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**How did the First World War influence crime in Somerset?**

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## **Abstract**

During the First World War approximately one quarter of the adult male population of England and Wales were enlisted in the army. This study questions the impact of such a change in population, as well as other effects of war, had on crime in Somerset. The men who left represented, traditionally, what was viewed as the most criminal part of society, but also they were acknowledged to be the heads of households, controlling women and children.

It is widely accepted that criminal statistics do not provide a true picture of criminal activity. However, local records offer the opportunity to study the individuals more closely and review the details of their supposed offences. There are many current questions surrounding the level of juvenile crime, female offenders and the impact of wartime legislation. Using numerous police and court records, as well as newspaper reports, this research provides a contribution to those questions in regard to a rural county. The period from 1911 to 1921 has most frequently been studied in the urban context, and this work challenges the idea of uniformity of wartime experiences.

This study concludes that there was no breakdown in morality of rural society in Somerset. Whilst the county town experienced crimes and offenders which more closely followed national trends, populations of smaller communities appeared to reduce the number and type of crimes they reported and prosecuted. It also concludes that despite the accepted reduction in police numbers, surveillance of the public intensified with Defence of the Realm legislation and centralisation of law enforcement increased.

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## Abbreviations

DORA- Defence of the Realm Act

JS – Judicial Statistics

SJC- Standing Joint Committee

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### **Personal Statement**

This dissertation builds on work in my End of Module Assessment from A825 and as such, some material has been used and referenced. No part of this dissertation has previously been submitted for a degree or other qualification from any other university or institution.

I confirm that this dissertation is entirely my own, independent work.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Dr Steve Bunker for his guidance and support throughout this dissertation, and his encouragement in my BA which started it all. Thank you to all the staff in the Somerset Records Office; particularly Kate and Liz who have helped point me in the direction of valuable material. Most of all, thanks to my husband for his never ending encouragement, patience and proof reading.



## Chapter 1 - Introduction

In his introduction to the 1923 criminal statistics, Mr. W. J. Farrant, Home Office statistician concluded:

Since the war crime appears to have assumed new forms. There has been a great increase of certain descriptions of crimes of dishonesty accompanied by violence [...]. Frauds and commercial dishonesty have also flourished, and it may reasonably be suggested that both classes of offences are in many cases assignable to the long continued debasing effects of the war upon conduct and character.<sup>1</sup>

It might seem reasonable therefore to assume the First World War had definitely impacted on crime in England and Wales, with a continuing influence on behaviour. This research explores the reality of crime during the war in three communities in Somerset, looking at the crimes which were reported to or recorded by the police, the accused who appeared in courts and some elements of the justice system before, during and after the war.

The strength of this research lies in the details available in local archives as they provide data which is not available at a national level. However findings sit within national debates regarding the history of crime, including the value of statistics, the influence of the justice system and issue of gender and youth in crime.

Chris Williams argued that the majority of crime involved disorder and petty offences rather than serious indictable cases and, as such, frequently did not reach the courts.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the key primary sources for the statistical data used here are the police reports and record books for 1911-1921, being the evidence closest to actual events. County data is from Home Office Judicial Statistics for

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<sup>1</sup> *Judicial Statistics, England and Wales, 1923: Part 1 – Criminal Statistics (JS)* (London: HMSO, 1925) p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 'Counting crimes or counting people: some implications of mid-nineteenth century British police returns', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 4, (2000), 77-93 (p. 91).

England and Wales. Local data is from the Daily Record of Crime Book for Ilminster, and both the Registers of Summons, and, of Charges, for Ilminster and Frome. These records provide, to varying degrees, gender, age and occupation of defendants, along with some detail of the crime and who witnessed it. This enabled the creation of a database of recorded events which is compared with Petty Court records from Ilminster, Frome and Taunton and the Quarter Session records for Somerset, supported by qualitative information from newspaper reports.

There are limitations in the figures available. The national post-war summary was produced for indictable offences known to the police, but not for indictable offences in 1915 or 1916. Therefore a breakdown by offence at a national level is not continuous. In itself this indicates the contemporary importance of summary crime. Permission could not be obtained from the courts to examine the 1921 Petty Court Sessions. It is also vital to recognise that all of these figures only reflect those crimes discovered and/or reported. In such a complex social environment as wartime Britain, there would have been many reasons for this not always having been the case. There is no trace of any Refused Charge or Suspected Stolen Books which would have indicated crimes not prosecuted by the police. The variations in recording methods do create some problems in direct comparisons, particularly in the analysis of juvenile crime statistics, where not all were listed in separate courts.

The original intention to explore familial links in a quantitative analysis has not proven possible due to the time required to research connections between common regional surnames. Qualitative sources, however, do provide anecdotal examples. It was also intended to explore the potential for bias in police or

magistrates towards individuals. However, the records vary in how they report the police involvement and many show multiple magistrates for each case. The quantity of records has proven too great to tabulate all years in every case. Where it has proved necessary to sample years, 1911 is used as pre-war base, 1915 as pre-conscription base, 1917 as post-conscription and 1921 as post-war. Appendix 1 is a sample of the tabulation of data.

Studies of crime on the home front were carried out immediately after the war and again later, in light of World War Two, by Hermann Mannheim, Edith Abbott and Victor Bailey, all of whom particularly concentrated on juvenile crime numbers.<sup>3</sup> In the light of recent studies the belief that crime fell due to the removal of young men from society has been questioned.<sup>4</sup> Research into World War One crime has been an element in broader studies, particularly by Clive Emsley, Barry Godfrey and Howard Taylor, in their examinations of the criminal justice system and its influence on recorded statistics. They particularly question the role of the Chief Constable and the influence of watch committees and central government as well as the centralisation of policing.<sup>5</sup>

The creation of new legislation through the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) underlined David Taylor's argument that laws reflect the behaviour which society deems unacceptable.<sup>6</sup> This period covered many new areas in the domestic

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<sup>3</sup> Hermann Mannheim, *Social Aspects of War* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1940) and *War and Crime* (London: Watts & Co, 1941); Edith Abbott, 'Crime and the War', *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 9 (1918) 32-45 and Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender, 1914- 1948* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Zoe Alker and Barry Godfrey, 'War as an opportunity for divergence and desistance from crime, 1750-1945', in *Criminology and War: Transgressing the Borders*, ed. by S. Walklate and Ross McGarry (London: Routledge, 2015) p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in Twentieth-Century England* (Harlow: Pearson, 2011), *The English Police*, (Harlow: Longman, 1991), Crime and Punishment: 10 years of research (1): Filling in, adding up, moving on: Criminal Justice History in Contemporary Britain', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 9, (2005), 117-138 (6) and Howard Taylor, 'The Politics of the Rising Crime Statistics of England and Wales, 1914-1960', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, (1998), 5-28 (15).

