

PAST TIME

A LEARNING RESOURCE ABOUT VICTORIAN PRISONS

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INTRODUCTION

Hello and thank you for picking up our learning resource.

This set of materials explores the Victorian prison and offers you thought-provoking historical resources alongside practical exercises to bring the materials to life. In particular it focuses on prison discipline, health and diet. We hope that it will help you examine the tensions between maintaining prisoners' physical and mental health, while, at the same time, adhering to strict prison regimes. You might want to reflect about how many things have changed significantly while some aspects of prison regimes still seem not to have moved on very much.

While this resource pack was inspired by our work in HMP Hewell and HMP Stafford, about which you can read more on page 5, the materials lend themselves to ideas and concepts beyond exploring the Victorian prison system, including:

- + How history is created, who 'owns' the narrative, and the nature of truth
- + Punishment and reformation
- + The importance of communication
- + Prison food and human rights
- + The origins of the science of nutrition.

We hope that you find these materials exploring Victorian prisons useful, and that you enjoy trying out some of the suggested activities.

Professor Hilary Marland, University of Warwick
Saul Hewish, Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation)



“
IT IS EYE
OPENING TO
SEE THE WAY
PRISONERS
THROUGH THE
GENERATIONS
LIVED AND
THE TASKS
THEY HAD TO
COMPLETE.”

(H, participant, HMP Hewell)

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS PACK

We have structured this pack around academic content with additional discussion points and supporting practical activities, but we hope you will be inspired to use and adapt materials for your own purposes.

Some people are happy to read and absorb the written word (and some might be inspired to follow our links to further reading), but we were also interested in helping non-readers find an entry point to engage with academic material. We also felt that many of the men we worked with in prison needed to be physically active – truly kinaesthetic learners.

In our experience, getting people up on their feet and / or talking often piqued interest even in reticent learners.



We have included a range of exercises from thoughtful writing to drama games and a little bit of basic science.



We hope that the discussion points will enable you to have conversations that explore ideas and themes around crime and punishment, reform, equality, and power, and relate them to contemporary society and culture.

But you'll know your group's strengths – and you are best placed to adapt materials to meet their needs to bring history to life.



IS THE PACK FOR ME?

We think this pack will be of use to many different people, both in school and community contexts. Perhaps you are an experienced teacher or facilitator who is:

- + teaching the GCSE History curriculum, particularly the Edexcel syllabus
- + running a drama club
- + facilitating a writing group
- + working with young offenders
- + working with people in prison or other criminal justice situations
- + working with a church group
- + part of a local history group.

BACKGROUND

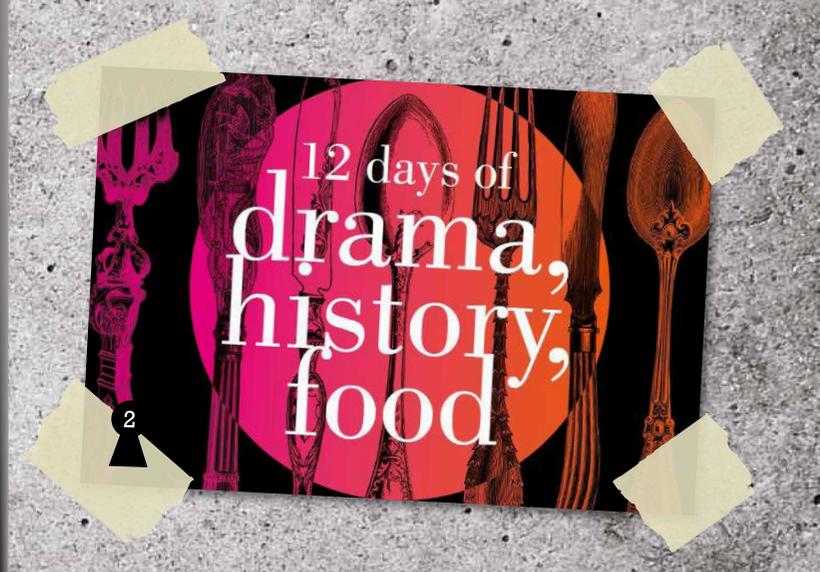
Throughout 2018 and 2019 academics from the University of Warwick collaborated with Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation) to develop *Past Time*, a series of workshops running in HMP Hewell and HMP Stafford seeking to engage men in prison with historical research around prisons and food.

Many people incarcerated in the UK have low literacy levels, so we knew that to even begin to interest our men we would have to do more than offer them a lecture and some paperwork. Rideout are specialists in creating opportunities for active learning – through them and the historical workshops centred around engaging with both historical texts and images, the men were encouraged and supported to become creative researchers. They also asked questions that caused the historians to head back to the archives to find answers for them. We were thrilled by the men's enthusiasm to be part of the project and are delighted to offer you this pack, which contains some of the materials and activities we used to bring the history of prison alive.

Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1850-2000 was a major five-year project (2014-19) funded by a Wellcome Trust Senior Investigator Award, led by Professor Hilary Marland at the University of Warwick and Associate Professor Catherine Cox at University College Dublin, undertaking research into topics that resonate with current concerns in the prison service, including the very high incidence of mental health problems amongst inmates, the health of women and maternity services in prison, and the maintenance of the physical health of people in prison. This multifaceted project has been conducted by a group of historians at four different institutions.

Prisoners suffer significant health inequalities and a much higher burden of chronic illness, mental illness, infectious disease and substance misuse than the general population. This project sought to provide a historical perspective on these issues, highlighting continuities and ruptures in both prisoner health and prison health systems. The strands of research straddled the period from the start of the modern prison system in the mid-nineteenth century to the current day, and compared the provision of medical services and notions of the entitlement of prisoners to health in both England and Ireland.

Find out more about the project at <https://histprisonhealth.com>



Rideout, led by Saul Hewish, are leading practitioners in the use of drama and theatre with offenders. Saul is a recipient of a Butler Trust Award, a national award recognising exceptional work by staff in HM Prison Service. He was a founder member, and former director, of Geese Theatre (UK) (est. 1987), and a deputy director of Geese Theatre (USA). In 1999 he co-founded Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation) with Chris Johnston. Over the last 20 years Rideout has built a strong reputation for innovative and experimental arts-based projects within the criminal justice system in the UK and across Europe. This includes theatre and digital video projects in prisons as well as the production of cross artform projects that span the divide between prison and the wider public.

Find out more about Rideout at www.rideout.org.uk

WHAT IS HISTORY?

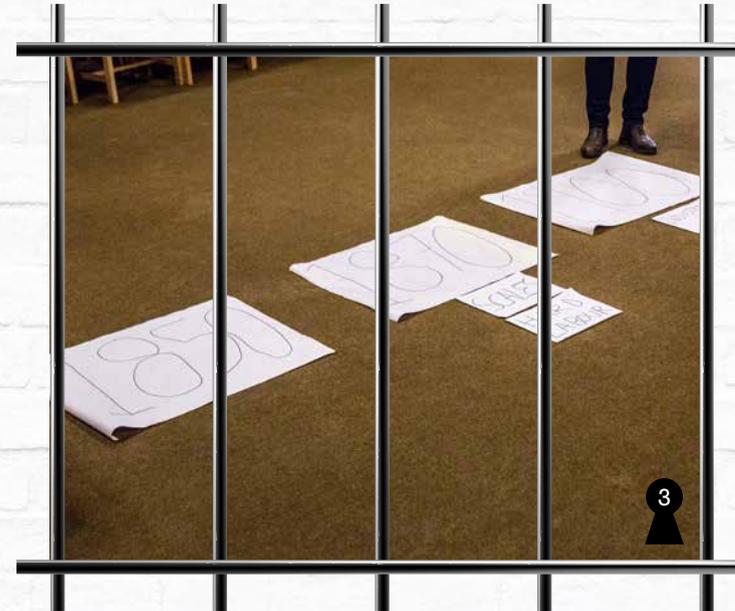
People often say things like ‘History tells us...’ but what does history tell us *reliably*? Historians use original documents, like personal correspondence or government reports, to piece together a picture of what they think happened – but all this evidence represents the viewpoint of the authors and makes the points that *they* are keen to convey, and it can be difficult to assess its accuracy.

