



Prison Registers in Institutions And Organisations

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 misdemeanors. These records are often very detailed and can include physical descriptions of height, weight and eye colour.

| | Surname | Given Names | Age | Trade or Occupation | Degree of Instruction | | |
|--|---|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------|--|
| Accused | Algar | Sarah Ann | 34 | Charwoman | Neither read nor write | | |
| Birth Year | 1868 | | | | | | |
| | Surname | Given Name | Title | Address | | | |
| Committing Magistrate (1) | Hussey-Freke | A. D. Esq. | | Hannington Hall, Highworth | | | |
| Date of Warrant | 1902 | 16-Oct | | | | | |
| When Received into Custody | 1902 | 16-Oct | | Date of Trial | 1902 | 27-Oct | |
| Offence as Charged in the Commitment | Being a person over the age of 16 years and having the custody of a certain child, to wit Annie Louisa Algar, aged 8 weeks, unlawfully and wilfully did neglect the said child in a manner likely to cause her unnecessary suffering and injury to her health, at Stratton St. Margaret, on the 16th September 1902, and diverse prior dates. | | | | | | |
| | Surname | Given Names | Title | | | | |
| Before Whom Tried | Wright | | Mr. Justice | | | | |
| Verdict of Jury | Not Guilty neglecting child under 16 | | | | | | |
| Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court | | | | | | | |
| Sentence or Order of the Court | Discharged | | | | | | |