



Prison Registers in Institutions And Organisations

Prisons were often in old buildings, such as castles. They tended to be damp, unhealthy, insanitary and over-crowded. All kinds of prisoners were mixed in together, men, women, children; the insane; serious criminals and petty criminals; people awaiting trial; and debtors. Each prison was run by the gaoler in his own way. He made up the rules. If

you could pay, you could buy extra privileges, such as private rooms, better food, more visitors, keeping pets, letters going in and out, and books to read. If you could not, the basic fare was grim. You even had to pay the gaoler to be let out when your sentence was finished.

Law and order was a major issue in Victorian Britain. Victorians were worried about the huge new cities that had grown up following the Industrial Revolution – how were the masses to be kept under control? They were worried about rising crime. They could see that transporting convicts to Australia was not the answer and by the 1830s Australia was complaining that they did not want to be the dumping-ground for Britain's criminals.

Discovering your ancestor in prison records doesn't necessarily make them a hardened criminal, nineteenth century law was harsh and children as well as adults were imprisoned for minor misdemeanours. These records are often very detailed and can include physical descriptions of height, weight and eye colour.

	Surname	Given Names	Age	Trade or Occupation	Degree of Instruction					
Accused	Bailey	John James	19	Soldier	2					
Birth Year	1894									
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address						
Committing Magistrate (1)	Giffard	H.R Esq		Lockeridge House, Marlborough						
Committing Magistrate (2)	Shawyer	J.J. Esq		Wood Street, Swindon						
Court										
Name of Victim (1)	Redman	Frederick William								
Date of Warrant	1913	10 May on remand								
When Received into Custody	1913	5 May			Date of Trial	1913	21 May			
Offence as Charged in the Commitment	Feloniously did break and enter a certain Church there situate, to wit, Christ Church, Cadley, and then in the said Church feloniously did steal four altar flower vases, the property of Frederick William Redman and another, wardens of the Parish of Cadley, on the 5th May 1913									
	Surname	Given Names	Title							
Before Whom Tried	Ridley		Justice							
Verdict of Jury	Guilty of Church breaking									

Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court	Nil				
Sentence or Order of the Court	To be detained in a Borstal institution for a term of 3 years				
Other crimes Committed	Bound Over Cardiff Police Court, 3rd May 1909 (sleeping out) Bound over, under the Probation of Offenders act Cardiff Police Court 19th May (stealing a purse and 15s 6d from his mother) 1909				