Of course there are some facts that are widely accepted – Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, World War II ended in 1945. Others are widely contested – think for a minute about the current debate on climate change and how historians will attempt to record this in the future! But when we look at something like the conditions of a Victorian prison, for example, we must consider who was in a position to leave evidence and who actually wrote it down; if someone was poorly educated and couldn’t read or write then they are unlikely to have recorded their own story. What we find with prison history is that most of it is written from the perspective

of officials, the people in charge of running the prison system. We have to read these accounts with care, as they are likely to be written in a way that supports the way prisons operated.

One way that historians attempt to reach a more balanced account is to work with a wide range of source materials as well as reading ‘against the grain’, which means that we attempt to scrutinise the beliefs and attitudes that typically go unexamined in a text, also drawing attention to the gaps, silences and contradictions. We also search to find stories of those who weren’t holding power or in positions of authority. So as

well as looking in the case of prisons at official reports and the accounts of prison governors and other prison officers, we can also examine the memoirs written by ex-prisoners or of organisations and individuals campaigning for change. But even these are largely written by educated middle-class people. We also have to recognise that much material will not be preserved so, in the case of prisons, while we have complete sets of government reports, we have very little original material on the day-to-day running of individual prisons and the lives of prisoners.



WHAT IS HISTORY? CONTINUED

WHY EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF PRISONS?

Why would we bother to examine the history of prisons? The famous Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky claimed that 'The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.' Examining the history of prisons provides a way of thinking about wider social attitudes to crime and punishment – and the opportunity to ask questions such as:

- + were prisoners considered capable of reform?
- + what kinds of discipline were thought to be most effective in preventing reoffending?
- + what measures – if any – were taken to ensure prisoners' health and wellbeing were protected?

Looking at prisons in the past can help us reflect on how they function today – it isn't a straightforward story, and in some periods it looks like prisons went 'backwards', but history can get us thinking about parallels and similarities in the past.

“
LOOKING
AT PRISONS
IN THE PAST
CAN HELP US
REFLECT ON
HOW THEY
FUNCTION
TODAY”



WHISPERING FACTS



- + WHO TELLS THE STORIES TODAY AND WHAT WILL BE LEFT BEHIND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?
- + HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT IS TRUE IN OUR CURRENT WORLD?

THE VICTORIANS: THE PENTONVILLE EXPERIMENT AND THE SEPARATE SYSTEM

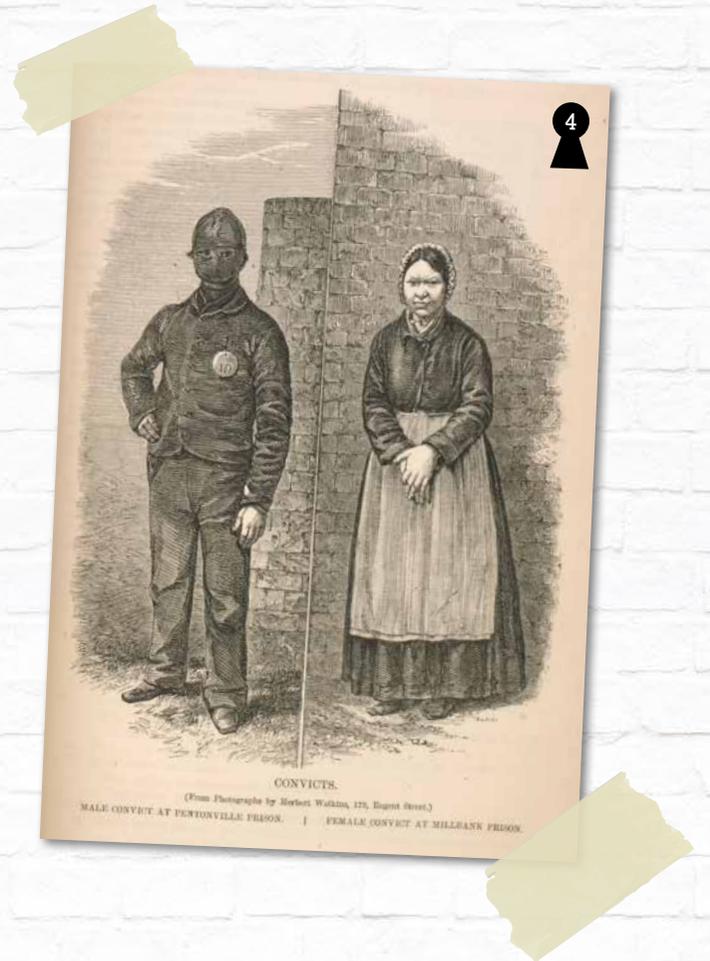
The mid-nineteenth century laid the basis for the modern prison system. As other penal options were withdrawn and corporal punishment and the death penalty became less common, prisons became the state's only option for punishing the majority of criminals. The number of people in prison grew dramatically.

In 1842 a new prison discipline known as the 'separate system' was established in Britain, modelled on methods used in the United States. It was intended that prisons would run like efficient machines and many new specially designed prisons were built for this purpose, including Pentonville Prison in London.

Under the separate system, prisoners were held in separate confinement in individual cells for 23 hours a day, where they worked, ate and slept. Every minute of their day was accounted for as prisons attempted to control the bodies and minds of prisoners. All communication between prisoners was strictly forbidden and prisoners were only allowed to speak to prison officials. In Pentonville, prisoners had to wear a cloth mask so they couldn't see each other as they moved around the building. They were allowed an hour's exercise each day, but this took place in silence. Daily church services were delivered with the congregation sitting in high-sided individual booths, known by the prisoners as 'coffins', so all they could see was the chaplain.

The separate system was intended to be both a rigorous punishment and an effective means of producing deep spiritual reform among prisoners; prisoners were meant to reflect on their sins. The prison chaplains were strong supporters of the separate system, and visited the prisoners regularly in their cells urging them to repent and reform.

The new system was seen to be taxing for prisoners and was described as an 'experiment'. It was initially restricted to those aged between 18 and 35, in a good state of health and first offenders, who were seen as most likely to reform. Women were believed to be less able to adapt to the separate system and the length of separate confinement for women, for example in London's Brixton Prison, was usually limited to 4 months rather than 18 months for men.



THE VICTORIANS: THE PENTONVILLE EXPERIMENT AND THE SEPARATE SYSTEM CONTINUED

From the opening of Pentonville, prison officials were warned to watch for signs of mental breakdown among the prisoners. Not surprisingly many prisoners were affected by the silence and solitude. Many prisoners were moved from the prison to Bethlem Asylum ('Bedlam') suffering symptoms of insanity or depression. In 1848 the length of separate confinement was reduced to 12 months in Pentonville, and then to 9 in 1853 in a response to fears about the impact of the regime on the minds of prisoners.

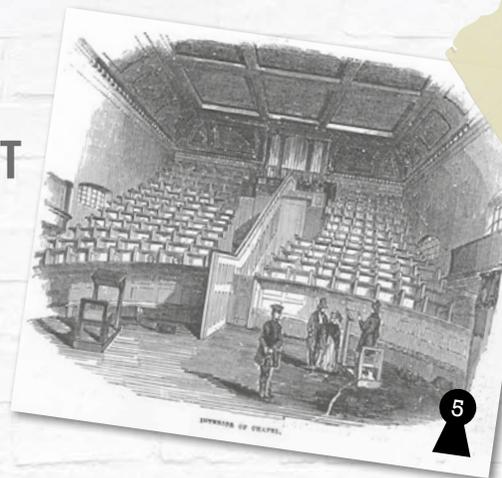
Despite this, the separate system expanded and was implemented in prisons across the British Isles in both convict prisons and local gaols. While initially the emphasis was very much on reform and encouraging the prisoners to reflect on their crime and to repent in their isolated cells, after the 1860s the system focused more on punishment and the imposition of an increasingly harsh discipline and

hard labour, including the crank, stone breaking, and the arduous treadwheel punishment. The government was keen to make the prison system as uniform, efficient and rational as possible. In fact, many prisons, such as Liverpool Borough Prison, struggled to effectively implement the separate system, due to unsuitable buildings or overcrowding.