<sup>6</sup> *Crime, Policing and Punishment in England, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 17.

sphere.<sup>7</sup> DORA is also the basis of David Englander's examination of surveillance of civilians.<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Swan's investigation of magistrates during the war highlights the chaos of legislative changes and the impact on society and the justice system.<sup>9</sup> Regional studies of crime or policing in the twentieth-century include some detail of war periods.<sup>10</sup>

Local histories of Somerset during the First World War make little reference to crime, generally focussing on the soldiers, the loss of men from the family, voluntary work on the home front and civic matters. Some reference is made to more salacious crimes but none to run-of-the-mill court appearances. No analysis of general crime in Somerset for this period can currently be found.

Few local studies specifically explore crime in the First World War. Andrew Emeny examined juveniles who committed crimes in Southend and responses by police and the wider community. He noted that little research currently exists beyond contemporary accounts of juvenile delinquency in cities but was able to establish differences in the types of crimes committed.<sup>11</sup> Ronald Reeve's research into the East Suffolk Police illustrates aspects of policing from an ex-officer's perspective and argues that the force efficiently and effectively did their duty.<sup>12</sup>

Chapter Two explores the changes in recorded crimes, engaging in debates regarding the creation of laws, and providing evidence of changing criminal justice priorities. Local research provides the data to study crime by age and gender

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<sup>8</sup> 'Military intelligence and the defence of the realm: the surveillance of soldiers and civilians in Britain during the First World War.' *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 52 (1987), 24 - 32.

<sup>9</sup> *Law and War: Magistrates in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> David J V Jones, *Crime and Policing in the Twentieth Century: The South Wales Experience* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> 'When Bill Sykes Junior came to visit: the rise in juvenile crime in Southend during the Great War', *The Local Historian*, 48 (2018), 180-193.

<sup>12</sup>, *When Constabulary Duty's to be Done: The Impact of the Great War on The East Suffolk Police* (Suffolk: Darsham Parochial Church Council, 2010).

which Mannheim found was missing from national statistics.<sup>13</sup> Likewise Emsley recently observed that little research exists into women and crime in wartime, other than as prostitutes or rape victims.<sup>14</sup> Research in Chapter Three challenges contemporary views regarding women and children, whilst examining defendants more closely. Chapter Four examines the impact of the war on police and magistrates and discusses the new relationship between the justice system and the communities they served.

At present no comparable research into overall crime in a rural county during the First World War can be found. Research regarding crimes and those who committed them are based on national or urban statistics. Comparative close examination of smaller communities would highlight the different experiences which could contribute to and challenge the national debate.

*The impact of war on the population of Somerset: some context.*

By 1918 more than eleven percent of the English population were enlisted into the army alone, equating to twenty-four percent of the male population, not including other services.<sup>15</sup> With a population of 458,025 in 1913, a reasonable estimation would suggest that at least 50,000 men were missing from society in Somerset during the war.<sup>16</sup> Whilst there are no precise figures for the volunteers and recruits by county, there is no evidence to contradict Somerset's contribution to the total. Within the first six weeks of the war 15,000 had joined the army and more than 8,000 men did not return.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Social Aspects of War*, p. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Clive Emsley, 'Future Themes and Research Agendas on Crime and Police in Wartime', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/ Crime, History & Societies*, 21 (2017), 77-86 (79).

<sup>15</sup> *General Annual Reports on the British Army: 1913- 1919* (London: HSO, 1921) p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> *JS*, 1913, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> *Somerset County Gazette*, Commemorative edition, 24 July 2014, pp. 2-3.

Originally a centre of woollen cloth production, Frome was latterly more notable for J.W. Singer’s brass foundry and Butler & Tanner’s print works. By 1914 it was experiencing an economic downturn.<sup>18</sup> The urban district population was approximately 11,000, of whom 4,000 were either retired or unoccupied.<sup>19</sup> During the war Singer increased recruitment and switched to munitions manufacture. Ilminster was a smaller community, of around 2,400, with an economy based on textiles and agriculture.<sup>20</sup> The population of county town, Taunton’s municipal borough was 22,500, of whom 7,200 were retired or unoccupied. Employment was in building and construction, or the food, drink and lodging sectors.<sup>21</sup> All had a larger female than male population.

**Table 1.1 Comparative populations: 1911 to 1921.<sup>22</sup>**

Town	1911	1911	1921	1921	+/-	+/-
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Ilminster	1,054	1,413	1,035	1,332	-19	-81
Frome	4,975	5,926	4,768	5,736	-207	-190
Taunton	10,054	12,507	10,914	12,309	+860	-198

Table 1.1 illustrates the overall recovery of the male population in the county, although average age groups and distribution may have differed. The female population fell in all cases. This may be explained by a general move to larger

<sup>18</sup> David Lassman, *Frome in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2016), p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Frome UD through time | Census tables with data for the Local Government District, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, online.

<sup>20</sup> GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Ilminster UD through time | Census tables with data for the Local Government District, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, online.

<sup>21</sup> GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Taunton MB through time | Census tables with data for the Local Government District, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, online.

