pipe as a match, the Aldersgate Street fire was started. It was shockingly successful, spreading to a number of surrounding buildings. The residents were successfully assisted in removing their belongings to "safety", and the plunder in furniture, plate and clothing was enormous.

Escape to the Navy.

Only Flindell was apprehended following the fire as he carried stolen goods in a drawer on his head on his way to hide them in Thomas Barnard's house in Pear Tree Court. Flindell was tried at Old Bailey later in May, and sentenced to seven years transportation. Subsequently he was pardoned on the understanding that he would give evidence against William Jobbins and Edward Lowe. Jobbins and Lowe had made their escape from London, intending to go to sea. Jobbins told his father that he wished to go as an assistant surgeon in the British navy to help with the war effort. He changed his name to George Burne, hoping that his father would not be able to trace him since he was able only to sign on as a "common foremast man". Thanks to the work of an investigator from the Sun Fire Office, encouraged by a substantial reward, Jobbins was apprehended on board the Crescent at Spithead; Lowe, under the name of Edward Price, was similarly apprehended on board the Brunswick.

Trials and Execution.

William Jobbins and Edward Lowe were tried for arson at the October sessions of the Old Bailey in 1790. The evidence of Flindell was crucial and the report of the case lengthy and detailed. Both were sentenced to death. For good measure, they were both also tried for a theft of wet laundered clothing drying in Vineyard Gardens, Cold Bath Fields, which they had carried out in April the same year. They were both found guilty and each given a second death sentence. Flindell had also been involved in this theft, but was not prosecuted for it since again his evidence against Jobbins and Lowe was crucial. In addition, Lowe was charged, together with Timothy Barnard, with theft from the buildings they had set on fire; while Lowe received a third death sentence, Barnard was found not guilty.

Lowe and his wife Catherine were then charged with the theft of a silk cloak on 10 May 1790. In view of the earlier death sentences, the prosecution declined to bring evidence and they were found not guilty.

At the end of the sessions, Jobbins and Lowe were brought up to the court to hear their sentence, and the Recorder delivered a speech of unusual vehemence against their crime. **They were executed on a temporary gallows erected in Aldersgate Street opposite where Gilding's house had stood, having been displayed to the crowd on a special high seat.**

WILLIAM TIDD, c. 1729-1750.

Orphan and Resourceful Thief.

Orphaned at an early age, William Tidd appeared destined for a life of crime. However, although he was a disorderly apprentice and stole from his master, he did not embark on more serious criminal activities until he was 14 or 15, having spent months trying to support himself by other means. He soon acquired a reputation as a dissolute and corrupting character, who convinced many others to steal alongside him. Although he proved much cleverer than his collaborators in avoiding arrest, he almost inevitably ended his life on the gallows.

Early Life.

William Tidd was born in Deptford around 1729 and was orphaned while still an infant. Due to this misfortune he never received a formal education and according to the Ordinary "the seeds of wickedness grew up in him very early, and he was always looked upon as an unlucky sad fellow, always given to profaneness and debauchery". He managed to gain an apprenticeship with a barber in Southwark, but he was punished for stealing from his master; and discontented with this, he ran away at the age of 13 or 14. He was persuaded to return to by some friends but he only stayed for another week or ten days. He stayed out late with his companions and sneaking back into the house through a skylight. When he was caught doing this and punished, he ran away again.

Vagrancy and Early Crime.

After leaving his apprenticeship, Tidd spent several months begging and surviving on what "his wits procured for him", in Southwark and St. George's Fields. When his destitution became too much for him he once again tried to return to his master, but he had become bankrupt in the interim. Tidd then fell into company and committed "several little thieveries". Fearing arrest, after one robbery he found a position on a ship and fled to Newfoundland, where he stayed for about a year. On his return to England he squandered what little money he had earned in America on alcohol and prostitutes, once again falling into destitution.

In 1744, at the age of 15, he was committed to Bridewell for attempting to pick a merchant's pocket in the streets, and "appearing to be a loose disorderly person having no visible way of living". He stayed in this house of correction for at least three months.

He soon acquired a reputation for leading others into crime. A former shipmate, James Johnson, blamed Tidd for encouraging him to rob. Following his conviction for theft and capital sentence, Johnson told the Ordinary that on the 25th of June 1749, being drunk, "he met Tidd and two others in Whitechapel" where they were drinking. They went on to rob at 1 or 2 in the morning Henry Aplén, a man driving sheep, the crime for which he and Valentine Godwin were condemned. Also condemned and executed for this offence was 17 year old Philip Lacy, but Tidd, who had initiated the robbery, managed to avoid arrest.

First Death Sentence.

He did not remain free for long. In October 1749 he was apprehended and tried for a burglary committed with Mathew Gilbert, not yet taken. The evidence was insufficient and he was acquitted, though according to the Ordinary he subsequently confessed to the crime. At the same sessions he was also tried for an assault on Henry Aplén and, although the Proceedings do not directly report it, he was convicted and sentenced to death. Tidd, however, contracted "the itch and vermin" which led to him gaining a full pardon.

"One Continued Scene of Robbery and Burglary"

According to the Ordinary, Tidd "returned to a lewd woman, with whom he had before kept company", and as soon as he recovered he "went to his old trade". However, fearing arrest he once again found employment on board a ship, and stayed away from London until he thought it was safe to return. From that point, the Ordinary reports, his life became "one continued scene of robbery and burglary".

After his return to land, and together with Anthony Byrne [or Bourne], Randolph Branch, Richard Pett and James Webster, he broke into the house of Mary Ormand, a widow, and stole over £8 worth of goods on July 25, 1750. Although she advertised the lost goods the robbers were not detected until November, when one of them, a boy, turned king's evidence. When Tidd appeared before Justice Henry Fielding, he reportedly confessed to stealing the goods but not to breaking open the house, and he damned Fielding "and said he was as big a thief as himself". At the trial, Tidd's sole defence was to say "I know nothing of it".

Execution.

Both Tidd and Byrne were convicted and sentenced to death. During his time in Newgate he refused to confess any other crimes, being resolved, as the Ordinary reported, "to die as he had lived, a hardened, wicked wretch, whom no warnings or admonitions could prevail with". In the week before his death Tidd called for a shopkeeper whom he had robbed in Newington Butts and demanded that he pay Tidd so that he could find out where his goods had been hidden. The shopkeeper refused this deal as he had no guarantee that Tidd could be trusted, while Tidd would receive certain cash that could be spent in prison.

Tidd was executed on the 31st of December 1750 at the age of 21.

The Ordinary reported that while the other convicts "behaved very decently", Tidd "shewed some levity, unbecoming a person so near his last moments".

His body was taken away to be anatomized by the surgeons. The execution was accompanied by some disorder: a cart holding spectators was so overloaded it collapsed, several spectators were injured, and a boy who got too near the gallows was trampled to death by horses.

One of the other convicts executed that day was John Newcome, also 21 and what the Ordinary described as a persistent thief. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Tidd was a confederate in the robbery for which Newcome was condemned, Tidd having fired a pistol at the victim.

WILLIAM UDALL, 1716-1739.

From Watchmaker to Highwayman.