After the transportation of convicts to Australia largely came to an end in the 1850s, there was a good deal of anxiety about prisoners being retained in Britain, and about high levels of reoffending. After a period of separate confinement, convicts

were now sent to hard labour prisons rather than being transported. Despite prisons becoming much harsher, crime was on the rise and the prison population increasing. During the 1860s prison numbers appear to have peaked when around 30,000 men, women and children were in prison at any one time.

However, the prison system faced criticisms and challenges from inmates, staff and reformers, who called for prisons themselves to be reformed, to become spaces offering welfare, re-education, and medical care alongside their role as places of punishment.



I HAVE NO WORDS



CATEGORIES CHARADES



- + DO YOU THINK PRISON IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUNISH PEOPLE OR FOR PEOPLE TO REFORM THEIR WAYS?
- + DO YOU THINK LOSS OF LIBERTY IS SUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT FOR BREAKING THE LAW, OR SHOULD PRISON IMPOSE ADDITIONAL PUNISHMENTS DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF CRIME?

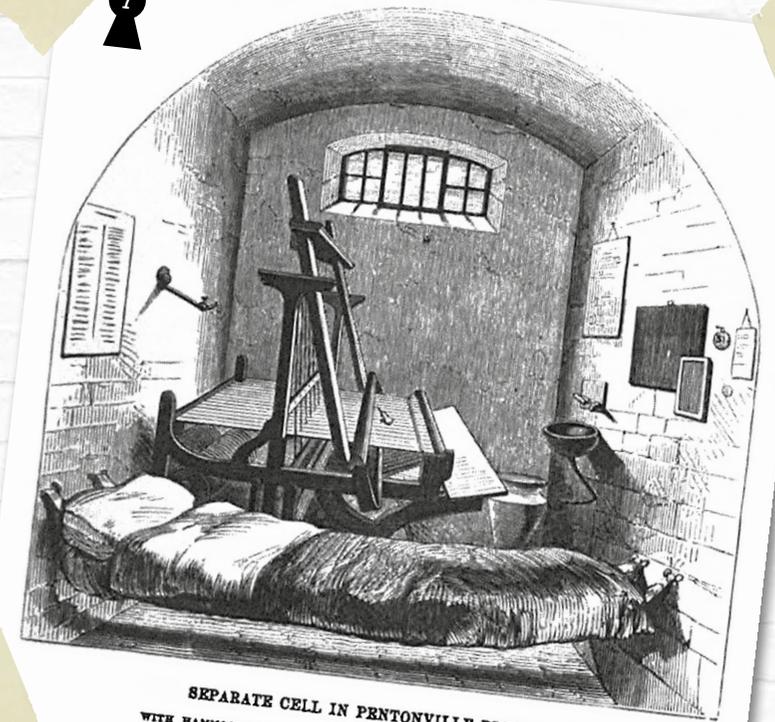
THE VICTORIANS: THE PRISON CELL

Under the new regime of separate confinement, introduced in 1842, cellular isolation was first endured by the prisoners for 18 months. Pentonville, with its 18-foot perimeter wall, was intended to produce isolation from the outside world.

The prison housed 520 prisoners in separate cells, with four wings radiating out from a central point, from which all cell doors were visible. Every detail was carefully engineered in terms of cell size and fittings, lighting, heating and ventilation, to ensure that each cell was identical.

All the prisoners required to exist was contained in the cell – a tin bowl and mug, a hammock or plank bed, a chamber pot, work materials and the Bible. The convicts were allowed one 15-minute visit every 6 months, and permitted to write and receive two letters each year. The prisoner, unable to communicate with anyone aside from the chaplain and other prison officers, must have often felt alone and frightened, and those who wrote of their experiences described their horror of the prison cell.

The most famous of the prison writers, author and playwright Oscar Wilde, was sentenced to two years hard labour for homosexual offences in 1895, and imprisoned in Reading Gaol between 1895 and 1897. Wilde became an advocate of prison reform and wrote *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (published in 1898) that highlighted the terrible conditions in prison. He explained in letters to the newspaper, the *Daily Chronicle*, how the separate system caused mental breakdown with prisoners locked for most of the day in their tiny cells.



SEPARATE CELL IN PENTONVILLE PRISON.
WITH HAMMOCK SLUNG FOR SLEEPING, AND LOOM FOR DAY-WORK.

THE VICTORIANS: THE PRISON CELL CONTINUED

Other prisoners described the revolting diet, the lack of exercise and fresh air, the cruelty of the warders, the dreadful hard labour, and the sheer boredom. They often referred to the cell's measurements, proportions and appearance, and their dread of being locked up. One account described a 'white-washed cube, 7 feet by 8 by 13, with a barred window of ground glass at one end, and a black-painted iron door at the other', and how the prisoner became like a wild animal 'pacing his cage, merely existing between meal hours'.

Susan Willis Fletcher, confined in Westminster Prison in 1881, described the cold and damp, the poor diet and the solitude: 'Each prisoner is locked in her solitary cell for twenty-three hours out of every twenty-four; which is in itself a very dreadful punishment bad for the health of the body, worse for the health of the mind – abnormal, inhuman, diseasing, demoralizing.'

The prison cellular system kept each man 'in his separate hell', wrote another prisoner of his confinement in the early 1920s, as in place of the physical torture of days gone by, we find

substituted 'a peculiar form of mental torture... it is not difficult to understand how the minds of many prisoners become warped and contorted from the comparatively healthy state to the imbecile and dangerous'.

Chaplain Kingsmill at Pentonville, though first very much in favour of the separate system, later became convinced as more and more prisoners showed signs of mental disturbance that it was not working as it was intended to. Gradually the Pentonville regime was made less severe, and the length of separate confinement reduced.

However, the system of cellular isolation and confinement in cells for up to 23 hours a day would remain a feature of the prison system until early in the twentieth century and some elements remain today. Many prisoners are placed in segregation or solitary confinement (80,000 currently in the United States) and because of staff shortages others spend many hours a day locked up their cells with little to occupy them.



LETTERS HOME



- + DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY SITUATION WHICH WOULD REQUIRE PRISONERS BEING KEPT SEPARATED?
- + WHAT KINDS OF HYGIENE AND HEALTH PROBLEMS MIGHT ARISE WHEN PEOPLE ARE KEPT IN SEPARATE CONFINEMENT?

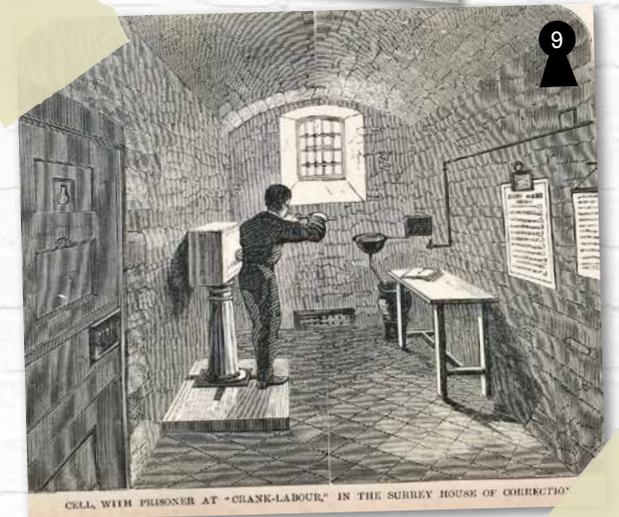
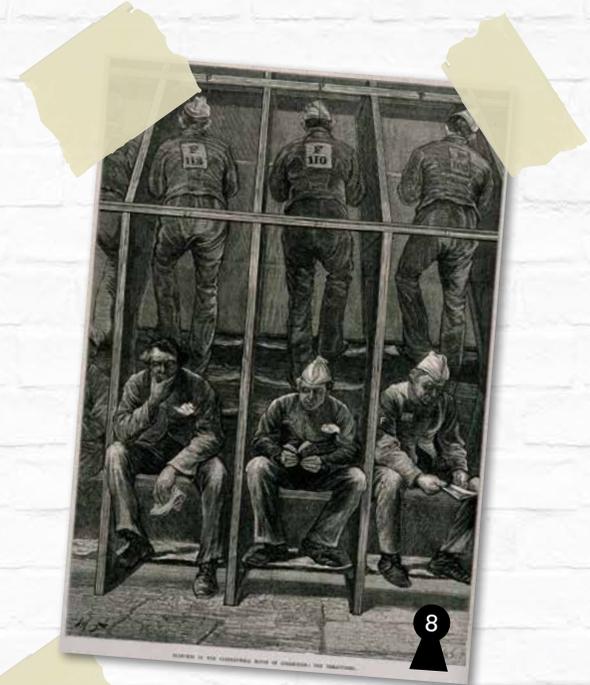
THE VICTORIANS: HARD LABOUR

The imposition of hard labour was used as a way of enforcing discipline and making the prison system more punitive.