<sup>22</sup> *A Vision of Britain through Time*, Taunton, Ilminster and Frome, online.

urban centres for wartime work such as munitions, as suggested by Mannheim and Swan, but given Frome's contribution in this industry and the size of Taunton this is debatable.<sup>23</sup> It is important to recognise the fluidity of population, with influxes of soldiers to local garrisons and the departure of existing residents. A report of 4,000 artillery soldiers leaving Frome indicates how significant the population changes could be.<sup>24</sup>

### *Criminal Justice System in Somerset*

Somerset had three police forces at this time, Somerset County, Bridgwater Borough and Bath County Borough. The towns central to this research were three of the fourteen divisions of the County Police Force. They all held Petty Court Sessions and were subject to the Quarter Sessions, held alternatively in Wells or Taunton, as were the Assize Courts.

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<sup>23</sup> Mannheim, *War and Crime*, pp. 67-68, and Swan, p. 219.

<sup>24</sup> *Somerset Standard*, 28 April 1917, p. 4.

## Chapter 2 - Changing Crimes

This chapter explores the changes in recorded crime in three towns in Somerset during the period 1911 to 1921, using police and court records. The patterns of crimes reveal the impact of new legislation, particularly under DORA and the change or continuation of existing offences from pre- to post-war. These quantitative findings are compared with the national and county-wide figures, demonstrating the differences between the national picture and that of a rural county, as well as fluidity in the definition of crime. Contemporary concerns regarding crime and post-war reflections in Britain are examined and compared to the reality away from the large urban centres. Evidence from this chapter will contribute to the assertion in Chapter Four that the records are a greater reflection of changes in the criminal justice system than in the community's behaviour. Throughout is the acceptance that there are unknown and unrecorded crimes which constitute a 'dark figure'.

### *Pre-war crime 1911-1913*

In as far as it is possible to measure the rate and type of crime from statistics, national 'crimes known to the police' indicate that the most frequent indictable offences were against property. Between 1911 and 1913 this equated to seventy-eight percent of total indictable offences, simple larceny being the major of those recorded.<sup>1</sup> Williams stated that disorderly behaviour accounted for most non-indictable or summary crime across England and Wales.<sup>2</sup> Drunkenness with aggravations was the highest of those, along with offences against Police

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<sup>1</sup> *Judicial Statistics 1913, England and Wales, 1913: Part 1 – Criminal Statistics (J.S.)* (London: HMSO, 1915) Table D, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 'Counting crimes or counting people: some implications of mid-nineteenth century British police returns', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 4 (2000), 77-93 (p. 77).

Regulations and the Vagrancy Act. The police returns for non-indictable crimes indicate an increase of over four percent year on year between 1911 and 1913.<sup>3</sup>

The comparative data provided by the whole of Somerset for the Home Office, indicated a reasonably stable level of indictable crime, particularly in the Somerset County force itself. Trends in crime correspond to the national statistics with simple larceny making up around seventy percent of the overall number.<sup>4</sup>

However, non-indictable crimes in Somerset fell by more than thirteen percent. Half of these consisted of offences against the Highways Act, the Education Act, County Bye-Laws, and for drunkenness, either simple or with aggravations.<sup>5</sup>

Education offences included non-attendance and the barring of children who were repeatedly deemed too unclean to attend school. Whilst these are behavioural offences, the pattern differs from the national picture in that Somerset had twice the national percentage of Highway offences and only a third to a quarter of the Drunkenness with aggravations offences.<sup>6</sup>

Frome and Ilminster Summons records for 1911 indicate a similar volume in offences against the Highway Act, Education Act and the Local and County Bye Laws, but also failure to pay rates.<sup>7</sup> Charge records show that larceny accounted for thirty-four percent of all cases in Frome and twenty-three in Ilminster, which was less than the national picture. Drunkenness was almost as significant as larceny in Frome in 1911; whilst Ilminster recorded that over twenty percent of its cases were for Misbehaviour by Paupers; that is a refusal to conform to

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<sup>3</sup>*J.S, 1911, 1912 and 1913*, Table XXIII.

<sup>4</sup>*J.S, 1911, 1912 and 1913*, Table XXVI.

<sup>5</sup>*J.S, 1911, 1912 and 1913*, Table XXVII.

<sup>6</sup>*J.S, 1911, 1912 and 1913*, Table XXIII.

<sup>7</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, Summons book, Shepton Mallet, Radstock, Frome, Weston, 1911-1917, DD\ASC\7/1/15, Register of summons cases, Ilminster, 1911-1921.

workhouse rules.<sup>8</sup> These findings support Howard Taylor's argument that the police prioritised crimes which appeased ratepayers, such as protection of property and public behaviour. He argued that a number of non-indictable laws, but particularly the all-encompassing Vagrancy Act, was used to ensure good behaviour of the working class.<sup>9</sup> However as Peter King pointed out, the charges were often brought by members of the same community and class.<sup>10</sup>

Once charges appeared in court the local pattern is further substantiated.

Taunton's most frequent summary cases were non-payment of rates or drunkenness. Indictable crimes tried at the Quarter Sessions were dominated by larceny; accounting for forty-five percent.<sup>11</sup>

The key finding therefore is that whilst some common factors existed, communities found different crimes to be a priority either due to their frequency or to their importance to local society. Larceny was consistently the dominant indictable crime, but in parts of Somerset, police were handling more offences against the Highways Act and against rate-payers. Vagrancy and drunkenness were arguably perceived as less of a problem in some rural communities than the national picture would imply.

### *Crime during the First World War*

In 1919 Farrant commented that the fall in larceny offences had been 'remarkable' during the war. Whilst there was undoubtedly a decrease in the crime recorded, it must be noted that this is not conclusive proof of a decrease in crime. Howard

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<sup>8</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/12, Register of Charges for Frome division, 1911-1917, DD\ASC\7/1/16, Register of charges for Ilminster district, 1911-1921.

<sup>9</sup> Howard Taylor 'Forging the job: a crisis of 'modernization' or redundancy for the police in England and Wales, 1900-39', *British Journal of Criminology* 39 (1999) 113-135, (115, 116).

