



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.

### Mary Jane Bantin

	Surname	Given Names	Age	Trade or Occupation	Degree of Instruction		
<b>Accused</b>	Bantin	Mary Jane	19	Servant	Can read and write imperfectly		
<b>Date of Birth</b>	1864						
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address			
<b>Committing Magistrate (1)</b>	Smith	T. G.	Esq.	Easton Grey, Malmesbury			
<b>Court</b>	Salisbury						
<b>Name of Victim (1)</b>							
<b>Name of Victim (2)</b>							
<b>Date of Warrant</b>	1883	21-Jun					
<b>When Received into Custody</b>	1883	21-Jun		<b>Date of Trial</b>	1883	07-Jul	
<b>Offence as Charged in the Commitment</b>	Administering to herself at Crudwell on the 8th January 1883, she being then with child, certain noxious drugs and things, with intent to procure her own miscarriage 2nd indictment with Francis Charles Norris Holloway a farmer for the same charge. 2nd indictment charge Unlawfully supplying noxious things knowing same to be intended to be used for purpose of procuring her miscarriage (2nd indictment not proceeded with)						
	Surname	Given Names	Title				
<b>Before Whom Tried</b>	Duke	John	Lord Coleridge				
<b>Verdict of Jury</b>	Not Guilty of administering noxious drugs and things						
<b>Particulars of Previous</b>	Nil						

<b>Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court</b>	
<b>Sentence or Order of the Court</b>	Nil
<b>Other crimes Committed</b>	Nil