

The History of Crime and Punishment

The police force was first introduced in London in 1329. Sir Robert Peel introduced them as part of a campaign to improve public law. These policemen were called 'Bobbies' or 'Peelers'.

By 1839, other areas of the country were developing their own police force.



Public executions were extremely popular during Tudor times. People would wait for hours to watch them, often taking their children with them.

The idea was that severe punishments would put others off from committing crimes.

It is estimated that approximately 70,000 people were executed during the reign of Henry VIII.

Dick Turpin lived during the Georgian period. He was born in 1705 in Essex. He was captured and hung in 1739.

During this time, highwaymen would rob people while they were travelling on the road.

Britain still did not have a police force, so it was difficult to catch highwaymen.



Romans: Roman laws were called 'The Twelve Tables'.



Anglo-Saxons: People found guilty of crimes were either executed or punished with fines. If they ran away, they became 'outlaws' (outside the law) and anyone could hunt them down – unless they hid in a church.

Tudors: Public executions were huge events with families, food stalls and people queuing for hours to get a good spot. The idea was that severe punishments would put others off from committing crimes.



Victorians: Anyone accused of a crime would be put in a 'lock-up' until they could see a magistrate who would decide whether they could be released or if they needed to be sentenced by a judge. Gaols (jails) were built to try to prevent people re-offending, although many were sent out to the Empire to serve sentences abroad.

Modern Times: Crime now ranges from physical to digital crime. Prisons now work hard to help rehabilitate people so that they do not re-offend and technological advances have meant catching criminals can be done by identifying fingerprints or even DNA.