Born to reputable parents and with a good upbringing, William Udall's descent into crime in 1738-39 was perceived as a classic tale of the consequences of sin.

Early Life

William Udall was born in 1716 in the parish of Clerkenwell, the centre of watch making in London. According to the Ordinary of Newgate, his parents were reputable, and he received a good education, being taught "to read, write and cast Accompts". He was sent to the Charterhouse school and received further education at "Mr. Groves in Red-lion-street". When Udall was "of age" he was apprenticed to a "Watch maker in Leadenhall street", described as "eminent", whom he, at least initially, served well and honestly.

Ill Company and Debt.

The Ordinary describes Udall as having "a very good Hand in his Business", with aspirations eventually to set up his own watch making business. What stopped Udall pursuing this ambition was the apparent "ill company" he kept. Udall's group of friends led him to become "much addicted to gaming, drinking and other Vices".

Apparently the final straw was his rejection by the woman he was courting. Set to marry a "Woman of Credit", she refused to marry him on discovering the company he kept. She found out that Udall had

associated with Thomas Raby, a highwayman. Raby had recently been executed, and Udall's potential wife "suspected him of following the same Courses".

After this incident Udall apparently took up residence in a "bawdy house" (brothel) in Cheapside. During this time Udall lodged with one prostitute in particular, identified only as P - g Y - g. He was subsequently to blame her and her associates for his misfortunes. Udall spent his money extravagantly. The Ordinary notes that he "let fly his Money after a strange Manner". He spent all the money his father had given him and quickly fell in debt to the sum of four hundred pounds, and was committed to the Marshalsea Prison. But with Thomas Mann, he managed to escape.

On the 6th of August 1738 Udall and a companion were out riding, when they stopped at the house of William Young. Udall said he had "he had been riding hard" and desired that Young give him a "Bit of Diaculum Plaister", which he did and Udall paid him 3d for it. Soon after they left, however, Young noticed his hat was missing and he quickly ran down the road and caught Udall. Young found his hat hidden under Udall's coat. According to Young, Udall "begged I would use him civilly", but Young took him to a constable who took him before a Justice, Captain Margets, who committed Udall to Newgate.

First Trials

On 6 September 1738 Udall was tried at the Old Bailey for stealing Young's hat, worth ten shillings. Udall did not deny the crime, but pointed to the fact that he had served as king's evidence in another trial in that sessions. The jury accordingly committed "pious perjury" and found him guilty of stealing goods to the value of ten pence only, making the crime petty larceny. He was sentenced to be whipped. The other trial in which Udall gave evidence was that of John Slade and Henry Fluellin, who were tried for the highway robbery of Henry Davies.

From Udall's testimony we find further evidence about his deviant behaviour.

Protected by his status as king's evidence, Udall actually states he was directly involved with, and was indeed a primary agent, in this crime. Udall testified that he and the other two men met at the Coach and Horse, Temple Bar, where they stayed for a while before they "agreed to go a Street Robbing".

Apparently the group got as far as Charring Cross without finding anyone to rob. They then returned to the parish of St Clements Danes, to a place called the "dead wall", part of the St Clements Danes alms house. Here Udall states they ran into Davies, whom he and Slade held against the wall with a pistol while Fluellin robbed him. The group then fled through the churchyard to a public house on Butchers Row where they shared out the money. The next day Fluellin and Udall pawned the hat they had stolen from Davies on Aldersgate Street. Udall's story was confirmed by Henry Atkins, who had arranged for Udall to give evidence to Captain Margets before the trial. After learning of the crime, Atkins went to the pawnbrokers on Aldersgate Street and found the stolen hat. In his defence, Fluellin called Udall "a lewd Rascal; he lives upon the Spoils of lewd Women". He went so far as to say that Udall only gave evidence to escape the punishment for his own crimes. When Slade and Fluellin brought their character witnesses, Udall gave some additional information. John Cook claimed that Slade was a good man and that his sister was married to harpsichord-maker. Udall on the other hand alleged that Slade's sister actually kept a bawdy house at the sign of the Barley-Mow. Udall went further saying "I have been at it several Times". Despite Udall's testimony Slade was acquitted whilst Fluellin was found guilty and sentenced to death.

A Second Trial and the Tables Turned.

Udall did not stay away from the Old Bailey for long. In February 1739 he was tried for robbing William Thorn on 26 December 1738 on the king's highway of "a Silver Watch with a Tortoise-shell Case, value 40s. a Hat, value 2s. a Brass Seal, value 2d. and four Shillings in Money".

Thorn testified that he was riding from Holloway to Highgate late at night on 26 December 1739. Thorn could not see anything that night and could not swear that Udall was the man who robbed him. However he could confirm that the watch that had been recovered from a pawnbroker on Shoe Lane was his. The main evidence against Udall once again came from a man who had turned king's evidence, this time Thomas Mann. Mann stated that the day after Christmas he and Udall rode to "the Castle" in Holloway, and on the way they stopped at a house for pork steaks. On their return journey at about seven or eight in the evening they robbed a man, taking their loot back to Udall's lodgings at White Lyon Court. Mann claimed that Udall threatened to kill Thorn to prevent him being able to identify his attackers, until Mann stopped him. The next day they pawned the items on Shoe Lane, dividing the money between them.

How and why Udall and Mann were caught is not entirely clear, but Richard Wernel, apparently a constable, was the man responsible. Mann quickly asked to turn king's evidence. During the trial it emerged that Udall also tried to turn king's evidence, to avoid being hanged for what was a capital offence. According to Wernel, Udall "wanted to have been made an Evidence against Mann, and said he could put three or four more into his Information. He did not deny the Fact at all". According to Wernel the request was denied, "as

he had been admitted an Evidence several Times before". Udall's only defence was to argue that Mann only gave evidence "for the Sake of the Reward, that he may clear himself of his Debt", the debt for which he had been imprisoned at the Marshalsea.

Udall was indicted a second time for robbing John Bradford on the same night. Bradford was riding from London to Finchley when he was assaulted by two men near Upper Holloway. Bradford was attacked savagely by the two men who took from him "a Hat, value 1s. a Drugget Coat, value 5s. and five Shillings in Money". He identified Udall as one of his attackers. Mann confirmed this story and once again argued that he was a restraining influence upon Udall, preventing Udall from killing the man, only to have Udall threaten his life too. Mann also found out during the trial that Udall had sold the items for more money than first reported, and that "he cheated me of a Shilling". Udall was found guilty of both indictments and sentenced to death.

The Ordinary of Newgate and His Execution.

Despite condemning Udall's earlier life, the second half of the Ordinary's Account reveals another side to him. The Ordinary, James Guthrie, saw Udall in the chapel at Newgate frequently, and though he occasionally found Udall to be mischievous, Guthrie was confident that he was earnest enough to be saved.

But no one was more confident of his salvation than Udall himself who "declared his Hopes of Salvation thro' Christ, that he repented of a wicked and profligate Life, and died in Peace with all Mankind".

Ordinary's Accounts published around this time frequently include appendices with additional material concerning the condemned, and Udall provided Guthrie with three writings which he wanted to have printed after his death in order to preserve his reputation.