Though some hard labour, like working on major building projects such as Chatham docks, had a useful purpose, most was pointless and unproductive. Prisoners subjected to crank labour had to turn a handle thousands of times a day. The warders could tighten the screws to make it much more difficult to turn.

The notorious treadwheel was also employed in many Victorian prisons. Each step on the treadwheel or treadmill was around 18cm high, and prisoners could be expected to make as many 56 steps per minute. They were made to do 10 minutes on and 5 minutes off, for 8 hours per day - this would be the equivalent of climbing 3.2km per day, the same as climbing up Mount Snowdon three times! Even the toughest of prisoners were reported as coming away from the treadwheel in tears, and one prison chaplain reported that the treadwheel was a source of 'great terror'. However, in 1863 a major government report on prison discipline dismissed claims that the treadwheel and crank were degrading and demoralising, 'highly approving' both these instruments.

“ PRISONERS SUBJECTED TO
CRANK LABOUR HAD TO
TURN A HANDLE THOUSANDS
OF TIMES A DAY ”



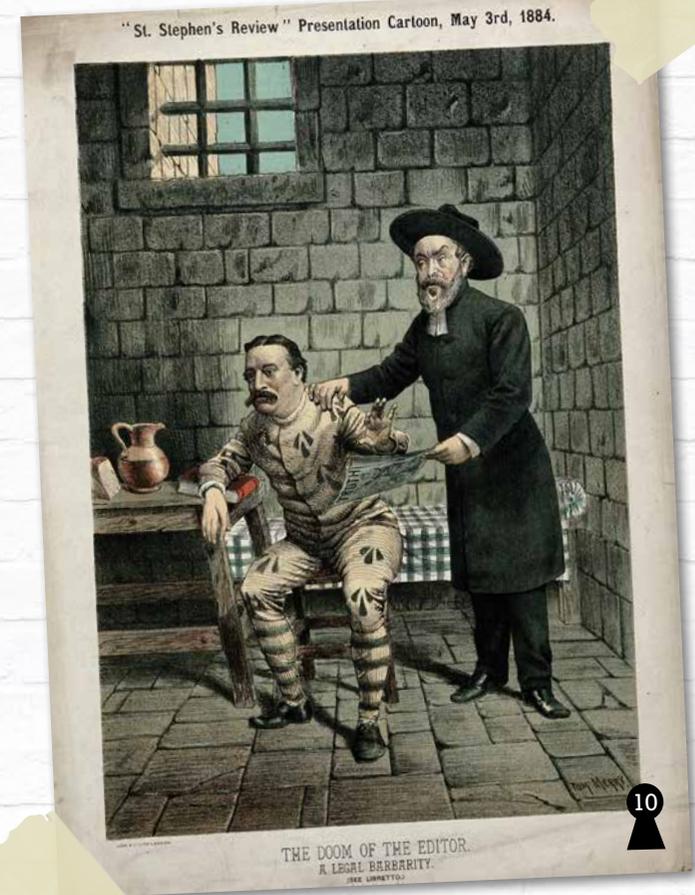
THE VICTORIANS: PRISON GOVERNORS, CHAPLAINS AND DOCTORS

With the setting up of the modern prison system, determined efforts were made to change prisons that had previously been poorly managed, unhygienic and disorderly, replacing them with well-regulated penal institutions.

The prison governor had an important role in establishing discipline and regulating conditions within the prison and supervising the other prison officers. Many had military experience and this was reflected in the way they ran their prisons.

Prison governors met many challenges when attempting to achieve discipline and order. They had to impose strict management on the institution and respond to any disruption to its efficient running, including daily breaches of the prison rules by prisoners and the misbehaviour of the prison officers. When doing so, they had to consider the disciplinary requirements of the prison alongside the physical and mental health needs of the inmates under their charge.

Female prisoners were often described as particularly unruly. When reflecting upon his time serving as the governor of Coldbath Fields House of Correction between 1829 and 1854, George Laval Chesterton despaired at the disorderly conduct of the female prisoners when he took up his post. He described them as 'specimens of turbulence, pugnacity and hardihood', who used bad and immoral language and were violent towards each other and the prison staff. However, he prided himself on transforming the prison from a place of 'corruption and misrule' to an 'establishment distinguished for industry, order, and impressive discipline'.



THE VICTORIANS: PRISON GOVERNORS, CHAPLAINS AND DOCTORS **CONTINUED**

THE PRISON DOCTOR IS AN INTERESTING FIGURE IN THE VICTORIAN PRISON

He was responsible for treating physical ailments and disease, as well as mental illness, for running the prison hospital, regulating diet, taking care of prison staff and monitoring the hygienic condition of the prison. He was also involved, as a prison official, in enforcing prison discipline, determining the prisoners' fitness to work (including treadwheel labour) or to be punished (this could include being beaten or being placed on a punishment diet of bread and water). As such he was often caught between his role as a doctor, caring for the health of the prisoners, and a disciplinarian.

The role of the chaplain was also very important. As well as holding regular services and visiting inmates in their cells, they attended the sick and preached to prisoners as they departed on convict ships to Australia, and took charge of prisoners' schooling, supervising the schoolmasters. For the most part they were keen advocates of the separate system, and strove to lead prisoners towards redemption, particularly by means of individual cell visits.

Chaplains provoked a variety of responses among prison authors. In *My Prison Life*, Jabez Spencer Balfour praised the chaplains for their commitment. The anonymous writer of *Five Years of Penal Servitude* described how Newgate's chaplain offered 'encouraging, really sweet words of comfort' and advice on how to adjust mentally to a long prison sentence. Others were more critical, not least Oscar Wilde, who described chaplains as 'entirely useless... well-meaning, but foolish, indeed silly, men'.



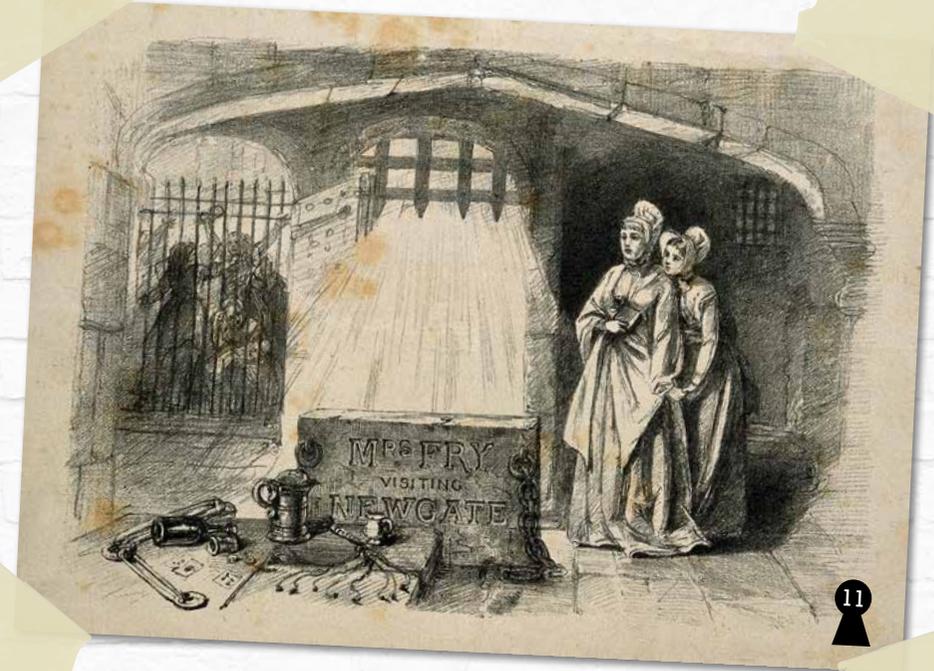
HIDDEN AGENDAS



- + WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN CHARGE OF PRISONERS' HEALTH? THE GOVERNOR, THE CHAPLAIN, THE DOCTOR - OR SOMEONE ELSE?
- + WHY MIGHT THE ROLE OF THE PRISON DOCTOR BE SUCH A DIFFICULT ONE?