<sup>10</sup> *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 358.

<sup>11</sup> D\PS\tau.b/1/9 Taunton(Borough) Petty Sessional Divisional Records, Court Register, 1909-1911, D\PS\tau.b/1/10 Taunton (Borough) Petty Sessional Divisional Records, Court Register, 1911-1912 and Q\SR\842- 845 Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset, Sessions rolls.

Taylor questioned the substantial reduction in numbers of drunks and vagrants, suggesting that such a decrease was convenient to the government. He cited contemporary sources who were dubious; particularly a *Times* article suggesting that the prosecution of offences had fallen rather than the number offences committed.<sup>12</sup> The criminal justice system is explored in Chapter Four but its influence must be borne in mind whilst considering the statistics examined below.

Although Farrant's introduction concentrated on the reduction in crimes reported by the courts, he acknowledged the discrepancy between court and police reports, the latter being less optimistic.<sup>13</sup> In fact, whilst national indictable 'crimes known to the police' fell in the first two years, in 1916 the figures increased again.<sup>14</sup>

Mannheim argued that after the initial rush of solidarity and excitement, life returned to normal, including crime.<sup>15</sup> However the pattern for non-indictable crime contradicts this. The records in 1914 and 1918 documented a substantial fall of over thirty two percent.<sup>16</sup> This trend is further substantiated by the more complete Summary Court returns which indicate a fall of over forty percent, bar a spike in 1916. This was caused by offences against DORA legislation as illustrated below (N.B. Some DORA offences fell within the Highways Act statistics).

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<sup>12</sup> 'Forging the Job' (119 -120).

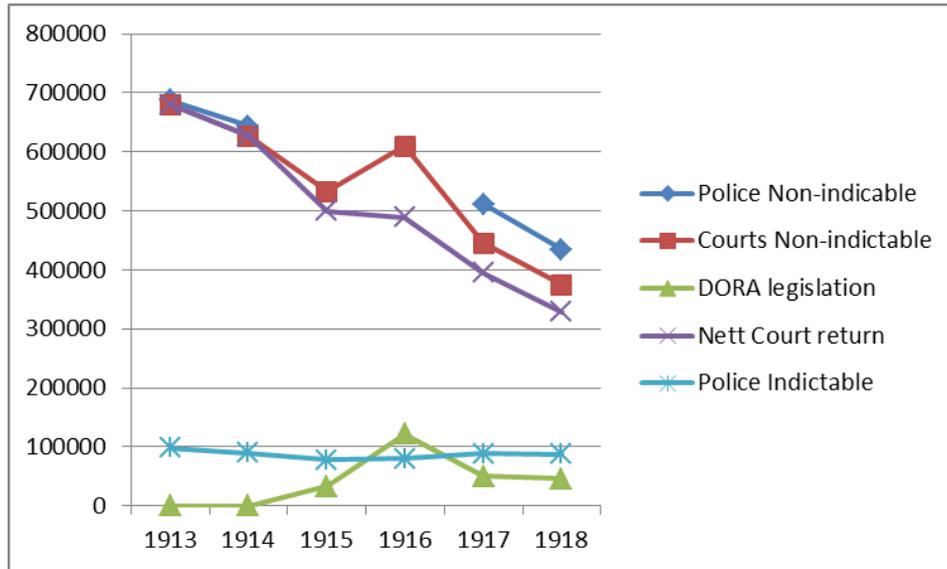
<sup>13</sup> *J.S, 1919*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *J.S 1919*, Table D.

<sup>15</sup> Hermann Mannheim, *War and Crime* (London, Watts & Co, 1941) p. 76.

<sup>16</sup> *J.S, 1914, 1917 and 1918*, Table XXIII.

**Figure 2.1 Indictable and Non-indictable crimes: England and Wales.<sup>17</sup>**



It should be noted that this downward trend started before the outbreak of war and that given the reduction in the population of young adult males, a fall in crime could be anticipated; not least because this section of society had traditionally been responsible for the highest number of crimes recorded.<sup>18</sup> Mannheim went as far as to suggest an underlying increase in indictable crime, given the population changes.<sup>19</sup>

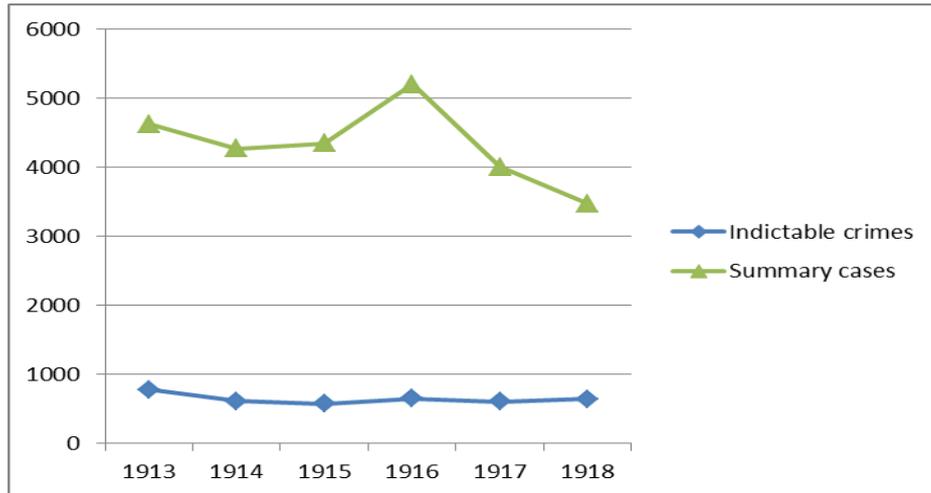
A comparable pattern is evident in the indictable offences reported by the Somerset County force to the Standing Joint Committee (SJC); however there was a small rise in 1915 non-indictable crimes reported, as well as the 1916 spike. Deputy Chief Constable Brown commented that the 1916 indictable increase was largely due to an increase in property offences committed by juveniles and the non-indictable offences were 'principally the lights order'.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> JS 1913- 18, Table D, Table XXIII and JS, 1919, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in Twentieth-Century England* (Harlow: Pearson, 2011) p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> *War and Crime* (London: Watts & Co, 1941), p. 97.