The first was Udall's own account of his life, in which he provided more details concerning the antics recorded by the Ordinary. Although much of this echoed what the Ordinary had already reported, Udall gave more attention to the effect his debts had upon his life.

The second item was a letter addressed to the woman he cohabited with at the bawdy house. This recounts Udall's own self conviction that by confessing his sins he would gain salvation. He implores this woman to give up her own ill-life so that she can join him in heaven one day.

The final item purportedly written by Udall was a short poem addressed to his mother. The poem reaffirms that Udall's criminal activities were caused by the bad company he kept. Once again it implies that Udall will be saved by his confessions.

Udall was executed at Tyburn on 14 March 1739.

MARY TALBOT, c. 1766-1791.

First Transported Female Letter Writer.

Driven to steal by financial hardship, Mary Talbot was forced to leave her family behind when she was transported to Australia on the second attempt.

Early Days in London.

Mary Talbot came to London from her native Ireland and married a London stone-mason. He suffered a severe injury at work, was taken to hospital and was unable to take up his trade again for a considerable while. By this point, Mary and her husband had at least one child.

In order to support the family, Mary took to theft. In February 1788, then aged about 22, she was apprehended for the theft of seven yards of printed cotton, valued at seventeen shillings, from a linen draper's shop in King Street, Covent Garden. She entered the shop carrying a baby and bought a small piece of Irish linen for two and a half pence, but was seen leaving with a much larger piece of cotton, concealed between her arm and the baby. At her trial for theft at the Old Bailey sessions in February 1788, she attempted to excuse her behaviour by saying that she had been drunk when the theft happened and did not know what she was carrying out of the shop. The witnesses, however, insisted that she was perfectly sober. Convicted of the crime, she was sentenced to seven years transportation to New South Wales.

Escape from the Convict Ship.

In the latter part of 1788 a group of transportees, including Mary Talbot, were taken from Newgate to the convict ship Lady Juliana, which was being made ready for the voyage on the Thames at Gravesend. This ship was to form part of the Second Fleet to sail for New South Wales. Mary became part of an escape plot devised by the friends and families of some of the female prisoners on board. On the night before the ship was due to sail, four women, including Mary and her baby William, went over the stern into a small boat, effecting the only successful escape from the ship.

Sentenced to Death.

Mary made her way home after her escape, but in January 1790 she was arrested in High Street, Bloomsbury, for "being at large ... without lawful cause". She was tried at the Old Bailey in January 1790 for returning from transportation and was sentenced to death. She pleaded her only reason for escaping was that she found it

impossible to breast-feed her baby on the ship because of the lack of sustenance for herself. Nonetheless, she was found guilty. When she was examined by the jury of matrons, she was also found to be pregnant. Consequently, her execution was delayed until she gave birth, which she did later that year in Newgate.

Transportation to New South Wales.

At the Old Bailey in October 1790 she received a conditional pardon and her sentence was commuted from death to transportation for life to New South Wales. To her distress, she was ordered to leave without any of her children, even though she claimed she preferred death to living without them. She was taken on board the convict ship *Mary Ann*, unable to either say goodbye to her husband or to receive any money or items from him for her voyage. The ship left Portsmouth on 23 February 1791, arriving in Sydney on 9 June.

Letter to a "Benevolent Friend"

During her troubled times between 1788 and 1791, Mary was in touch with an unnamed "gentleman" in England who tried unsuccessfully to get the Talbot family transported together to America. On her voyage on the *Mary Ann*, she wrote to him (or had written for her) a long and moving letter. In it, she described the stormy voyage, the "crossing the line" ceremonies to mark the ship's journey past the equator, and the conditions on board ship. She begged him to continue trying to obtain a pardon for her which would allow her to be with her family once more.

She asked him to tell her husband she had written; she hoped he was taking good care of the children. She asked "the gentleman" to respond by sending a letter by any ship's captain sailing for "Botany Bay". Her letter was posted on 29 March 1791 at St. Jago, in the Cape Verde Islands, the only port of call for the *Mary Ann*. It was directed to Dublin, where it was published on the first of November in the *Dublin Chronicle*. It is claimed that Mary Talbot was the first woman convict letter-writer whose identity is known.

A Short Life Ends

Although in her letter to her benefactor, Talbot said that on board ship she was in "much better health" than she had been for a long time, she died only seven weeks after her arrival in Sydney. Her burial took place on 28 August 1791.

DAVID HART, d. 1783.

Persistent Thief and Possible Ringleader of a Convicts' Mutiny

Background

Little is known about David Hart's early life, although a newspaper report in 1783 claimed he 'seemed near 40', suggesting he may have been born in the 1730s or 1740s. This report also indicates he was Jewish, so he may have been brought up in one of London's Jewish Communities. One witness of his good character stated he was a 'dealer' in clothes and watches, whilst other trial witnesses described him as having grey eyes and 'very little hair on his eyebrows'.

At some point he married a certain Francis or Fanny, who herself was charged several times with thefts of various articles of clothing and was eventually transported overseas for receiving stolen shoes. In nearly all cases Fanny was tried alongside accomplices with distinctly Jewish names, reinforcing the likelihood of her and David's inclusion in a Jewish community.

The first possible record of David Hart is in the sessions papers for the 11th of September 1771 which indicate he was indicted in London for an unknown crime, but was acquitted when no one appeared to prosecute. He appeared again in a similar situation on the 1st of January 1773, noted in a list with others as 'discharged by proclamation' and 'bills not found'.

Old Bailey Appearance.

The Old Bailey Proceedings for the 13th September 1780 record Hart's trial for a theft committed on the 1st July of that year. He was indicted for 'stealing two leather saddle bags', containing a collection of clothes and hosiery that was valued at over 38 shillings.

Hart had taken the saddlebags after they had been unloaded from a coach parked outside an inn. Realising what was happening, the coachman grabbed hold of the bags and called for help until Hart was secured by the inn staff. Despite good character references, including the woman who informs us of his occupation, Hart was found guilty sentenced to imprisonment for six months. We later learn he was imprisoned in the Wood Street-Compter.

Two Lucky Escapes.

Following his discharge, David Hart was indicted two further times within the space of eighteen months, but was not found guilty in both cases. On the 9th January 1782 he was tried for the theft of cloth and handkerchiefs valued over 63 shillings, although no details of the actual crime were recorded in the Proceedings. Hart was acquitted. Just over a year later Hart was tried alongside two others for the theft of a trunk containing bills in excess of 65 pounds, which was stolen whilst being unloaded from a coach. Hart's role in the crime is ambiguous; aside from the indictment against him there is no mention of his involvement, and

after the witnesses were examined the court declared there was 'no sufficient evidence' to convict him. His accomplices Charles Stokes and Phillip Gibson were found guilty, whilst Hart was acquitted.

Third Time Unlucky.

Later that year, however, David Hart was successfully tried and convicted. This time the stolen goods were again a collection of various clothes and stockings valued over £14. It appears that Hart pretended to be a certain Mr Fosgate, a local merchant, and took the goods from a fourteen year old boy, Richard Nightingale, who had been ordered to deliver the bundle to Fosgate's wife. Nightingale testified against Hart in court, and claimed to have recognised him due to him having 'very little hair on his eyebrows.' Despite Hart's pleas that he was 'innocent as the child unborn' he was convicted and sentenced to transportation for seven years.