THE VICTORIANS: PRISON REFORMERS

Prison reform is most strongly associated with the work of two philanthropists and reformers, John Howard (1726-90) and Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845). Howard's exhaustive survey of prisons, based on 350 visits to 230 prisons, resulted in the publication of his seminal work *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales* in 1777. Fry focused largely on improving the plight of female prisoners and her efforts were key in the eventual establishment of female-only prisons.



Early penal reformers supported the separate system, its advocates arguing that prisoners would be reformed through silent, spiritual reflection, inducing penitence and moral redemption. Yet from the outset, the new prison discipline attracted critical voices. *The Times* newspaper expressed alarm at a system where insanity produced by extreme isolation would be an 'inevitable outcome', while author Charles

Dickens criticised the system of separate confinement with its 'slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain... immeasurably worse than any torture of the body'.

The shift in emphasis from reform to punishment in prisons in the 1860s and 1870s prompted a variety of reformers to demand changes. Following his release from Reading Gaol in 1897,

Oscar Wilde voiced concern about the failings of prisons in two letters published in the *Daily Chronicle*, describing the solitary cellular system as 'an example of the cruelty of stupidity. The production of insanity is, if not its object, certainly its result.' Prison doctors, he added, were 'brutal in manner... and utterly indifferent to the health of the prisoners or their comfort'.

THE VICTORIANS: PRISON REFORMERS CONTINUED

Other prisoners advocated for change, notably political prisoners. In 1922 conscientious objector Quaker Stephen Hobhouse and socialist Archibald Fenner Brockway produced an influential report on English prisons, *English Prisons Today*. This drew on their own prison experiences and questionnaires returned by prison staff and former inmates, and highlighted the continued impact of separation and poor conditions.

Increasingly criticism also came from within the prison system. In the late nineteenth century, prison chaplains began to produce more critical commentary, and encouraged more provision for creative activities, more association between prisoners, and wider engagement by prison staff with the 'reformatory side' of prison work.

Crucially, they spoke of the impact of poverty and hardship upon those who populated the prisons and acknowledged in the 1895 Gladstone Committee report that 'society creates criminals, and needs to repent and reform itself, as well as the prisoners'.

An historic and enduring voice in prison reform is the Howard League for Penal Reform which has long played a key role in campaigning for better medical care and educational opportunities in prisons, the abolition of capital punishment, and in offering support to prisoners during and after their sentences. Today the organisation continues to campaign to reduce the prison population and works with other charities and reform groups to improve conditions in prisons.

“ **SOCIETY CREATES CRIMINALS, AND NEEDS TO REPENT AND REFORM ITSELF, AS WELL AS THE PRISONERS.** ”



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE



- + HOW CAN PRESS AND MEDIA COVERAGE HELP OR HINDER PRISON REFORM?
- + SHOULD CELEBRITIES USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO LOBBY FOR ISSUES LIKE PRISON REFORM?

THE VICTORIANS: PRISON FOOD

Prison food – perhaps more than any other form of institutional diet – has particular significance for the inmates who rely on the prison to feed them on a daily basis.

While today in prison, prisoners have access to a diet that offers choices (including kosher, halal, and vegetarian and vegan diets), the food provided (at time of writing this resource) is limited by a daily budget per prisoner of £2.02, which is intended to cover the cost of providing three meals. Though many prisoners supplement this with food bought from the canteen (the prison 'shop'), the food provided by the prison takes on particular importance for people in prison in terms of nutritional value and health, variety, and taste.

In the past, prison diet was also dictated by cost and ideas of 'entitlement'. It was widely believed that prisoners did not deserve as good a diet as even the poorest people outside of prison or in the workhouse. Prison diets were designed to maintain prisoners on as little food as possible while, at the same time, avoiding damage to health or even death. Prisoners who broke the prison rules could also be put on punishment diets of bread and water.

When Pentonville opened in 1842 some of the prisoners were put on such a 'low' diet, that many rapidly lost weight and there were reports of prisoners fainting in chapel. While the prison doctors advised against such a restricted diet, the commissioners responsible for Pentonville were keen to test how little the prisoners could survive on without damage to their health. Henry Mayhew and John Binny wrote a book on London's prisons in 1862, and claimed that prisoners put on a punishment diet of bread and water could lose 1-3lbs (roughly 0.5-1.5 kilos) a day.

A typical diet in a nineteenth-century prison would include bread, gruel or skilly (a thin porridge), potatoes, occasional meat, soup or cheese. In 1843 the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, published an advisory 'dietary' (a precise list of food provided in prison, with weights, for different groups of prisoners) for local prisons and in 1864 a revised version was issued by the government. Yet many prisons disregarded or adapted these dietaries, and there was variation (variation



between little and very little!) in the amount and types of food given to prisoners.

In 1878 all this was tightened up and a strict set of dietary scales was introduced, for male and female prisoners, those employed on hard labour, prisoners who were sick and those being punished, according to the length of the sentence. Health, discipline and deterrence were all considered important, and diet came to be seen more as an instrument of punishment. The types of food were restricted to bread, gruel, potatoes, suet pudding and meat in very small quantities.

Prisoners on short sentences had a very limited diet. For example, the diet for adult men sentenced to hard labour, but only serving up to 7 days, consisted of a daily allowance of 16oz of bread and 1½ pints of 'stirabout' (another name for thin porridge). Slightly more food was offered as longer sentences progressed.

THE VICTORIANS: PRISON FOOD CONTINUED

Prisoners had the right to complain to the prison administration about their diet, but if the complaint was found groundless they risked punishment – often by a decrease in their already meagre diet! What was called adulteration (adding substances that made the food of poorer quality) of food was common in the nineteenth century and particularly in prisons, or prisoners claimed that food was mouldy or inedible.

Others pretended that they were ill in an attempt to be moved to the hospital, where they would be fed a much better and more nutritious diet. Prison doctors also were concerned about prisoners 'feigning' insanity in order to be moved to a lunatic asylum, where the diet was much better than in prison.

PRISON MEMOIRS OFTEN DISCUSSED FOOD AND THE FEELINGS OF HUNGER MANY PRISONERS EXPERIENCED ON A DAILY BASIS

As late as 1924 one prison noted that 'supper' arrived at 4.15pm, 'a frugal meal', consisting of 'four ounces of bread with a pat of margarine, an ounce of cheese, and a pint of "cocoa"'. This was supplemented at 7.30 in the evening by a half a pint of skilly.

Thin fare was the order of the day then, and no-one knew it better than the gaolbirds. They experienced every day the feeling which is foreign to the majority of people – in such a country such as ours, at any rate – what it is to be hungry.



GUESS THE WEIGHT



- + WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT THAT PRISONERS GOT ENOUGH FOOD?
- + SHOULD PEOPLE BE PUNISHED BY HAVING LESS FOOD?
- + SHOULD IT EVER BE RIGHT THAT SOMEONE GOES HUNGRY?
- + IS IT POSSIBLE TO DEVISE A DIET CONSISTING OF THREE MEALS A DAY FOR £2.02? HAVE A LOOK AT A SUPERMARKET WEBSITE TO SEE WHAT £14.14 COULD BUY YOU FOR A WEEK'S FOOD. HOW WOULD YOU CHOOSE YOUR FOOD?

