

The all-time high and
was a serious
problem



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The phrase 'juvenile delinquency' originated in Britain in the 19th Century and means "The habitual committing of criminal acts or offences by a young person, especially one below the age at which ordinary criminal prosecution is possible." (Juvenile Delinquency, 2018) In Victorian Britain, crime and how to deal with it was one of the great issues debated. There was a rising crime rate, with 5000 recorded crimes per year in the 1800's to 20,000 recorded crimes in the 1830's. This could be due to more people reporting the crimes however and more people being punished. London's police force was only fully established in 1829 which could also explain the rise in reported crimes. Despite this level of crime, child crime was only a small percentage.

Due to the coverage in written media, Victorians were under the impression that crime was at an all-time high and was a serious problem in society. In reality, however, "statistical evidence modifies this image, suggesting that as a proportion of total Victorian crime, juvenile crime was not dramatically elevated" (Rowbotham and Stevenson, 2005). Crimes were mainly seen in working-class children, however, there were several recorded cases of middle-class children 'larking'. This was "Something done for fun, especially something mischievous or daring; an amusing adventure or escapade." (Lark, 2018), such as truancy.

Truancy was when children would stay away from school for no good reason and this was seen in all classes in society. For middle-class children, it was seen as a release from their strict lifestyle, whereas for working-class children it was a vital part of their street culture. For higher classes, education was seen as a way of reforming juvenile delinquents and to develop conformity to society. Youths, however, saw truancy as a way of

resisting strict control in their lives. It was suggested that these juvenile criminals were “ adopted children of the devil”(Macilwee, 2011) and were in serious need of reforming. Punishments were taken incredibly seriously by Victorians at the beginning of the century and Edwardians and they believed that everyone should face up to their responsibilities and actions. In Liverpool, the crime was so bad that they requested more reformatory schools. Not only were there prisons, jails and reformatory schools for criminals, within these the inmates were still punished.

One method used was called flogging. This was when someone would “ Beat (someone) with a whip or stick as a punishment.” (Flogging, 2018) Often, care was taken to ensure that other prisoners would not know what was going on: “ no prisoner shall see, or, if possible, hear anything that is going on”(Gilfillan, 2014). Flogging could be sentenced by the judge as part of the punishment and up until 1830’s, could be done in public. It was also used in prisons when prisoners would breach the internal prison discipline. For boys, flogging would be done with a birch – a bundle of twigs bound together at one end to form a handle. If the boy was under 10, the birch would be 34 inches long and weigh around 6 ounces. For boys aged between 10-16, the birch would be 40 inches long and weigh around 9 ounces.

This increased accordingly for adults. Many child criminals began their life of crime due to the fact they had little parental care or were orphans and had to find a way of staying alive. Stealing money, food and small possessions from people provided them with enough food for a day or so. Many did not know that what they were doing was wrong as they were destitute of all

things children should have had as a right. Some children became part of gangs that were controlled by adults.

They were taught how to pickpocket and steal and had to bring all possessions and money back to their 'Fagin like' carer. A prison inspector from the Mason Street, Edge Hill reformatory stated that once children have "acquired the taste for an idle vagabond life, there is little hope of weaning them from it to pursuits of a more restrained nature" (Macilwee, 2011) There were several notable gangs from the 19th Century, all of which contained child members. Some of these included The Peaky Blinders, based in Birmingham; The Deansgate Mob, based in Manchester and The High Rip Gang, based in Liverpool. All are notorious in their own right and have left marks on communities that are still seen today. The Peaky Blinders began in the early 1890's and were the biggest, most violent gang in Birmingham for over 2 years. Members would sew razor blades into the peak of their flat caps and use them as weapons, often head-butting victims leaving them partially blind in both eyes. This is where their name originated.

They would target people who looked vulnerable or unfit and would take anything they could get. There were several children within the group including David Taylor, aged 13 and Charles Lambourne, aged 12. The image shows members of the Peaky Blinders gang. The Deansgate Mob originated in Manchester in the late 1800's and was predominantly lead by Irish reprobate John-Joseph Hillier. He joined the gang and just 14 years old and was repeatedly jailed for slashing members of rival gangs with a butcher's knife.

Despite this, there were very few deaths from the violence in comparison to gang culture and violence today. The photograph details some members of the gang. On the Old Merseytimes website, there are thousands of court transcripts taken from newspapers in Liverpool and Merseyside in the 18th, 19th and 20th Century. One details a crime committed by the High Rip Gang. The High Rip Gang was created in the 1880's in order to wage a war against the Logwood Gang, its sworn enemies. They originated in Vauxhall, Liverpool.

Some members of the gang were convicted of the Blackstone Street Murder, the gangs first crime that saw them become notorious for unprovoked attacks of violence on the public. In this, they attacked a Spanish sailor, stabbed him in the back and killed him. The judge described it as “ shocking case” (Old-merseytimes. co. uk, 2011) and that the men who committed this murder “ deserved exemplary punishment” (Old-merseytimes. co. uk, 2011)² of the men that were prosecuted were 18 and were sentenced to death.

The other 3 were found not guilty and were consequently released. The violent acts by the High Rip varied between random violence, robbery and revenge attacks. There were little to no theft attempts.