Mutiny on the 'Swift'

The story of David Hart as a common criminal appearing intermittently at the Old Bailey changes significantly the next time he appeared in the docks. This time the indictment was not for larceny but for 'returning from transportation, and being found at large' at Ashbourne, Kent. So began a remarkable case in which twenty four other escaped convicts were also tried, separately, but reported in the same edition of the Proceedings.

After serving time in prison from April 1783, Hart had been put on board the 'Swift' at Blackwall on the 16th of August, which the press reported was bound for Canada to become part of the establishment of a new colony.

Since 1776 with the onset of the American Revolutionary War, transportation to the American colonies was forced to a halt. Most prisoners sentenced to transportation thus had to be detained on hulks (ships used as floating prisons) on the Thames. The strain on the system quickly became intolerable and attempts were soon made to transport criminals elsewhere, such as the western shores of Africa, where living conditions were extremely harsh.

The prisoners delivered onto the 'Swift' had previously been held in Newgate with a convict who had returned early from being transported to West Africa, and it is believed in recounting his story that fear spread through the men that they, too, were being delivered to such a place. In actual fact the Swift was heading to Baltimore, in America, where the captain planned to attempt to deliver one last batch of criminals to America. Unaware this was the case, and fearing they would be sent to Africa, the prisoners panicked.

On the 28th of April several of the prisoners wrote to the captain demanding that he remove their chains or they would do it themselves. The captain refused and the men carried out their threat but were restrained below deck. The next day the captain allowed the prisoners on deck in small groups to get some air. According to the testimony of the ship's mate, once the ship left the Thames estuary on the 29th, 'the prisoner and the rest of them...made what they called a rush', armed themselves and secured the captain and all the ship's crew. That same day, forty eight of the prisoners boarded rowing boats and made it to the shore. The escaped prisoners split up, some making it as far as London, but most were recaptured within a week. Hart was picked up on the 31st April at Ashbourne, along with one other escapee, by a local butcher who had his suspicions that 'he and his mate were bad'. In his trial Hart claimed he had been forced into taking part in the mutiny by the other prisoners, who said 'they would fire if I did not come', and that he had done "no mischief to anybody".

Hart's was sentenced, along with the others, to be 'respectively hanged by the necks until you are dead'. However, of the twenty four convicted, eighteen were pardoned on condition of transportation. Nevertheless, six, including David Hart, did not receive mercy. Despite the declaration of another escapee, Charles Keeling, that Hart was not one of the ringleaders, it appeared the court thought otherwise. The ship's mate described the extent of each of the escapees' participation and, in the case of Hart, declared that the defendant had had a 'musket or blunderbuss in his hand'.

Execution.

On the 22nd of April Hart and the other seven convicts were taken by cart to Tyburn to be hanged. Being Jewish Hart and Abraham Hymans were carried in a separate cart to the others and 'attended by a priest of their own religion'. The London Chronicle reported that the men 'behaved well' and after being turned off, were cut down by two Jews who took care to ensure they were properly taken away for burial.

EDWARD HILL. c.1730-1749.

Wayward Apprentice turned Petty Criminal.

Possibly influenced by other criminals in his family, Edward Hill misbehaved during his apprenticeship. In a classic example of sliding down the slippery slope, he became a convicted criminal and was transported.

Background and Early Life.

We do not know a lot about the early life of Edward Hill but, judging from the fact that he was apprenticed in 1744, he was born in the late 1720s, or early 1730s at the latest. At that time he lived in Baldwin Gardens in the county of Middlesex with his father (also Edward Hill), a tailor, and his father's wife, Edward's mother or

step-mother. He may also have had a brother, John Hill, tried with his father Edward for highway robbery, in December 1744. Edward was acquitted, but John was convicted, and executed on the 24th of December. Edward (the father) was identified in the trial as a tailor living in Baldwin Gardens.

Apprenticeship.

Edward was bound as an apprentice to John Sewell, a 'shagreen case maker', by the permission of his father on 17 September 1744 for a term of 7 years. He apparently did not take his apprenticeship seriously and was constantly in trouble. Hill was frequently drunk and often gambled by playing cards, and this got him into trouble locally. Sewell claimed he repeatedly had to seek out Hill on these occasions and 'with Gentle words rebuke him'. Sewell appears not to have reported this behaviour until October 1747 when he approached the local justice of the peace to request that the apprenticeship be terminated.

On 12 October 1747, Edward Hill and his father were ordered to attend court the following Friday, to settle the matter.

His father was presumably ordered to go with him because he was under 18 as he was in the middle of an apprenticeship. Sewell told the justices that Hill frequently 'got Drunk and Absconded...Assaulted & Beat your Petitioner [John Sewell] & Threatened to Kill him'. After the final assault Hill was committed to New Prison for a short time before his formal dismissal.

Criminal Record.

Edward's gambling led him to begin stealing goods from Sewell in order to fund his habit. This was one of the reasons Sewell sought to end the apprenticeship, and his discharge Hill continued down the slippery slope into a life of crime. He appears in the records of the Old Bailey in 1749 on very similar theft charges, though with different outcomes:

On 5 April 1749, he was 'indicted for stealing one pewter quart tankard' from Thomas Roshill on the 9th of March. No testimony is recorded in this case (apparently the prosecutor did not appear) and he was acquitted. On 6 September, he was again 'indicted, for stealing one pewter quart pot', this time from James Close in August. At this trial the jury found him guilty of a lesser offence (petty larceny, of goods to the value of 10d.) and he was sentenced to be whipped.

Finally on 11 October he was 'indicted for stealing one pewter pint-pot, value 9d.' from George Tessel on 6 October, and found guilty. On this occasion he was sentenced to be transported for 7 years. It can only be assumed that this more severe sentence was the result of his previous criminal record.

There is no documentation of Edward Hill's actual transportation, other than the sentencing, and he does not appear again in the records, so it is unclear whether he was transported, and if so, whether he ever returned to England.

GEORGE BARRINGTON, 1755-1804.

The Life of a Pickpocket.

Early Life in Ireland

George Barrington (or Waldron), one of London's most notorious pickpockets, was born in Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland, on 14 May 1755. His family name was Waldron, his father was an artisan silversmith, and his mother (née Naish or Naith) a mantua maker. His natural father may have been a British army officer surnamed Barrington. Apprenticed to an apothecary, he showed sufficient aptitude for learning that he was provided with an education at Dublin Blue Coat School. At the age of sixteen, he absconded after stabbing a fellow pupil in a fight, joined a band of travelling players and learned the art of pickpocketing, at which he became highly skilled.

A Genteel Thief.

When his thieving partner was arrested in 1773, George fled to England, taking the name of Barrington. He was able to persuade well-placed people to introduce him in London society as an actor and a gentleman of Anglo-Irish descent (though sometimes he claimed to be a surgeon). He soon became notorious for his thieving activities amongst members of genteel society in churches, theatres, and on racecourses. His activities were frequently reported in newspapers; which detailed thefts of great value, that nevertheless failed to result in an arrest, or prosecution, normally because the victims did not press the matter.