USEFUL LINKS

+ Food in prison

Past Time

This is a publication created as part of our work at HMP Hewell, including recipes for prison bread and gruel amongst other interesting information about the workshops and their effects.

Fish Custard Anyone: The food of healing and punishment

An article exploring institutional food in prisons and hospitals.

+ General resources about prison

Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1850-2000

This is the website for the project exploring many aspects of the history of health in prison including: mental health; maternal health and mothers in prison; food and nutrition; medical care; HIV/AIDS; juvenile offenders; political prisoners; reform and welfare organisations, with many useful blogs. Lots of useful information from the prisoner project has been collated on a single page at the University of Warwick's Centre for the History of Medicine [here](#).

A Guide to the Criminal Prisons of Nineteenth-Century England

Trace your local prison in this huge listing of all the prisons of the nineteenth century.

Still searching for a prison system that really works

An article exploring how the present-day prison system in the UK is deeply rooted in its Victorian predecessors.

+ Solitary confinement

Disorder Contained: A theatrical examination of madness, prison and solitary confinement

As part of the prisoner project, a short play was created with Talking Birds Theatre Company which explores the effects of the introduction

of solitary confinement. You can watch a film of the play [here](#) and read lots of supporting materials [here](#). You can also read an interview with Talking Birds and Professor Hilary Marland, about the process of creating the piece, [here](#) and read an article from *Prospect* magazine, ***Over a century ago, Dickens said it was cruel, wrong and 'tampered with the brain'. So why is solitary confinement still allowed?***

+ Women in prison

If you're interested in female experiences of prison, you might want to read these articles..

Disturbed Minds and Disruptive Bodies

Explore how women prisoners resisted the ways prison officers tried to regulate their minds and bodies in the second half of the 1800s.

'Why Should a Man Rule "The Castle"?' Early twentieth-century debates over the appointment of female governors and medical officers in women's prisons

'The Great Disgrace to our Age': Desperate women, crime, drink and mental disorder in Liverpool Borough Prison

In the nineteenth century, Liverpool Borough Prison reputedly had the largest population of female prisoners in the country and possibly Europe.

+ Reform organisations

The Howard League for Penal Reform is the oldest penal reform charity in the UK. It was established in 1866 and is named after John Howard, one of the first prison reformers.

The Prison Reform Trust works to ensure UK prisons are just, humane, and effective. 'The state of our prisons is a fair measure of the state of our society.'

PRINTABLE LINKS

We thought there might be rare occasions when you wanted to share the full links to the materials we suggest on the previous page. For neatness we embedded them within the PDF, but here they are in full in case you are sharing a printed version.

+ Food in prison

Past Time publication:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/chm/research/current/prisoners/outputs/past_time_for_warwick_final_18_dec_2018-compressed.pdf

Fish Custard article:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/knowledgecentre/arts/history/fishcustard>

+ General resources about prison

Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1850-2000 website:

<https://histprisonhealth.com/>

List of outputs from the project above:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/chm/research/current/prisoners/outputs/>

A Guide to the Criminal Prisons of Nineteenth-Century England:

<https://www.prisonhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Guide-to-the-Criminal-Prisons-of-Nineteenth-Century-England-R1.pdf>

Still searching for a prison system that really works:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/knowledgecentre/arts/history/prison-solution>

+ Solitary confinement

Disorder Contained: A theatrical examination of madness, prison and solitary confinement project page:

<https://histprisonhealth.com/arts-projects/disorder-contained-a-theatrical-examination-of-madness-prison-and-solitary-confinement/>

Watch the film here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/chm/outreach/disorder/videos/>

Supporting materials:

<https://histprisonhealth.com/arts-projects/disorder-contained-a-theatrical-examination-of-madness-prison-and-solitary-confinement/disorder-contained-background-reading/>

Prospect magazine article: Over a century ago, Dickens said it was cruel, wrong and ‘tampered with the brain’. So why is solitary confinement still allowed?

<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/over-a-century-ago-dickens-said-it-was-cruel-wrong-and-tampered-with-the-brain-so-why-is-solitary-confinement-still-allowed>

+ Women in prison

Disturbed Minds and Disruptive Bodies:

<https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W0jWFyYAACgAbZho>

‘Why Should a Man Rule “The Castle”?’ Early twentieth-century debates over the appointment of female governors and medical officers in women’s prisons:

<https://histprisonhealth.com/2017/03/15/appointment-of-women-to-senior-roles-in-womens-prisons/>

‘The Great Disgrace to our Age’: Desperate women, crime, drink and mental disorder in Liverpool Borough Prison:

<http://socialhistoryblog.com/the-great-disgrace-to-our-age-desperate-women-crime-drink-and-mental-disorder-in-liverpool-borough-prison-by-catherine-cox-hilary-marland/>

+ Reform organisations

The Howard League for Penal Reform:

<https://howardleague.org/>

The Prison Reform Trust:

<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/>

IMAGE CREDITS

- 1 Image credit Natalie Willatt
- 2 Design credit Andrew Moore
- 3 Image credit Natalie Willatt
- 4 *Two Convicts at Pentonville Prison* taken from *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*, Mayhew and Binney 1862
- 5 *Interior of Chapel, Pentonville Prison*
Image credit *Illustrated London News* (7 January 1843)
- 6 *Convicts exercising at Pentonville Prison* taken from *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*, Mayhew and Binney 1862
- 7 *Separate Cell in Pentonville Prison, with hammock slung for sleeping and loom for day-work* taken from *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*, Mayhew and Binney 1862
- 8 *Men standing in a frame treading on the boards of a treadmill: in the foreground others sit looking glum.*
Wood engraving by W.B.S. after M.F. Fitzgerald, Michael, active 1871-1891
Image credit Wellcome Collection
- 9 *Cell, with prisoner at 'Crank-Labour,' in the Surrey House of Correction* taken from *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*, Mayhew and Binney 1862
- 10 *A clergyman is visiting a journalist in prison* Lithograph after Tom Merry, 3 May 1884
Image credit Wellcome Collection
- 11 *Elizabeth Fry* Reproduction of lithograph
Image credit Wellcome Collection
- 12 *Portrait of A. Fenner Brockway*, circa 1910–15
Image credit Wikipedia
- 13 *Wormwood Scrubs prison, London: four cooks in prison uniform standing in a line in front of buckets and baskets* Process print after P. Renouard, 1889
Image credit Wellcome Collection

WHISPERING FACTS



Time 10–15 mins

1. Divide the class into two or three teams (there should be an even number of people in each team). Have them stand in lines, one behind the other as if in the queue for dinner.
2. Put a chair in front of each line with paper and a pen on it.
3. Place a chair at the back of each line with a series of cards containing statements of fact about prison.
4. At a signal from the teacher, the person at the back of the line picks up a card, reads it, and then whispers its contents to the person in front of them. They can only whisper once!
5. The person they have whispered to then whispers what they think they heard to the person in front of them and so on until the message reaches the front of the line.
6. The person at the front of the line must then write down what they heard and give the fact to the teacher.
7. Once all lines have got an answer, the teacher reads out what is on the paper. Points are awarded to teams on the basis of the most similarity to the original statement. Extra points can be awarded for teams that finish quickest.

- + IN THE 1860S THERE WERE AROUND 30,000 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PRISON
- + THE PRISON POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES IN 2018 WAS JUST OVER 82,500
- + THERE WERE AROUND 300 PRISONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 1830
- + THERE WERE AROUND 121 PRISONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 2018
- + THE NUMBER OF STEPS TAKEN DAILY ON THE TREADWHEEL WAS THE EQUIVALENT TO CLIMBING MOUNT SNOWDON THREE TIMES IN A ROW
- + FOOD WAS THE FIRST THING PRISONERS EVER HAD THE LEGAL RIGHT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT
- + THE ARROWS ON VICTORIAN PRISON UNIFORMS SHOWED THE UNIFORMS WERE THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN
- + HARD LABOUR IN PRISON WAS FINALLY ABOLISHED IN 1898

I HAVE NO WORDS



Time 10–15 mins

Pair people up. Make sure they have pen and paper. Person 1 & Person 2 are given Card 1 or Card 2 to match.