<sup>20</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Somerset Constabulary, Proceedings of the Standing Joint Committee, 2 April 1917.

**Figure 2.2 Somerset County force crimes reported to the SJC.<sup>21</sup>**

Brown's claims are explored below. The data challenges the simplicity of Mannheim's thesis, indicating a more complex pattern. Although Farrant stated that crime fell due to the decrease in police numbers, Brown informed the SJC at the same meeting of a shortfall of eighty men from his county's allocation of 375. These crimes may have been recorded by a significant force of special constables or may indicate a change in priorities for the established force.

Likewise, fewer summonses were reported in Frome and Ilminster's registers in 1915. Ilminster's offences fell by fifty-two percent, across most categories, but most particularly in offences against the Education Act and non-payment of rates. By comparison, in Frome, education was one of the few categories to increase. Education offences were prosecuted by a private agency, several of which developed over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, enforcing new welfare regulations, particularly those concerning children and animals.<sup>22</sup>

In keeping with Mannheim's thesis, 1917 summonses in Frome rose, although they exceeded those of 1911. With fifty offences against DORA and 187 against

<sup>21</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings of the SJC, 1913 -1918.

<sup>22</sup> Barry Godfrey, 'Changing Prosecution Practices and their Impact on Crime Figures, 1857-1940', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 48 (2008), 171-189 (184).

the Highways Act, they were predominately about light restrictions.<sup>23</sup> These recorded offences clearly illustrate the shift in priorities towards wartime legislation and away from previous social concerns. As Swan argues, the lighting controls had a greater impact than any other DORA legislation.<sup>24</sup> Newspapers regularly reported on the numerous lighting offences. Miss Mary Marsh of Ilminster was killed by a cyclist due; it was claimed, to insufficient street lighting.<sup>25</sup> Newspapers referred to 'the more than customary shoal of "lights" cases'.<sup>26</sup> Letters and opinion columns repeatedly questioned the necessity for such tight controls in an area which had not suffered air attacks. The local authorities of Ilminster were accused of being 'timorous' and appeals were made to the Home office to intervene.<sup>27</sup> In the last month of the war, ratepayers of Frome met to discuss the lighting restrictions which they believed to be the worst in England.<sup>28</sup> This all occurred after Mr Villar, of the SJC , had reported Deputy Chief Constable Brown to the Home Office for his 'extreme interpretation' of lighting restrictions.<sup>29</sup>

Figures 2.3 and 2.4 illustrate the impact of bicycle and cart offences on the crime levels in Frome and Ilminster in 1917. They also reflect the other changes in levels of crime such as decline in County Bye-Law offences, drunkenness and vagrancy and the increases in larceny and malicious damage.

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<sup>23</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13 , DD\ASC\8/5/14, Summons book, Shepton Mallet, Radstock, Frome, Weston, 1917-1921 and DD\ASC\7/1/15, Summons, Ilminster.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Swan, *Law and War: Magistrates in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books Ltd, 2017), p. 137.

<sup>25</sup> *Chard and Ilminster News (CIN)*, 5 Feb 1916, p. 3.

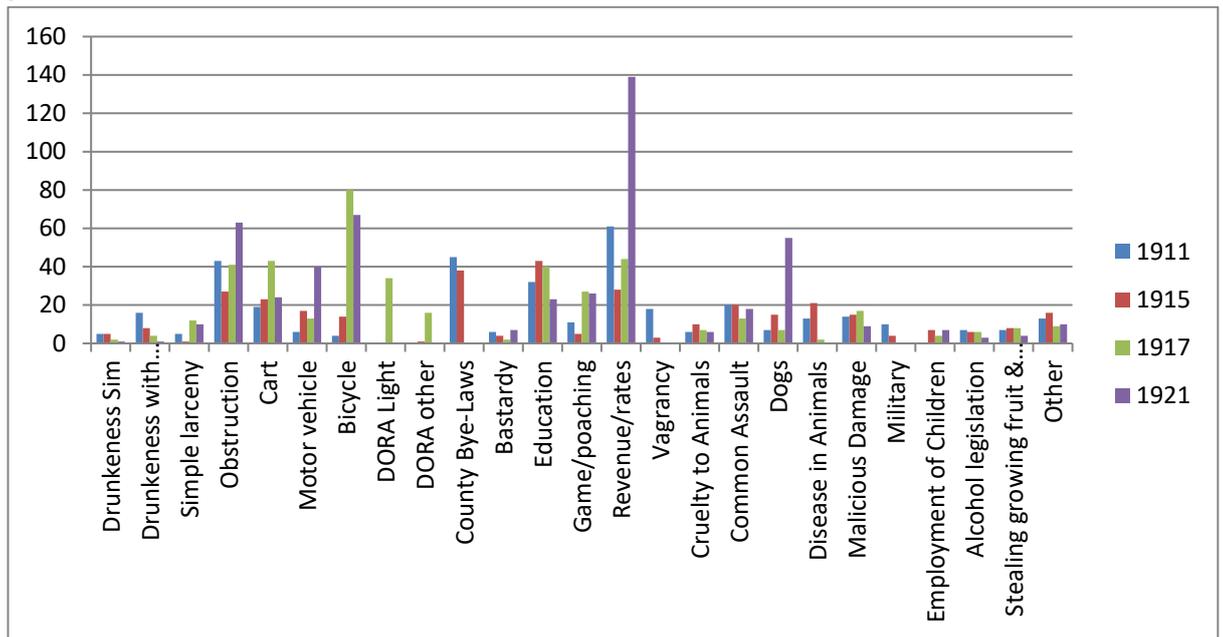
<sup>26</sup> *CIN*, 8 Sept 1917, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *CIN*, 27 Oct 1917, pp. 3 - 4, 1 Dec 1917, p. 3.