In December 1776, he was arrested for the theft of a pair of silver studs, a silk purse, half a guinea and three shillings and six pence from a widow, Ann Dudman, in the pit of Drury Lane Playhouse. After being held in Tothill Fields Bridewell, he was tried for larceny at the Old Bailey on 15 January 1777, found guilty and sentenced to three years hard labour on the hulks at Woolwich. In this case, despite being described as "the genteel thief ever remembered seen at the Old Bailey", a witness stated he lived in lodgings in the markedly un-genteel neighbourhood of Charing Cross.

Barrington served less than a year on the hulks, receiving a pardon as a first offender at the end of 1777. In April 1778, he was again on trial at the Old Bailey, charged with pickpocketing a watch, £3, a silk

watch string and a glass seal on 15 March 1778 from Elizabeth Ironmonger in a crowded church where a special sermon was being delivered. Found guilty of theft (but not of pickpocketing) he was sentenced to five years hard labour on the hulks. At this trial he made the first of what would become his characteristically long, florid and emotional speeches of the sort the Old Bailey reporters and the press rejoiced in and which would set the tone for his later writing and publication ventures.

Having served part of this sentence, he appealed for remission claiming that it was too severe and had made him extremely ill. This was granted in April 1782 on condition that he exiled himself from England for life. He was subsequently detected in his normal activities in Ireland and Scotland, and in December 1782 was apprehended in London for a theft in Drury Lane Theatre. He was brought before the court at the Old Bailey for contravening the terms of his pardon.

In another inventive speech, he stated that he did not realise his exile was for life and that he was now so ill he could not go back to the hulks. He was sent to Newgate Prison to complete his original five year sentence.

Nonetheless, a year later, in February 1784, Barrington again appeared before the Old Bailey for pickpocketing a silk purse and a considerable sum of money in Covent Garden Opera tea-room. This was followed by appearances in February 1785, charged with grand larceny of a watch, chain and seals in Drury Lane Theatre, and in December 1789, for pickpocketing a purse and a great deal of money in the same location. In all these cases he was found not guilty, either from want of identification, lack of direct evidence, or as a result of a lengthy delay resulting in key witnesses becoming unavailable. He was also represented by well-known counsel, who successfully challenged the jury, and set the scene for Barrington to perfect his increasingly sophisticated court-room speech-making.

His last appearance at the Old Bailey was in September 1790, charged with the theft of a watch and associated items from Henry Hare Townsend Esq. at Enfield Racecourse. Despite the attempts of William Garrow, the noted defence counsel, and another very long and flowery speech begging not to be executed (he was not in danger of this since the crime for which he was tried was not capital), he was found guilty and sentenced to transportation for seven years to New South Wales.

New Opportunities in Australia.

In March 1791 George Barrington left for Australia on the convict ship *Active*, arriving in Sydney in September of the same year. Although absent from England, his notoriety continued. In a popular ballad, *The Jolly Lad's Trip to Botany Bay*, in which convicts treat transportation as a lark, the convicts say that the first thing they will do when they get to Australia is appoint a king, "for who knows but it may be the noted Barrington". Despite the stories growing up around him, crediting him (probably falsely) with many publications, letters, journals and theatre pieces, it is clear that transportation dramatically changed his life. In 1792 he received a conditional pardon. He was appointed Superintendent of Convicts at Paramatta, and purchased large amounts of land at Paramatta and near the Hawkesbury River. By 1794 was also Chief Constable at Paramatta. He received a full pardon in 1796. In 1801, he retired to one of his Paramatta farms (because of ill-health) with a pension, and died on 27 December 1804.

JOHN SIMPSON. c. 1718-1754.

Pauper Transported for Shoplifting.

John Simpson appears guilty of only one crime in the London Lives records, but the impact of that crime extended beyond his personal misfortune. Following his transportation, his wife and young daughter were left to negotiate the poor law authorities by themselves.

Service and Marriage.

John Simpson lived as a servant for Colonel Mading, lodging in his master's stables at Ham Yard in the parish of St. George Hanover Square, earning four pounds a year in his first year and later six pounds a year for his service.

He left his position in approximately 1748, before marrying Margaret on 11h December 1750 at the Fleet, London. Margaret, who may well have been older than John, was the widow of Thomas Harrison, whom she had married in Dublin around 1734. She had one child with Harrison, Mark, who was born around 1745. It is unclear what profession John took up after his marriage. But Margaret and John moved to the parish of St Clement Danes, where Margaret had a daughter, Ann. On the 30th of March 1752, presumably following and applications for relief, however, they were removed to St. George Hanover Square as their parish of settlement.

Trial for Shoplifting.

On the 11th of January 1753, John was tried at the Old Bailey, together with James Ellice, for stealing five silk handkerchiefs, valued at fifteen shillings from the shop of John Gillingham, just 5 days before the trial.

Gillingham stated that Simpson and Ellice posed as customers, asking to view several different patterned handkerchiefs and bartering over prices. He claimed that John hid the parcel containing the stolen

handkerchiefs in his coat, but when Ellice was accused and searched, John flung them on the counter. Simpson stated that he had entered the shop with the intention of buying goods. Although the goods were worth fifteen shillings, the jury, engaging in "pious perjury", and found the two guilty of shoplifting to the value of only 4s 10d. This meant that they were transported, rather than hanged.

Transported'

John was transported on the ship The Thames to America in April 1753. Margaret, who had moved back to St Clement Danes, was subjected to another settlement examination in June 1754, in which she is described as "the wife of John Simpson (gone from her)". This led to Margaret and her daughter Ann, now twenty months, being removed back to the parish of St George Hanover Square.

MARY PARTRIDGE. b. 1764.

Servant Girl and Thief.

After working as a servant and receiving some parish relief, Mary Partridge became involved in crime, perhaps as a result of her job as a servant to a pawnbroker.

Early Life.

There is no definitive birth date for Mary Partridge. However, as she was 26 years old when examined by the parish officers of St. Clement Danes in 1790, she was born around 1764. The information given in her settlement examination indicates that she was a servant from the age of 15, but no other details of her early life are available.

Work as a Servant

From the age of 15 to 22 Mary was a servant in New Street Covent Garden for 7 years, in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields. She worked for a Mr. Calvert's earning a substantial wage of £8. 12s per annum, before leaving his service. She did not explain the reason for her departure.

Mary swore under oath that she then did not work as a 'yearly hired servant' for the next 4 years before applying to the parish for relief. But when she testified against William Warton for stealing silk stockings in 1787, she was identified as a servant to Mr. Hird of Oxford street who was a pawn broker. Mary testified that the prisoner had pawned two, stolen, silk stockings with her at Hird's pawn shop.

Parish Relief and the Workhouse.

Mary applied for relief on the 6th May 1790 in the parish of St Clement Danes but was denied settlement and instead ordered to be removed to St Martin's in the Fields, where she had previously been employed. She was admitted into the St Martin's Workhouse that same day, staying for just over two weeks before she was discharged from the workhouse on the 22nd May 1790.

The Old Bailey.