Even though the acts were unprovoked, they were planned meticulously meaning that the gang got away with most things. The fact that 18-year-old boys, I say boys as they are barely adults with very little maturity, could be prosecuted for murder within a gang surprises me but does not shock me. In

today's society, there are many cases of children committing murder, several being in Liverpool and Merseyside.

One famous case was that of Rhys Jones in 2007. He was shot in the back whilst cycling through a pub car park in the afternoon by a member of the Croxteth Crew, Sean Mercer. It was stressed by police that this shooting was not gang-related, even though the Croxteth Crew had a huge rivalry with the Norris Green Strand Crew and the two often fought. It was suggested that Jones was in the wrong place at the wrong time and got caught up in a crossfire. Mercer was sentenced, aged 16, to life imprisonment with a minimum of 22 years. Gang culture is still relevant and present in society today, almost 200 years after the first gangs were seen in city centres.

However, over time they have got progressively more violent, with fewer crimes of theft and more of assault and murder. In the 1980's, Liverpool experienced a huge increase in gang crime and substance abuse, specifically heroin. Several of the gangs developed into drug cartels, creating links with the city and South America. It has since been revealed that Liverpool became the main centre for organised crime in the UK during the 1990's.

It was the first place where police officers could openly carry guns in order to combat the severe gun crime. Current child criminals do reflect those from the 19th Century. They are similar in behaviour and the fact they have come from impoverished, working-class backgrounds. Gang culture over time has increased and grown in popularity and awareness. Today, police are dealing with gangs and gang rivalries in cities all over the UK.

However, as one gang disintegrates, another appears in its place. It has spread outside of city centres and is mainly in the poverty-stricken suburbs.

In most cities, it is one area versus another

Bibliography
Primary and Secondary Sources
Gilfillan, R. (2014). *Crime and Punishment in Victorian London: A Street Level View of the City's Underworld*.

1st ed. Barnsley: PEN AND SWORD HISTORY.
Macilwee, M. (2011). *The Liverpool Underworld: Crime in the City, 1750-1900*. 1st ed. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
Rowbotham, J.

and Stevenson, K. (2005). *Criminal conversations*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
Old-merseytimes. co. uk.

(2011). *Blackstone St, murder 1884*. online Available at: [http://www. old-merseytimes. co](http://www.old-merseytimes.co).

uk/blackstonestmurder. html Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.
Pearson, G.

(1978). *Contemporary Crisis*. 2nd ed. West Yorkshire: University of Bradford.
Definitions
Juvenile Delinquency. (2018). In: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1st ed.

online Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at: [https://en.oxforddictionaries. com/definition/juvenile_ delinquency](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/juvenile_delinquency) Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

Lark. (2018). In: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1st ed. online Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at: [https://en.oxforddictionaries. com/definition/lark](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/lark) Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

[https://assignbuster. com/definition/lark](https://assignbuster.com/the-all-time-high-and-was-a-serious-problem/) Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

[https://assignbuster. com/definition/lark](https://assignbuster.com/the-all-time-high-and-was-a-serious-problem/) Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

Flogging. (2018). In: Oxford English Dictionary, 1st ed.

online Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/flogging> Accessed 18 Jan.

2018. Online ArticlesThe Echo (2008). Liverpool gangs: Our history of violence. online Available at: <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-gangs-history-violence-3488018>

Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

Wainwright, M. (2008). Meet the historical hoodies. The Guardian. online Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2008/oct/22/hoodies-victorian-manchester-gangs> Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

Bradley, M. (2013). Birmingham's real Peaky Blinders. online BBC News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-24047750> Accessed 18 Jan. 2018. Online ResourcesHiddenlives.org.uk. (n. d.).

Hidden Lives Revealed – Poverty and Juvenile Crime. online Available at: https://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/juvenile_part1.html Accessed 18 Jan.

2018. The National Archives. (n. d.). Victorian children in trouble with the law – The National Archives. online Available at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

2018. The National Archives. (n. d.). Victorian children in trouble with the law – The National Archives. online Available at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Available at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

<https://assignbuster.com/the-all-time-high-and-was-a-serious-problem/>

gov. uk/education/resources/victorian-children-in-trouble/ Accessed 18 Jan. 2018. Farrell, C.

(2017). JUDICIAL AND PRISON FLOGGING AND WHIPPING IN BRITAIN. online Corpun. com. Available at: <https://www.corpun.com/counukj.htm>

Accessed 18 Jan. 2018. Photographs and Online ImagesThe Telegraph

(2013). Peaky Blinders. image Available at: http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02667/Peaky-Blinders_2667908b.jpg

Accessed 18 Jan. 2018. The Guardian (2008).

The Deansgate Mob. image Available at: <https://i.guim.co.uk/img/static/sys-images/Education/Pix/pictures/2008/10/22/GANGgroup.jpg?w=620&h=55&format=jpeg&max=12&crop=a432bcad09fe2d6a4873f264b92778fa>

Accessed 18 Jan. 2018. Find My Past

(2015). Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette article on George Whitehead stabbing a witness.

image Available at: <https://assets.rbl.ms/2356855/980x.jpg>

Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.