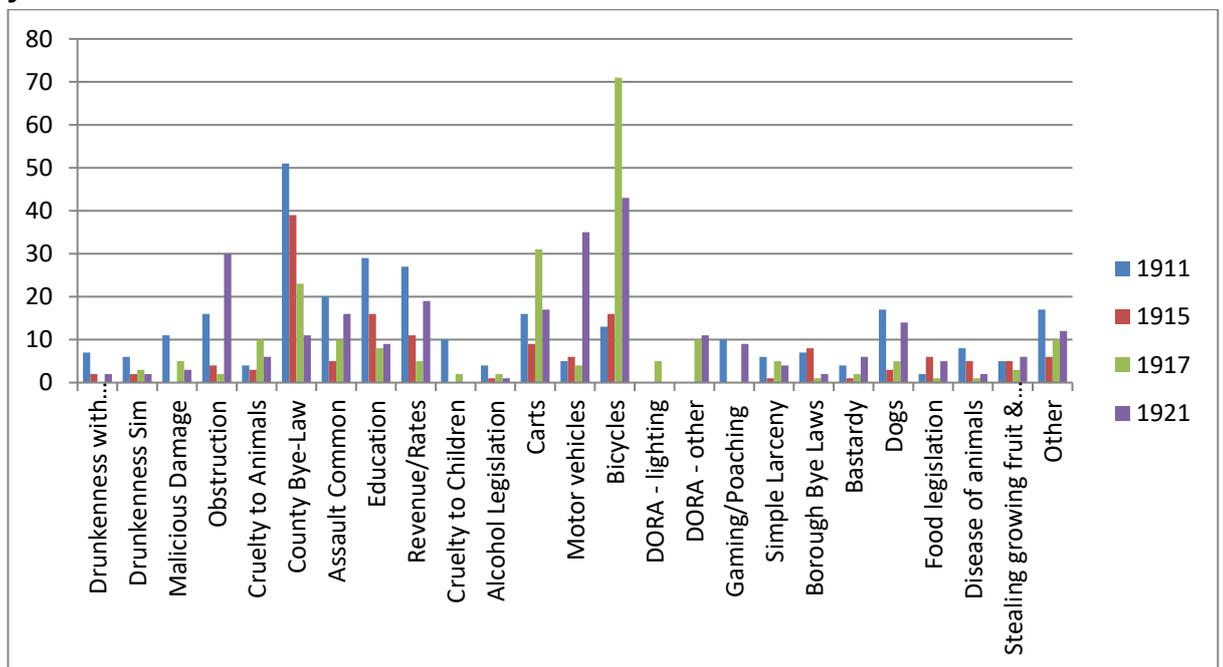
<sup>28</sup> *Somerset Standard, (SS)*, 1 Nov, p. 2 and 8 Nov, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser (TWCA)*, 3 Jan 1917, p. 5.

**Figure 2.3 Frome, non-indictable summon offences from sampled years.<sup>30</sup>**



**Figure 2.4 Ilminster, non-indictable summon offences from sampled years.<sup>31</sup>**



The evidence of these statistics supports Howard Taylor’s thesis that DORA legislation gave the police new work, which, he argued, justified their continued

<sup>30</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13 and DD\ASC8/5/14.

<sup>31</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/15.

importance and therefore funding. Rather than a return to pre-war behaviour this marked a shift from preventative policing which had previously been the highest priority.<sup>32</sup>

Summonses in Frome for poaching rose significantly in 1917, to above pre-war levels. Nine cases involving adult men were recorded on one August day. Along with other communities across the country, Frome had introduced voluntary food rationing in April.<sup>33</sup> Edward Harding, a discharged soldier was fined one pound for shooting a pheasant because he could 'not buy anything and he must get something somehow'.<sup>34</sup> Four Ilminster boys were caught rabbiting on Christmas Day 1917. However, the landowner decided not to prosecute.<sup>35</sup> Reports suggested that food prices had increased by an average of 104 percent since July 1914.<sup>36</sup> The rapid increase in the cost of living for unskilled workers in particular has been cited as a reason for wartime crime.<sup>37</sup> By December 1917 food shortages became greater and rationing was formalised. Whilst Swan found that food hoarding was a common wartime offence, few cases were recorded in Somerset.<sup>38</sup> Theft of food featured more regularly. Dorothy Marsh was charged in both 1916 and 1918 for stealing growing fruit and vegetables, exemplifying recidivist behaviour.<sup>39</sup> Equally, instigation of compulsory coal rationing in July 1917 resulted in an increase in the theft of coal and wood. One weaver with forty-two years continuous employment was prosecuted for stealing coal from work.

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<sup>32</sup> Howard Taylor, 'The Politics of the Rising Crime Statistics of England and Wales, 1914-1960', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 2 (1998), 5-28 (8 and 14).

<sup>33</sup> David Lassman, *Frome in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2016) p. 118.

<sup>34</sup> *SS*, 19 April 1917, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *CIN*, 2 February 1918, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *CIN*, 21 July 1917, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 235.

<sup>38</sup> Swan, p. 215.

<sup>39</sup> *CIN*, 7 September 1918, p. 4.

However, the managing director allowed him to keep his job.<sup>40</sup> Frome police recorded more larceny, stealing growing food and poaching than Ilminster, which may reflect the early move to rationing.

In 1915 only one of the fifteen cases of simple larceny in the Frome Register of Charges was brought by the police; by 1917 all forty-one cases were. Ilminster Registers for both years record all simple larceny complainants as being private citizens, with cases falling from fourteen to five. It is the private prosecutions which appeared to be falling, and those pertinent to police increasing. In line with King's argument, this indicates a degree of discretion and leniency on the part of victims in their decision to prosecute. Williams argued that because police were required to witness a crime or be instructed by a witness, the pattern of crimes changed as the prosecution process changed.<sup>41</sup> The evidence points to police behaviour and priorities being responsible for the difference in statistics. The changing pattern of crime also demonstrates the tension between the concerns of central government and local rate-payers, given that the police were funded by both.