Silently, they take it in turns to perform activities A & B opposite, timed and directed by the leader / teacher, and writing down their answers in between each activity. They are only allowed to speak three words for activity C.

Compare answers at the end.

- + What could you tell from that exercise? Could you communicate?
- + Which activity was easiest? Hardest?
- + Do you think you could get through an hour without communicating? A day?
- + Why weren't people allowed to communicate? What happens when people communicate with each other?

A Strike a pose

Silently each person must make their body a statue to 'tell' their partner how they feel according to statement 1.

B Eyes, windows to the soul

Silently, covering their lower face with their hand so only their eyes and eyebrows are visible, they must 'tell' their partner how they feel according to statement 2.

C Three little words

Without using the word in bold, tell the other person how you feel according to statement 3.

CARD 1

- 1 I FEEL ANGRY
- 2 I FEEL HAPPY
- 3 I FEEL **SAD**

CARD 2

- 1 I FEEL SAD
- 2 I FEEL ANGRY
- 3 I FEEL **HAPPY**

CATEGORIES CHARADES



Time 35–40 mins

Split the class into teams of 5 or 6.

Phase 1

Very quietly, so other teams can't hear, each team writes down on a piece of paper one item for each of the categories opposite.

Once this is done, the lists are given to the teacher. The teacher should check the lists to see if there are duplicate items and if so request alternatives. The teacher might also wish to exercise discretion on any items that might be considered to be too difficult to reasonably guess.

Phase 2

1. Each team is asked to identify 1 or 2 team members who will do the performing and the other team members will do the guessing.
2. The teacher asks for a team who wishes to go first, and gives the performer(s) a list from one of the other teams (i.e. NOT their own).
3. The performers then have to act out to their fellow team members what is on their list without using words or sounds, although they are allowed to say what the category is.
4. Players can use the conventions of Charades, such as breaking items down into numbers of words and/or syllables or enacting words that 'sound like' the word on the paper.
5. The teacher keeps a record of how long it takes for the rest of that team to guess all the items correctly. If a group goes beyond 5 minutes then record the total number of correct guesses. Once the first team has gone, play again with the next until all teams have had a go.
6. The winning team is the team that gets most correct answers in the quickest time.

ANIMAL

SPORT

DRINK

FOOD

PERIOD OF HISTORY

(e.g. Egyptians, Stone Age, Romans, Vikings, Dark Ages, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Tudors, Stuarts, Georgians, Victorians)

CLASS SUBJECT

(eg Maths, English, Food Tech, etc)

NAME OF A COMPUTER GAME

LETTERS HOME



Could be set as a homework task, otherwise 20 mins

Here is a list of real entries taken from the Old Bailey's Record of Proceedings. The Old Bailey is London's most famous court and at www.oldbaileyonline.org/ you can find a searchable database of over 195,000 trials held there between 1674 and 1913.

1. Give each class member one character and ask them to write a letter in the role of that character. They can choose who it is they write to (for example, a parent, sibling or partner, a friend, or a local member of the community).
2. The letter should identify clearly to whom the character is writing and should describe the experience of being in prison. This could include imagined details of the transport from court to the prison, the nature of conditions in the prison, any concerns the character has about things outside of prison, and/or issues relating to their guilt or alleged innocence.

2 Sept 1844	CHARLES STOCKINS Age 24	stealing 1 mare, value 30 pounds; the property of Charles Beavan. 2nd COUNT, stating it to be the property of Ann Lydia Savage	Confined Twelve Months
9 Sept 1844	SOPHIA GARWOOD Age 33	stealing 4 frocks, value 13 shillings; 1 gown, 7 shillings and sixpence; 2 spoons, 5 shillings; 2 tumblers, 4 shillings; 1 petticoat, 1 shilling and sixpence; 1 quilt, 7 shillings; and 2 capes, 9 shillings and sixpence; the goods of Joseph Smith, her master	GUILTY of stealing the spoons Confined Three Days
19 Dec 1844	GEORGE BLENNEY Age 17	stealing 11 groats and 12 farthings, the monies of James Lee	Confined Seven Days
20 Dec 1844	CATHERINE MULLER Age 17	stealing, 1 ring, value 2 pound and 10 shillings; the goods of James Belcher, her master	Confined Fourteen Days
21 Dec 1844	HENRY CLARK Age 42	stealing 500 bricks, value 1 pound, the goods of James Brown	Confined One Year
23 Dec 1844	THOMAS NEAL Age 16	stealing 1 handkerchief, value 1 shilling; the goods of Daniel Norton, from his person	Confined One Year
24 Dec 1844	HENRY THOMPSON Age 17	stealing 1 handkerchief, value 2 shillings & sixpence; the goods of Charles Hawkins, from his person	Confined Three Months
26 Dec 1844	JOHN CLARK Age 20	stealing 1 handkerchief, value 5 shillings, the goods of Edward Lennox Boyd, from his person	Confined six months
1 Jan 1845	LAWRENCE WRIGHT Age 38	assault on Joseph John Cornwall, stabbing and wounding him on the left temple, with intent to do him some grievous bodily harm	Confined One Year
15 Mar 1845	MICHAEL LEE Age 28	with menaces did feloniously demand of Patrick O'Connor the sum of 5 pounds, his monies, with intent to steal the same	Confined One Year
29 Mar 1845	ELIZABETH CRADDOCK Age 16	feloniously breaking and entering the dwelling-house of John Smith and stealing therein 215 pairs of socks, value 4 pounds; 1 table-cloth, 1 shilling; and 1 sack, sixpence	Confined Two Months

HIDDEN AGENDAS



Time 15-20 mins

1. Split the class into pairs. Explain they are going to do short dramatic scenes exploring some of the conflicts that drove changes to conditions in prison through the Victorian era.
2. Hand out the 5 scenarios. Make sure that in each pair, the participants only see their brief (i.e. they don't see what their partner's instructions are except of course which character they are playing.) The scenes can all be worked on at once, and then the teacher can ask to see if any pairs are keen to perform their scenes in front of others.
3. Discuss the scenes in respect of what viewers perceive to be the hidden agendas, and what strategies people use to make their arguments.
4. If time permits, you could ask for other class members to try taking the place of one of the characters and trying out a different strategy.

DOCTOR and PRISONER

Prisoner: You have heard from other inmates that the food in the hospital is better than the food you normally get. Try to persuade the doctor that you are sick and that you should be put in the hospital.



DOCTOR and PRISONER

Doctor: You are aware that some prisoners are faking illness to get into the hospital where the food is better. You do not believe this prisoner is sick enough to be admitted.

DOCTOR and GOVERNOR

Doctor: You are concerned about the health of prisoners in your prison. Your job is to ensure prisoners leave prison the same weight as they were when they were first imprisoned. You have noticed that bigger prisoners lose more weight than smaller prisoners. You believe this is because all prisoners get the same amount of food. Try to persuade the Governor to let prisoners have more or less food on a case by case basis.



DOCTOR and GOVERNOR

Governor: Whilst you are concerned that you need to take care of prisoners under your charge, you are worried that any change to dietary scales will cause problems in the prison. These include a potential increase in the cost of buying more food, problems with prison officers not wanting to change the way they feed prisoners, and worrying that some prisoners will start trading their extra food with other prisoners, leading to problems caused by debt.

HIDDEN AGENDAS CONTINUED

CHAPLAIN and PRISONER

Prisoner: You are a male prisoner soon to be transported to Australia. Try to persuade the Chaplain to let you have a visit with your newborn son before you have to leave the country.



CHAPLAIN and PRISONER

Chaplain: You are worried that if you let this prisoner see his son, it will be a distraction from his main task which is to show repentance to God. Your cell visits are the medium to achieve that goal. You are also concerned that if you make an exception in this case, it will open the door to other prisoners making similar requests for leniency and the 'bending' of rules.