At the February 1791 sessions of the Old Bailey, Mary was indicted for privately stealing a silver watch worth 20 shillings, having been held for some time at Bridewell awaiting her trial. Her attempts at obtaining parish assistance suggest that she may have committed the theft out of necessity. At this time Mary was in a relationship with a Joseph Smallwood, a journeyman, who was tried alongside her for receiving the stolen goods. Whilst living with Smallwood, Mary adopted the name of Mary Smallwood, although they were 'not married but live together as man and wife'. It was later alleged by the Evening Mail that the couple had been living together for two years.

The accusation of theft was brought forward by Martin Everet who testified that having left The King's Bench, after two or three pots of beer, he was invited home by a woman on a street corner before being pushed by a man, to then find his watch to be gone. There were varying accounts of the theft, with Hannah Harrington testifying that Mary had confessed she stole the watch from a foreigner's waist coat.

There is an indication that the theft may have been linked to participation in gangs. Harrington testified that she had an accident with her eye because two 'young fellows came behind me, and said, that is she that is against Smallwood; and they knocked me down on one side and on the other'. She further claimed that two of the witnesses brought in to give character references to Partridge and Smallwood were Partridge's sister and brother-in-law, hinting they had been brought in to give false testimony in order to secure the prisoners' freedom. Although in 1787 Mary had given evidence in the case of William Warton, as she was pawned two pair of cotton stockings... for 4 shillings,' Mary may well have been involved in selling and trading of illegal goods well before she was indicted herself.

In her defence, Mary proclaimed her innocence, and called several character references. Elizabeth Camplin stated that Hannah Harrington was 'seeking revenge' and that she had 'trusted [Mary] with a great deal of her property'. George Tellick similarly testified that he 'had never heard that she wronged a person of anything'. Nonetheless, both Mary and John were found guilty.

Transportation.

Mary was sentenced to 7 years transportation and John to 14 years. On the 28th May 1791 Mary and John were transported to Australia on the Pitt India Man. Along with 404 other prisoners, Mary was bound for New South Wales in Australia. She does not appear in the records after this date so it is not clear whether she returned after her 7 year sentence.

PETER DE LAFONTAINE. 1746-1762.

Forger who Returned from Transportation.

On 5 December 1746 Peter De Lafontaine was accused of forging and counterfeiting a promissory note, and of passing or "uttering" the same.

Early Life.

According to The Tyburn Chronicle, Peter De Lafontaine was born into an ancient French family and was descended from the Marquis de la Fontaine. At the age of about twenty he joined the French army. He later became a captain in the Dutch army, and spent some time in Surinam, before moving to England.

His Crime.

To obtain his release from imprisonment for a debt, he passed a promissory note for £220 from John Baptista Zannier a "Purveyor to the British Forces abroad", payable to a Mrs Mary Legrand, to his creditor. He claimed it had been given to him and endorsed by Mary Legrand, described as a French gentlewoman and widow. Several witnesses came forward to claim that it was not Zannier's handwriting. At De Lafontaine's trial for forgery, a witness for the defendant, Benjamin Stephens, gave contradictory and dubious evidence and was "very severely censured by the court, as he appeared to be notoriously perjured". Mary Legrand did not appear, even though the trial had been postponed from October to allow for her return from France.

Nonetheless, De Lafontaine was found guilty of feloniously uttering the note, knowing it to be stolen, though not of the forgery itself. This was still a capital offence, and he was sentenced to death. The sentence was then commuted to transportation for life. However, he was still in Newgate Prison nearly two years later. His wife Ann petitioned for a free pardon, claiming her husband was "very much mis Represented". She also asked that he be allowed to transport himself, or to be admitted a "private Centinel in his Majesty's Army".

Transportation and Return.

The Tyburn Chronicle states that he remained in Newgate for four years. It is not clear when and to where De Lafontaine was subsequently transported. However, he had returned to London by 1762, when he was committed to Clerkenwell Bridewell for "feloniously returning from Transportation and being found at large in his Majesty's European Dominions after being Transported for the Term of his natural Life". His case was referred to Sir William Moreton, the Recorder of London, but it is not known what became of him thereafter. He was not tried at the Old Bailey for returning from transportation, possibly for the same reasons which had delayed the imposition of his initial sentence.

ROBERT ABEL, b. 1767.

Innocent Boy Transported.

Robert Abel was probably born on the 4th of March 1767 in the parish of St. Stephen Coleman Street to Edward and Jane Abel.

The Trial.

Robert Abel and William Rellions were tried for highway robbery at the Old Bailey in September 1784. William Rough, a labourer, testified that he was attacked on a Sunday evening at 10:15 in Stepney Fields by two men with a pistol, who demanded "your money or your life!" When he told his attackers he had no money, they knocked him down and "mauled me on my head and shoulders". They then took five shillings and one penny from his pocket and fled, threatening to blow his brains out if he followed them.

Rellions was apprehended the following Wednesday by William Selby, John Olive, and Joseph Levy (possibly Bow Street Runners), "having some information", but Abel was not arrested until about six weeks later. Nonetheless, Rough testified they were the two men who had robbed him. While Rellions confessed that "I am the lad that did the robbery", he exonerated Abel, claiming that Rough "has sworn to this lad wrongfully". In his defence Abel testified "I know no more of the robbery than the child unborn", but when asked if he had any friends to provide a character witness, he said "I have nobody living but a brother, and he is just come home from sea". Instructed by the judge, Baron Eyre, to ignore Rellion's testimony as it could be accorded no validity in law, the jury convicted both defendants, and Eyre sentenced both to death.

A Stay of Execution.

Both were due to be executed on Wednesday 17 November. Two days before, the Recorder of London, James Adair, requested a stay of execution as there appeared to be doubt as to Abel's guilt, as it "depended wholly on the recollection of the prosecutor, at some distance of time, under circumstances not very favourable to recollection, and confirmed by no circumstances whatever on the trial".

Midford Young, an undersheriff, reported that Rellions claimed William Collop, not Abel, had been concerned with him in the robbery, a fact confirmed by Collop.

After a strict enquiry, the Undersheriff, together with Reverend Villette, Ordinary of Newgate, confirmed that Rellions and Collop both stated that Abel was innocent, and that "the prosecutor [Rough] was a common labourer, living in Gravel Lane, the known haunt of the lowest and worst of the people, swearing under the temptation of sharing a reward of £40 for each prisoner, whom he shod be able to convict.

The case as to Abell rests wholly on his evidence not confirmed by any circumstances whatsoever, swearing to a person, at the distance of 6 weeks whom he had never seen but once, in a sudden in the fields, at 10 o'clock at night [although it was a moonlit night] and when he admits that he was much stunned, by the first blow he received from Rellions. He speaks also throughout his evidence, of the persons who robbed him as two men. Rellions and Collop were stout lads of about 20, but Abell is I[m] informed a boy of 17, very slight and low of stature." However, the Recorder considered Abel to be "a bad boy" who had "connected himself with thieves and pick pockets". He therefore did "not wish him to be turned loose upon the public", and suggested that transportation for 7 years would be the best course of action.

Abel was transported to New South Wales on the Alexander, one of the ships of the first fleet that transported convicts to Australia in 1787/8.

THOMAS VOBE, b. 1767.

Father of a Bastard, Waiter and Thief.