Taunton Petty Court records, below, reveal a different pattern and raise questions regarding the significance of community size on crimes recorded and the discrepancy between police and court records. Pre-war non-payment of rates, offences against the Education Act and drunkenness changed significantly. Assault and wilful damage rose in 1915, perhaps fuelled by the increase in drunkenness. As the Jellalabad Barracks in Taunton was the home of the Somerset Light Infantry, it should also be recognised that there was a temporary but significant increase in the population of young men. The remarkable drop in drunkenness by 1917 undoubtedly reflects, at least in part, the increasing

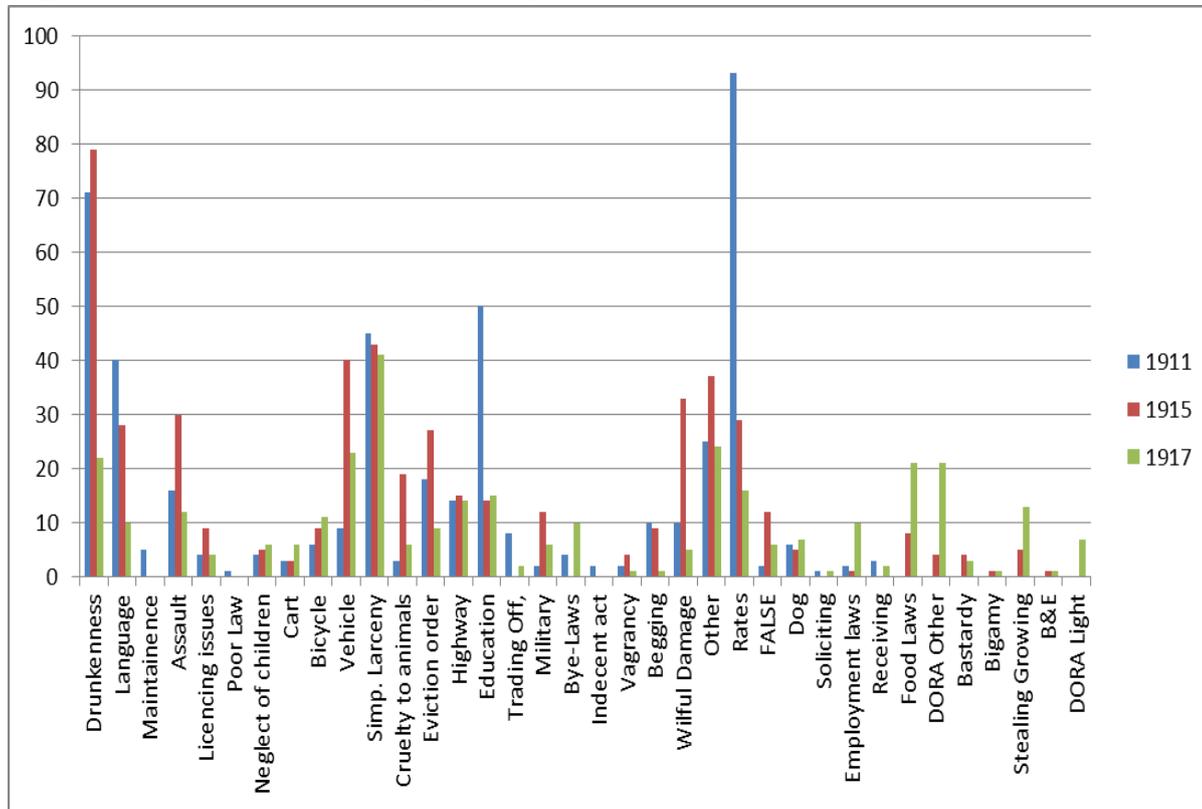
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<sup>40</sup> SS, 21 September 1917, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> King, p. 17 and Williams, p. 83.

imposition of alcohol restrictions. Whilst DORA legislation increased in 1917 it did not impact on Taunton Courts to the degree one might expect.

**Figure 2.5 Taunton Borough Petty Court cases, 1911, 1915 and 1917.<sup>42</sup>**



As mentioned above, petty crimes often failed to reach court. Ilminster Petty Sessions provide comparative contextualisation. They recorded thirty-one cases against the seventy-one summonses and only twelve DORA lighting cases against thirty-four summonses.<sup>43</sup> It is therefore possible that many cases existed in the missing Taunton police records. As King argued, the process of prosecution acted as a filter, which reflected the community’s values.<sup>44</sup> Against the national trend, simple larceny remained constant in the Taunton Courts. Very few cases of larceny appeared in Ilminster Courts pre-war, but there were fewer still during the war. Only eighteen cases of simple larceny and five of stealing growing fruit and

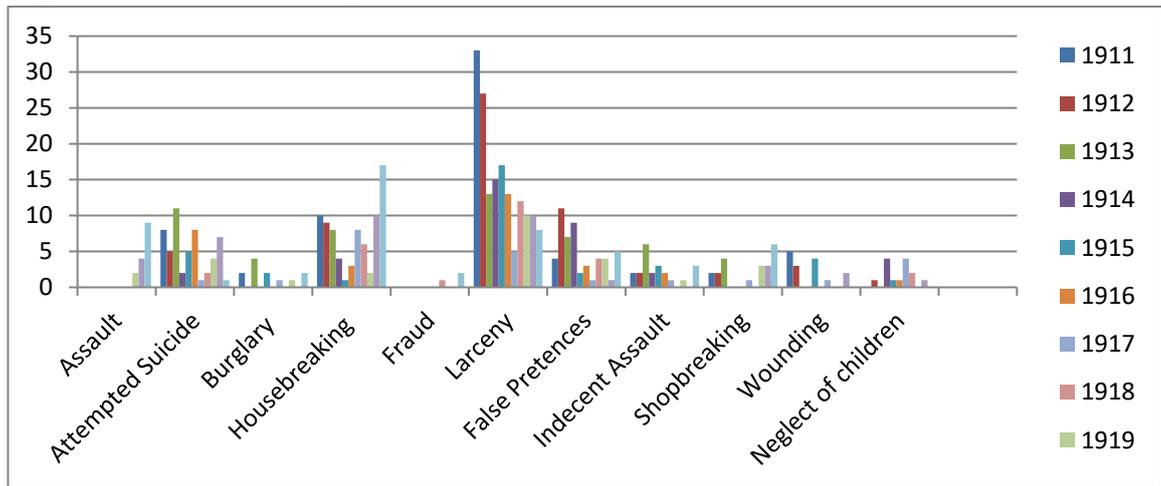
<sup>42</sup> D\PS\tau.b/1/9 – D\PS\tau.b/1/15.

