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INTRODUCTION

In this latest volume in our series, the focus is on two of the subjects that run through the entire history of the British Isles. In fact, the two key words of our title refer to large-scale elements in our social history. Britons were known as toppers from early times, and equally, they were seen as fractious and truculent. Regarding the first – drink – that is of course a universal aspect of all societies, but for disorder, although we have always been a nation keen to take to the streets when in a dissenting mood, we have avoided the kind of revolution that entails anything too extreme, except for the Civil War, when the Parliament showed what can happen to an autocrat.

As I write this in January, 2021, the television screens show scenes from an insurrection in Washington D.C., and although in my long life I have witnessed some demonstrations and a few public fights in the streets (and indeed in my school) I never thought that I would live in ‘interesting times’ to such a degree. However, British history shows that we have always been a society with violent disorder in our armoury of political and social action. The eighteenth century, for instance, has a long and sad chronicle of riots running through it. The Riot Act of 1715 stands as a watershed at the opening of Georgian England, and at the end of that century riots and disorder escalated into the realms of politics rather than in a context of such things as food shortages, grain prices or savage laws.

Our book offers a guide to these two core subjects in criminal law and also in social history; Stuart Gibbon’s experience as a

detective is invaluable for understanding police procedure in these areas, and my own background as a social historian allows me to weigh in with some thoughts on the problems associated with intemperance and such hugely important topics such as sedition and treason.

The two subjects will be explored at all levels, from the issues around magistrates' courts in a local context, to the superior courts which have dealt with serious political threats to the sovereign's peace. At times in British history (such as the Chartist unrest and petition of the 1830s) violent disorder has been avoided by good sense, planning and police presence. Most riotous outbursts have been local, with a definite aim in view, but there have been terrifyingly intense events of disorder such as the Gordon Riots of 1780. The book will include all the important applications of the law and of criminal investigation in this spectrum of offences and social crises.

Arguably, the most significant issue relating to public disorder is the difficult borderland in the mind we have in law regarding what is political and what is criminal. This became apparent as a problem for the judiciary and for parliament in the 1830s and 40s in the Chartist movement. In that period, a number of Chartist agitators were imprisoned and they were classified as criminals, whereas they defined themselves as political prisoners. Of course, in the aftermath of the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916 that same issue was foregrounded again, and with more complexity.

Our emphasis here will be on the essential criminality of disorder in the streets, and our history has never been short of that kind of threat to the sovereign's peace.

The Authors

This book is a natural progression from our first two reference works, detailed below, and provides something we feel fills a gap on the shelf of the crime writer or reader. The aim was to provide a short guide which would deal with two specific subjects from both the police procedure viewpoint and from the position of a crime historian.

The rationale behind this is simple: the book provides a readable, lucid account of each subject in a manner very different from a book of law or a procedural manual. Students of legal history will want to read this in addition to the standard works, and the general reader will find here a mix of informed guidance on actual policing alongside some narratives of dramatic cases from history.

It is impossible in the space allowed to cover the entire historical development of criminal law in England of course, but we see the book as a starting-point, something to give a taster, as it were, while at the same time being thorough in the treatment of the subjects involved.

Stephen Wade

Stephen's varied working life includes time in offices, on building sites and in retail clothing, but eventually he decided on teaching as a career and became a lecturer in English in further and higher

education. In his last years teaching at university, he was a part-time lecturer at Hull. After leaving his full-time posts, an opportunity came to work as a writer-in-residence in prisons, and he filled that role in three prisons, starting with a stretch of three years at Lincoln.

He became a crime historian after discovering an interest in local and social history, and after producing a number of books, he joined with Stuart on their works for readers and writers of crime, in both fact and fiction. Hence, Stephen is the historian and Stuart the professional detective. The aim in the historical material is to invite the reader to go further and deeper into the state of the law in years gone by.

In addition to his writing, Stephen acts as adviser to television productions on criminal matters, featuring in the BBC series *Murder Mystery and My Family*, and on Channel 5's *Inside Wormwood Scrubs*.

Stuart Gibbon

Stuart Gibbon travelled south from his native north-east to join the Metropolitan Police as a teenager. He successfully completed a tough 16 week training course at Peel Centre in Hendon and in September 1982 was posted to Wembley Division as Police Constable (PC) collar number 727. He worked as a uniformed response officer before becoming a detective and qualifying as a Sergeant. In the year 2000 he transferred to Lincolnshire Police where his career continued to develop. He served as a detective at every rank from Constable to Chief Inspector, during which time he became a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) leading murder

investigations. As a DCI he was seconded to the newly-formed East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) as one of a small number of SIO's in charge of murder and kidnap throughout the five East Midlands police forces.

Following a career of more than 30 years Stuart made the decision to retire from the police service. He is now a writing consultant (GIB Consultancy) who advises authors to ensure their police procedures are accurate and authentic. He also appears on TV and radio as a policing expert and features in true crime documentaries about historical UK murder cases including *999: Killer on the line* and *Deadly Women*.

Our books

Our first book *The Crime Writer's Casebook* was published in December 2017. Although there are many true crime books in circulation, we believe that the *Casebook* is unique in that it looks at crime from both a historical and contemporary perspective. From the chaotic murder scenes of centuries past to the modern technology now used to track down the killer, the *Casebook* has proved hugely popular with the crime community, both writers and readers alike. If you're an aspiring or established writer looking to get your facts right then this book would be a useful addition to your bookshelf.

Book 2 *Being a Detective* is focused on the role of the UK detective, from the creation of the first professional detective department in 1842 to modern-day crime investigators. This book, published in March 2019, contains a wealth of information about

the history and evolution of the detective. Like its predecessor, *Being a Detective* contains true crime case studies and clear explanations for context. Summarised as *An A-Z Readers' and Writers' Guide to detective work past and present* the book is presented in an alphabetical format with over 100 individual subject entries. From the **ABC principle** of crime investigation to **Zombie knife** this book is an essential companion for true crime fans.

The authors have now decided to look more closely at certain individual aspects of crime, the law and police procedure, with the publication of a series of comprehensive guides. These **guides are intended to improve the readers' understanding** of the subject area, whether criminal offences or the procedures involved during their investigation. They will provide you with a unique insight and take you behind the scenes to hear first-hand accounts from historical and modern-day policing.

Neither Stephen nor Stuart is a lawyer qualified in criminal law, but they both have considerable lifetime experience which enables them to speak with authority on the subject of true crime. The combination of a seasoned crime historian and an experienced former police detective will hopefully provide you with an interesting and informative read. They hope that you enjoy reading this guide and thank each and every one of you for your support.