The oldest of six children in a pauper family, Thomas Vobe received much less support from the parish than his younger siblings. He appears in London Lives primarily as the father of a bastard child and as a defendant when he was tried for theft.

Early Life and Family.

Thomas Vobe was born on 23 August 1767 in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, the son of Thomas and Jane Vobe. Thomas was the eldest of the Vobes' six children: his siblings were Elizabeth, born in 1768; Ann, born in 1770; James, born in 1775; Jane, also born in 1775; and Peter, born in 1777.

Unlike some of the other members of the Vobe family, including Jane, Thomas never appears in the St Clement Danes register of poor children. Instead, he first appears in the parish records of St Clement Danes in the list of persons in the workhouse for February 1787, though this entry is actually concerned with his younger sister Elizabeth. Elizabeth entered the workhouse on 5 March 1785 and a brief history of her family was given to determine whether she was settled in the parish and therefore entitled to parish relief. This history lists her father, Thomas Vobe, as keeping the "Indian Queen", presumably an alehouse, in Holywell Street, Westminster. It also states that her mother Jane had recently been discharged from the workhouse; and that Thomas's sister Ann had recently been discharged from the workhouse and placed as a servant to man living near Hyde Park Corner. Two of his other siblings, Jane and James, were described as remaining in the workhouse; while Thomas, who was now about twenty, is described as having recently left the workhouse for employment as a waiter at the "new England Coffee House".

Father of a Bastard.

Thomas subsequently worked as a waiter at the Devil Tavern in Fleet Street. There he met Margaret Bell, a nineteen year old former servant to her uncle Richard Bell in Stanhope Street, St Clement Danes. They first had sexual relations in April 1786 "and at several times since". Margaret became pregnant, and, when examined by a Justice of the Peace, identified Thomas as the father. On the second of December she gave birth to a daughter, Harriet, in the workhouse. Harriet was immediately sent to a parish nurse in Enfield.

On the 12th of January 1787, Harriet was recorded as having been put out to a Nurse Chapman. In the parish's Enfield Book, Thomas Vobe, "a Lad that was a Pauper in the House then a Waiter", was identified as the father, but he appears to have run away, presumably to avoid having to pay for Harriet's support.

An Act of Theft and Transportation.

Later that year, Thomas's life took a further downward turn when he was apprehended, on the 17th of December, and accused of theft. Ann Lincoln, a spinster mantua maker of Orange Street, Red Lyon Square, was returning home after work walking along Holywell Street (where Thomas's father kept an alehouse), carrying a bundle containing "two calico gowns, value 20s. a silk gown, value 20s. a napkin, value 1s. two yards of silk, value 7s. two yards of linen cloth, value 2s. 6d. [and] half a yard of cotton, value 18d." Someone ran up to her and snatched the bundle and ran away. Ann called out "stop thief!", and gave chase.

Esther Martin, the wife of a shoemaker of Grayhound Court, the Strand, saw Vobe running towards the New Inn with a bundle in his hand, and upon hearing Lincoln shout, she cried out "stop thief!" too. James Flower, a "Soldier in Colonel Belve's Company in the first Regiment of Foot Guards", heard the cries, saw Vobe running, and caught him. Vobe was arrested and tried at the Old Bailey on 9 January 1788 for assault and theft from Ann Lincoln. During the trial Lincoln was asked whether or not Vobe attacked her when he took her bundle,

and she stated "he did not use any force". Vobe's only defence was that he had never seen the bundle, and that he was just walking along when Lincoln and Martin shouted "stop thief!" and Flower apprehended him. Apparently Vobe wanted the trial to be held on the Friday so that "then I should have had people to [speak to] my character".

Since there was no proof that Vobe had used force, the judge ruled that he could not be convicted of highway robbery, and the jury convicted him of "stealing, but not violently". **He was sentenced to transportation for seven years.**

WILLIAM BLEWIT. d. 1726.

Audacious Criminal and Member of Burnworth's Gang.

A juvenile thief who was transported, William Blewitt engaged in a remarkable correspondence with the authorities after preventing a mutiny on board the ship carrying him to America. Following his early return from transportation, his membership in Burnworth's gang attracted notoriety, but it soon led to his demise.

Early Life.

William Blewit was born around 1700 in St Giles Cripplegate, the son of a porter. His mother, at the time of his execution, was selling herbs in the same parish. Being poor, his parents could not provide for him, so the parish assigned him to a perfumer of gloves. At a young age he became involved with a gang of pick-pockets, and in 1717 he was accused of jostling a man and stealing children's clothes from his person. He was found guilty and sentenced to whipping. Five years later he was found guilty of stealing a silk handkerchief from a man's pocket. This time he was transported.

Transportation (and Return).

Blewit boarded the ship *Alexander* on 2 July 1722 under the command of John Graham, which was heading for Nevis and Jamaica. According to a letter written by Blewit dated 17 October 1723 to Charles Delafaye, secretary to the Lords Justices, Blewit prevented a mutiny. The other prisoners on board the ship rose up, secured the Captain below and would have done the same to the crew, had not he, Blewit, assisted the crew in overcoming the transports, thereby saving the crew and cargo. The grateful Captain granted him his freedom and set him ashore on the island of Nevis.

Blewit returned to England where he was arrested and tried for returning from transportation before the expiry of his sentence. He was found guilty, and sentenced to death. Blewit had called Jonathan Forward, who had been granted an exclusive government contract to oversee convict transportation, as a witness, who "deposed That tho' he [Blewit] had been appointed to have his Liberty on Board of Ship, in order to assist in the Management of the Felons, yet he knew not what he said to be true, as to his preventing the Loss of Ship's crew and Cargo". The captain could not be asked, as the ship had not yet returned from Nevis. Upon an application by his friends to Lord Carteret, Blewitt was granted a reprieve on 22 June 1723 on condition of transportation for fourteen years. Blewit wrote to Robert Walpole on 2 Jul 1723 reminding him that he had promised to prevent him being transported again. On 22 July Temple Stanyan, clerk-in-ordinary to the privy council, wrote "I believe Wm Blewitt was reprieved from Transportation; but the Book wherein the Reprieve is entered is at Hanover. I don't know what promise my Lord Carteret made to obtain his pardon; but if the Lord Justices are pleased to respite his transportation, I'll write to Hanover about it".

The ship *Alexander* arrived back after Lord Carteret had gone to Hanover, but Captain Graham swore an affidavit before Justice Treby and Sir Gerard Conyers, Lord Mayor of London, presumably confirming Blewit's role in saving the ship's crew and cargo. Nonetheless, the Recorder of London wrote on 20 October 1723, "As to ye case of Blewit tis as you write, and ye best way is to take no further notice of his applications & he will be gone very soon". However, he did not leave on the ship *Rappahanock*, commanded by Captain John Jones, until 14 December 1724. The ship arrived in Virginia on 3 April 1725, the Captain having died on the voyage.

Association with Burnworth's Gang

Blewit quickly returned to England and soon after made the acquaintance of Edward Burnworth alias Frazier. He was with Burnworth and his gang when Burnworth shot and killed Thomas Ball, who kept a gin shop in the Mint, in early February 1726. According to Burnworth, Ball fancied himself as a thief-taker, and had nearly apprehended him.

