

**OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION**

A952/22

HISTORY A

(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

**Developments in Crime and Punishment in
Britain, 1200–1945**

SOURCE BOOKLET

TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2010: Afternoon

DURATION: 1 hour 30 minutes

SUITABLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CANDIDATES

Candidates answer on the Answer Booklet

OCR SUPPLIED MATERIALS:

8 page Answer Booklet

OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED:

Question Booklet

DEVELOPMENTS IN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN BRITAIN, 1200–1945

WERE HIGHWAYMEN THE ‘GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD’?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the eighteenth century highway robbery was a common crime. There was no police force to protect travellers, and highwaymen found it easy to commit their crimes and escape without being caught. Highwaymen also had a romantic, glamorous image. Instead of being seen as violent criminals, they were known as the ‘gentlemen of the road’, treating those they robbed kindly, robbing only the rich, and even living as members of the same wealthy society as their victims.

Is it true that highwaymen were the ‘gentlemen of the road’?

SOURCE A

I have been in London for a day or two and have heard nothing but conversation about McLean, a fashionable highwayman, who has just been put on trial. He has lodgings in St James's Street, close to White's, and another in Chelsea. His face is as known around St James's as any gentleman who lives in that area. He had a quarrel at Putney bowling green two months ago with an officer, whom he challenged to a duel for doubting he was a gentleman, but the captain declined until McLean produced a certificate proving his nobility, which he has just received. Lord Mountford, along with half of the members of White's, went to the first day of the trial. Mountford's aunt was crying all over him. 'My dear, have you been involved with McLean?'

From a letter written in August 1750 by Horace Walpole, the famous writer, to one of his friends. White's was a gentlemen's club for the nobility. St James's was one of the most fashionable areas of London.

SOURCE B

A butcher was robbed in a very brave manner by a woman mounted on a side-saddle, near Romford in Essex. She pointed her pistol at him and demanded his money. He was so amazed by her behaviour that he said he did not know what she meant. Then another highwayman rode up and told him he was a brute to deny the lady's request, and that if he did not do as she said immediately, he would shoot him through the head. So he gave her his watch and six pounds.

*An account of a robbery from a magazine
published in 1735.*

SOURCE C

When he was to his trial brought,
He there held up his hand,
Declaring to the ancient judge
He wasn't the worst of men.

He said the Bible I fulfilled,
Though I this life did lead,
For when the naked I beheld,
I clothed them all with speed.
The poor I fed, the rich I empty sent away.

What say you now my honoured Lord,
What harm was there in this?
I never robbed or wronged the poor,
Be pleased to favour me therefore,
And be not too severe.

*From a popular song about a highwayman
hanged in 1695.*

SOURCE D



A painting from 1860 of a highwayman robbing a coach. On an isolated road, a masked and well-dressed highwayman has taken off his hat to greet a finely-dressed lady who has got out of the coach. He is being helped by other masked highwaymen. One is threatening the coach driver, while another is opening a small chest with a dagger and a third is playing a small pipe. One woman in the coach has fainted while another woman is pleading with another highwayman.

SOURCE E



A picture from a book published in 1734 of a highwayman robbing a tinker (a poor tradesman who travelled around mending metal tools for his customers). The tinker is a thin, poorly-dressed man who is carrying a couple of bags as he walks along a road a long way from any houses. The highwayman is sitting on a horse and is threatening the tinker with a pistol.

SOURCE F

- 1 I swear to be faithful to my companions;**
- 2 To be ready at all hours of day and night;**
- 3 Never to desert my companions in any danger, never to run away from an equal number of enemies, but rather die courageously fighting;**
- 4 To help my companions whether captured, in sickness or other distress;**
- 5 Never to leave my companions' bodies behind me to fall into enemies' hands;**
- 6 To confess nothing if captured, or ever to reveal information about my companions, even under punishment of death myself.**

From a Highwayman's Oath, recorded in a book published in 1719. The writer of the book probably obtained the oath from a late seventeenth-century pamphlet, now lost. The oath may be genuine, though this is uncertain.

SOURCE G

As for those who talk of solemn oaths, I can assure them that we never swore an oath between us, and if we did, no oath is binding when keeping it is a greater sin than breaking it. I know that several persons have saved their lives, as I am doing, by giving information about their companions, and then went back to a life of crime. However, I wish with all my heart that our story may be a warning to other young men, by which they will find that we enjoyed none of those rewards that tempt mankind to break the law. Honesty is the best policy. We do not consider how naturally one thing leads to another until at last we swing from the end of a rope. I have this comfort in my misfortunes, that I was never involved where any murder was done.

From the confession of a highwayman, 1722.

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