PRISONER and PRISON OFFICER

Prisoner: All your food is given based on dietary scales which indicate the weight of all food rations. You believe the prison officer is not giving you the correct amount of bread each day. Furthermore you have found sawdust and mouse droppings in your bread. Complain to the prison officer and demand your right to have the ration of bread weighed.



PRISONER and PRISON OFFICER

Prison Officer: You get complaints about food all the time from prisoners and you are fed up. You don't control what happens in the kitchen so you don't see it as your problem. You are willing to weigh the bread, although (according to the rules) you don't have to weigh it in front of them. As far as you are concerned the prisoner should take what you are giving him. If the prisoner gets too difficult you can threaten to put them in the 'dark cell' (i.e. punishment cell with just bread and water).

PRISONER and DOCTOR

Prisoner: You have recently arrived from another prison where your gruel and cocoa were made with milk instead of water which made it taste better. At the new prison they only use water. Try to persuade the Doctor to instruct the kitchen to make the cocoa and gruel with milk.



PRISONER and DOCTOR

Doctor: There is no evidence that cocoa itself has any nutritional benefit. Its benefit is purely in keeping prisoners happy. Whilst you think adding milk to gruel might make a difference in terms of health, the cost of using milk in cocoa and gruel will cause problems and you will have to ask the Prison Governor for permission to make this change. Unfortunately you don't get on well with the Governor.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE



Time 20–25 mins

1. Explain to the class that you are going to have a parliamentary debate about prison conditions. The Government wants to introduce changes to prison diets. The Government needs to argue for this, whilst the Opposition will argue against. The briefing sheets are there to help each side build their arguments.
2. Split the class into two and set up the space as if it is the House of Commons (i.e. two lines of chairs facing each other and a chair for the Speaker).
3. Identify one person to be the Speaker (this could also be the teacher).

The Speaker's role is to control the debate and ensure people keep to the rules.

Members may not:

- accuse other Members of lying
 - use abusive or insulting language
 - refer to the alleged views of members of the royal family.
4. One half of the class is the Government and the other is the Opposition.
 5. Identify one person from each side who will begin the debate.
 6. Hand out the briefing sheets overleaf to the relevant sides and the Speaker.
 7. Once sides are ready to debate, the Speaker calls them to order. The two sides may use the wording on their briefing sheet as prompts for their arguments; these are loosely based on those used in real parliamentary debates from the nineteenth century.

The debate then proceeds with people making arguments back and forth until such a time that all arguments are concluded. At this point the speaker can ask for a show of hands for those in favour (the ayes) and those against (the noes). If there is a tie, the speaker gets to make a casting vote.

SPEAKER SHEET

I call this house to order. Today we are here to debate the motion:

This Government wishes to introduce standard dietary regulations for all prisoners that are based on principles of good health and nutrition. I call on the honourable member (insert surname of person chosen to begin the debate for the Government), MP for Shrewsbury, to open this debate.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE CONTINUED

GOVERNMENT SHEET

- + Surgeons at HMP Shrewsbury have recorded significant increases in diseases such as scurvy, and observed severe behaviour problems arising from mental instability. They attribute both to a combination of poor diet and a lack of meaningful activity in prison.
- + This is not the first time such problems have been seen. During the time of the hulk ships in the early part of the nineteenth century, there were many outbreaks of so called 'gaol fever' – a kind of typhus – that had a devastating impact on the communities to which prisoners were returning to upon release. We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to what is happening in prison. We need to heed the advice of these fine surgeons and set up a commission to examine prison diets with a view to making improvements in the range and quality of food supplied.
- + Far too many prisoners are dying in prison. The Government has a duty to ensure that, unless people are sentenced to death, the conditions in our prisons should be adequate to allow felons (criminals) to leave prison at least in the same state of health that they entered. Since for some this is very poor, I argue that their health should be improved if only to increase their chances of being able to get lawful employment upon release.
- + There is no evidence to suggest that people will commit crime just to get into prison so they can have better food!
- + Increasingly we are aware that people are not born evil, but rather the circumstances of their environment such as poverty, lack of education, poor housing, and a lack of moral guidance in their lives are contributing factors. We should be providing support in these areas – and that includes the improvement of diet – to better help people make a new start in their lives when released from prison.
- + We have conducted extensive analysis of the costs associated with caring for sick prisoners and it is clear that any increase in the cost of supplying food that is healthy and nutritious will be offset by savings in the overall costs of medical care. I urge the members of this house to support this motion.



OPPOSITION SHEET

- + Why should we provide better conditions and better food to those in prison whilst we have thousands of people living in terrible conditions on our streets? Surely our attention should be upon those who are law-abiding citizens, not those who have broken the laws of the land?
- + If we improve the quality of food in prison, poor people who are hungry on the street will start committing crime just to get into prison – this would be a disaster. Rather than trying to reduce crime, this will increase crime!
- + Prison should not be a hotel! Prison should be a place that people fear so it can act as a deterrent to those who are considering committing crime.
- + If those in prison do not behave then they should receive additional punishment to make sure they learn the errors of their ways. We need to make the prison experience so unpleasant that no sane minded man or woman would ever wish to return.
- + I have visited a number of prisons and in my opinion prisoners are given more than enough food to survive upon. May I remind the Government that there are many other issues of concern to the general public that are far more worthy of attention, especially when we consider the cost to the public purse. Are you seriously expecting us to go back to our constituents and justify such an unnecessary expenditure on those who break the law?
- + These doctors and scientists are always changing their minds. All you have to support your argument are the claims from a small number of clinicians, along with the whining of those in prison. I have it on good authority that some of these doctors are making such claims purely because they do not get on with the individuals in charge of their respective prisons. Until there is more substantial evidence, from independent doctors, I cannot support your call for a commission.

GUESS THE WEIGHT



Time 20 mins

Caution: check any contact allergies

Materials required:

- + A set of digital scales
- + 2 loaves of bread (sliced or unsliced)
- + A block of cheese
- + A bag of potatoes
- + 2 litres of very thin porridge to represent gruel (made with water and oats – NOT milk!)
- + A bag of Quorn sausages (defrosted and cut into chunks. Alternatively, if appropriate, you could use real meat in which case a pack of cheap beef cut into chunks)
- + Disposable gloves, if deemed necessary
- + A bag of onions
- + Jugs (One should be capable of measuring volume and others should be plain)
- + bowls for food

Below are some diets used in Bedford Prison.

Read out examples and ask for volunteers to try to portion out the food as accurately as possible. They can only do this by estimating; if they struggle, you could ask them to consider quantities of food they might recognise e.g. a 330ml can of coke, a 6 inch Subway roll (approx. 90gr), a standard Peperami stick (22.5 gr).

Only once they have portioned the food should their results be weighed and/or measured.

This could be done as a competition, in which case the teacher should keep a record of individual's answers and then reveal who got the closest at the end of the exercise.

In 1841, before any national guidelines were issued, most prisoners in Bedford would have received a basic daily diet:

- + 2 pounds (c. 900gr) of bread
- + 2 ounces (c. 55gr) of cheese
- + 1 onion

By 1850, after advisory dietaries for local prisons were issued but before the very strict national dietaries came into force, this diet had been modified at Bedford to depend on the prisoner's sentence as follows:

- + For your first 7 days: 2 pints (c. 1.1 litres) of gruel and 1 pound and 16 ounces (c. 450gr) of bread per day
- + For your next 8 to 21 days: 2 pints (c. 1.1 litres) of gruel and 24 ounces (c. 680gr) of bread
- + For 22 days to 4 months: a more varied diet that on a Tuesday or a Saturday could include 2 pints of gruel, 3 ounces (c. 85 gr) of cooked meat, 8 ounces (c 225 gr) of bread and 8 ounces (c 225 gr) of potatoes

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Past Time: A Learning Resource about Victorian Prisons was created by Professor Hilary Marland, University of Warwick and Saul Hewish, Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation).

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<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/chm/research/current/prisoners/toolkit>

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