On 12 February the government published "a Proclamation for the apprehension of William Blewit, Edward Burnworth, alias Frazier, Emanuel Dickenson, Thomas Berry, and four others, unknown, being the persons concerned in the Murther of Thomas Ball in Southwark". Blewit, Dickinson and Berry took a packet boat to Holland to lay low for a while. However Mr Finch, the British minister in the Hague, received information from Rotterdam, that some men were arrived there from England, whom nobody knew nor could give any Account of, and were therefore suspected: Whereupon, having before received the King's Proclamation of the 12th Instant, he sent three Persons from hence, with Directions to enquire about them, and with an Order (in Case

they answered the Description of the Criminals mentioned in the Proclamation) to apply to the Magistracy for their being seized. The three fugitives were apprehended at Rotterdam.

Finch then applied to the Dutch Government for permission to return them to England. Blewit, Berry and Dickinson were brought from Rotterdam to England on board the Delight Sloop. According to a press report. They were received at the Nore by three of his majesty's messengers, and were Hand-cuffed and doubly ironed, and had a Guard of 12 Dutch Soldiers besides: They seem hardened in Wickedness to a surprising degree, and put on an Air of Indifferency, and even of Mirth: Seeing a Press gang at St. Katherine's, they jocularly called out to them to put out and impress them for his majesty's Service.

They were taken to Westminster, examined by two Justices of the Peace, and committed to Newgate Prison, where they were placed in the cells for condemned criminals. Between six and seven in the morning of Wednesday 30 March 1726 Blewet, Berry, and Dickenson, together with Burnworth, John Legee, and John Higgs, "were put into an open Country Waggon, hand-cuffed to each other, and fastened to the Waggon; being all cleanly dressed, and each a white Pair of Gloves on; and were conveyed in that Manner from Newgate to Kingston, in Surrey under a strong Party of the Horse Grenadier Guards". There, they were to be tried at the assizes which were due to begin on that day. Having become notorious, and knowing how to play to the crowd, they set off from Newgate with

The Drums beating a March, and a Horn blowing before for the Way to be cleared. The Cavalcade was made up Holborn, through Monmouth Street and Piccadilly; where, 'tis said, some very great Persons were incog. [incognito] to have a View of them. At their being first put into the Waggon at Newgate, they drank and were very merrily disposed, giving several loud Shouts, and commanded the Mob to do the same, that the Respect due to their Quality might not be wanting.

Trial and Execution.

At the trial William Marjoram, one of the members of the gang commonly called Huggadie, was the principal evidence. He deposed that, at the instigation of Burnworth, the prisoners, together with himself, had decided to murder Thomas Ball because he had caused one of their companions, Christopher Leonard, to be apprehended, and was also in pursuit of Burnworth. He said the gang took a boat across the Thames from Blackfriars Stairs, and went to Jewell's Musick House in St George's Fields. Here they danced with some women until between six and seven o'clock in the evening. They then proceeded to Thomas Ball's, which was nearby, where Blewit, Burnworth and Dickenson entered the house while the rest stood at the door. Ball said to Blewit, "he hoped he designed him no harm, for that he never meant him any. To which Will. Blewit answered with an Oath, That he would put it out of his Power so to do: Burnworth at the same Time taking Mr. Ball by the Left hand, and lifting up his Arm, shot him at the Left Pap through the Heart". A number of people had assembled in the street, so Blewit fired a pistol to disperse them, and the gang made their escape. All six were found guilty of murder on 1 April.

The Daily Post reported Blewit's execution, and that of his companions.

"Yesterday soon after 11 o'clock in the Morning, the six notorious Malefactors condemned at Kingston Assizes, for the barbarous Murther of Mr Thomas Ball, were executed near the said Town, pursuant to their Sentence, viz. William Blewit, Edward Burnworth, alias Frazier, Emanuel Dickenson, Thomas Berry, John Legee and John Higgs: They were guarded from the Goal to the Place of Execution by the Sheriff's officers, as usual, and withal, by a Party of about thirty Foot Soldiers, who were posted by the Sheriff's Order (which they were to obey) round the Gallows with their Pieces loaded, and Bayonets fixed to them. 'Tis thought there were ten Thousand Spectators present, they behaved as to outward Appearance with more Penitence than at their Trial and Condemnation, but Burnworth continued more obdurate than the rest. We hear that the Murtherer's are to be hanged in Chains, two and two together in different Places.

Burnworth and Blewit were hung in chains by the sign of the Fighting Cocks in St George's Fields.

WILLIAM MARJORAM.

Gang Member turned King's Evidence

William Marjoram alias Elias Huggadie, was a member of Edward Burnworth and William Blewit's gang. His attempt to turn king's evidence to save his skin did not prevent him from eventually being transported.

Accomplice Turns King's Evidence.

Marjoram was present when Burnworth murdered Thomas Ball in Southwark on 24 January 1726. Following the murder a royal proclamation was issued on 12 February, offering up to £300 to anyone who assisted in the apprehension of Burnworth and his gang. When Marjoram heard of this, he thought one of his accomplices might turn evidence against him, and decided to get in first, in the hope of a pardon and the reward. He therefore gave himself up to a constable in Smithfield and asked to be taken before the Lord Mayor. Overnight he was confined in the Wood Street Compter.

Once the news of Marjoram's surrender became public, one of his former companions, John Barton, became alarmed for his own safety. He positioned himself near Goldsmith's Hall and waited for Marjoram to be brought from the jail to the Lord Mayor. As he approached, escorted by a constable, Barton stepped forward with a pistol in his hand and cried, "Damn ye, I'll shoot ye". He fired but only grazed Marjoram, who ducked. In the confusion which followed, Barton made his escape through the crowds. When Marjoram finally reached the Lord Mayor, he made a full confession, and gave information regarding the whereabouts of John Legee, another of the gang involved in Ball's murder.

Barton was right to fear Marjoram's arrest, for Marjoram also told the authorities where they might find him: at Black-Mary's-Hole. Following Barton's arrest, Marjoram was the principal witness in his trial in March 1726 for three burglaries that they had committed together.

Trial for the Murder of Thomas Ball.

Marjoram was also the principal witness at the trial of Burnworth, Blewit, Emanuel Dickenson, Thomas Berry, John Legee and John Higgs or Hicks for the murder of Thomas Ball. Barton claimed he had been responsible for apprehending Legee and was therefore entitled to the reward, but according to Anthony Cracherode, HM Solicitor for the Treasury, Legee was apprehended by others, who were responding to separate information. Cracherode did concede that, as Marjoram had actually been concerned in the murder, his testimony against his accomplices entitled him to a free pardon.

The Tables are Turned.

Marjoram was released from the Wood Street Compter on Monday 5 September 1726. He was soon back in prison, however, as two weeks later, on 19th of September he was arrested for stealing a butcher's steel. No doubt recalling the crimes which he had participated in but not been prosecuted for, he was described at his trial as "an old Offender", and sentenced to death.

A week before he was due to be executed, Marjoram was reprieved. He was instead transported to Virginia. He boarded the ship Forward in October 1727 and arrived at the Rappahannock River on 14 May 1728.

END