

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

**A952/22**

**HISTORY A  
(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)**

**Historical Source Investigation  
Developments in Crime and Punishment in Britain,  
1200–1945**

**RESOURCE BOOKLET**

**TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2011: Afternoon**

**DURATION: 1 hour 30 minutes**

**SUITABLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CANDIDATES**

**Candidates answer on the answer booklet.**

**OCR SUPPLIED MATERIALS:**

**8 page answer booklet  
(sent with general stationery)**

**OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

**None**

# **DEVELOPMENTS IN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN BRITAIN, 1200–1945**

## **HOW FAR WAS THE NEW METROPOLITAN POLICE FORCE TO BLAME FOR THE COLDBATH FIELDS RIOT OF 1833?**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**In 1829 Sir Robert Peel set up the Metropolitan Police Force to take responsibility for policing in London. It was intended that the force should have around 1000 men, but this was soon increased to more than 3000. At first, many people did not support the new police force. They feared it would give the Government too much power to crush its opponents, such as the working classes who wanted more democracy. These fears were increased by events in May 1833 when the new police force had to deal with a political demonstration at Coldbath Fields. This ended in a full-scale riot in which one policeman, PC Culley, was murdered, and two other policemen were stabbed.**

**Was the new police force to blame for the events at Coldbath Fields?**

## **SOURCE A**

**Posters have been put up and distributed in various parts of London, advertising that a public meeting will be held in Coldbath Fields, on Monday 13 May, as a means of campaigning for the rights of the people. A public meeting held for such a purpose is dangerous to the public peace, and illegal. All classes of His Majesty's subjects are hereby warned not to attend such a meeting, nor to take any part in it. Notice is hereby given that the police have strict orders to maintain and secure the public peace, and to arrest anybody offending against this order, so that they can be dealt with according to the law.**

***A Government notice about the demonstration at Coldbath Fields. This notice was published and posted up in London before the demonstration.***

## **DREADFUL RIOT IN LONDON**

**A FULL AND TRUE ACCOUNT OF THAT GREAT PUBLIC MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE IN COLDBATH FIELDS, LONDON, ON MONDAY LAST, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE DESPERATE ATTACK MADE ON THE MEETING BY A BODY OF 3000 POLICEMEN, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF COLONEL ROWAN AND MR. MAYNE**

By two o'clock, the time named by the Chairman for the start of the meeting, there were upwards of 1000 persons assembled in the Fields. He climbed up on a fence and said he was glad to see so many assembled before him. He was thankful to the Government who had given an importance to the meeting which otherwise it would have lacked (*Cheers and hisses*). The question now to consider was whether, as they were meeting under so many disadvantages, they should carry on (*Go, go on*) or whether they should wait for a better opportunity (*No, no, go on, go on*). The Chairman was here interrupted by the cry of 'Police!', who were advancing at double-quick time on the meeting. Another group of police came up from a side-street and also attacked those assembled.

The meeting was broken up in a few minutes, with people running in all directions. Many heads were broken, and we are sorry to say that one policeman, named Robert Culley, was stabbed through the heart, and died less than ten minutes later.

*From a broadside published on 16 May 1833. Broadsidees were single sheets of paper containing news and other information, which were sold on the streets.*

## SOURCE C



***A nineteenth-century picture of the Coldbath Fields Riot. It shows policemen confronting members of a crowd. One policeman has hit a man with his left fist and has a short truncheon held up in his right hand to strike him again. A man is on the floor at the feet of another policeman. A number of people in the crowd have sticks, and a dog and various hats have been hurled into the air. A police constable is on the ground and being attacked by a man with a stick.***

## SOURCE D

**It was the right of the people to meet and discuss political matters. I believe the meeting was peaceful and legal. I was present at the meeting that day, for the purpose of observing what happened. I saw how the police, before they commenced their attack on the people, closed off all the ways by which people might have escaped. On my solemn oath, the police started the attack while the people were perfectly peaceful. I saw the police knock people down. I saw them beat them with their truncheons while they lay on the ground, and trample on them. I saw them beat two women most brutally – two innocent women. Is it any wonder that people, when treated this way, should be ready to use illegal means to obtain their rights?**

***An eye-witness account of the riot, given at a meeting held in June 1833 to protest against the police action at Coldbath Fields.***

## **SOURCE E**

**The instructions of the police were to do nothing until the meeting had begun, and then to arrest the ringleaders. These instructions were given to the police on the spot, by Commissioner Rowan. He said, 'Be firm, be moderate, and strike nobody unless they resist.'**

**It has been claimed that the police rushed in madly. From my enquiries, and bearing in mind the good character of the police, not one policeman took any action until a number of stones and missiles had been thrown by the mob. Then the police advanced up one street in order to clear it, leaving plenty of room for the mob to retreat. When in Calthorpe Street, finding his men took up the whole width of the street, the Superintendent ordered them to leave space for the mob to go away either side. Many persons did go away.**

**The only violence I know of was against the police. As to wounding women and children, I cannot say that none were hurt in the confusion, but I wholly reject the charge that any were deliberately injured. I do not feel that the slightest blame can be placed upon the Government, or on the police for the manner in which they discharged their duty.**

***From a statement made by a Government Minister in the House of Commons, 13 June 1833.***

## SOURCE F



***[Inscription on the cup]***

***This cup was presented on 20 May 1834 by the Milton Street Committee, City of London, to Mr Robert French, one of the seventeen jurymen who formed the memorable Calthorpe Street inquest as a memorial of their glorious verdict of 'justifiable homicide' of Robert Culley, a policeman who was killed whilst brutally attacking the people peacefully assembled in Calthorpe Street on 13 May 1833.***

***[An ornamental cup presented to a member of the inquest jury that looked into the death of PC Culley. The jury found that his killing was justified. The Milton Street Committee was a group of Londoners who supported the campaigns for working-class rights].***



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