<sup>43</sup> D\PS\ilm/1/11, Ilminster Petty Sessional Division Records, Court Register. 28 Apr 1915 -31 Jul 1918.

<sup>44</sup> King, p. 17.

vegetables were prosecuted; compared with 177 cases involving bicycles, carts and motor vehicles.<sup>45</sup> Arguably, members from smaller communities exercised greater leniency to their neighbours during the war. Further breakdown of national larceny figures would be required to understand the urban and rural differences.

**Figure 2.6 Somerset Quarter Session cases, 1911-1921.<sup>46</sup>**



Quarter Sessions appearances for larceny fell before the war and again, in contradiction to Mannheim’s theory, rose between 1914 and 1916. In 1917 they accounted for only five of the twenty-four offences.<sup>47</sup> Again this challenges the degree of discretion being exercised, police activity and actual criminal behaviour.

*Post-war crime*

Categories of indictable crime being judged at Somerset Quarter Sessions are illustrated in Figure 2.6. The number of cases was gradually increasing from the low point in 1917, but had not reached pre-war levels by 1921. In line with national statistics housebreaking, shop-breaking and assault cases had grown and larceny had dropped, indicating a trend towards more violent crimes against property.

<sup>45</sup> D\PS\ilm/1/9, Ilminster Petty Sessional Division Records, Court Register, 1911-1915 and D \PS\ilm/1/11.

<sup>46</sup> Q\SR\842 - 873, Quarter Session Records for the County of Somerset.

<sup>47</sup> Q\SR\842- 873.

Nationally, indictable 'crimes known to the police' rose by almost thirty-eight percent between 1915 and 1922. Although offences against property with violence increased, there was also a steady growth in those without violence.<sup>48</sup>

Additionally, cases of abortion, concealment of birth and bigamy escalated.

Farrant expressed particular concern regarding bigamy which rose from 133 cases in 1913 to 917 in 1919. He also suggested that it was comparable to the increase in petitions for divorce, perhaps attempting to reduce its significance.<sup>49</sup> Whilst Farrant noted the overall reduction in non-indictable crimes reaching the courts, as compared to 1913, he also acknowledged the changing nature of those crimes; notably the doubling of highway offences and the more than halving of cases of drunkenness.<sup>50</sup>

Differing from the national trends, Chief Constable Metcalfe reported increases in non-indictable crimes in 1919 and 1920, citing both highway and drunkenness offences.<sup>51</sup> Somerset County force also recorded an increase in indictable crime by more than twenty-three percent in 1920, reducing in 1922.<sup>52</sup> An escalation in the number of simple larceny cases was cited as the cause. Given the concern around rising unemployment as serving men returned, economic reasons may factor in this trend.<sup>53</sup> Emsley has also suggested that economic hardship can encourage more individuals to report crime.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *J.S. 1922 and 1924*, Table D.

<sup>49</sup> *J.S. 1919*, p. 5.

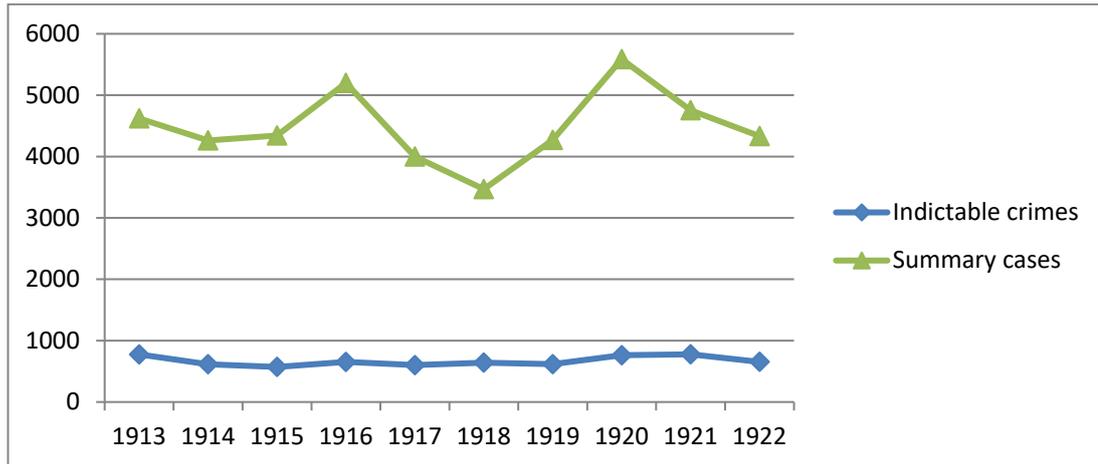
<sup>50</sup> *J.S. 1922*, P. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Metcalfe is variously referred to with and without the 'e' in contemporary sources.

<sup>52</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings SJC, April 1921.

<sup>53</sup> *T.C.W.A.*, 19 February 1919, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police & Penal Policy: European Experiences 1750-1940* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), p. 440.

**Figure 2.7 Somerset County force crimes (incl.1919-22) reported to SJC.<sup>55</sup>**

Comparison of the post-war summons trends in Ilminster and Frome, as illustrated above in Figures 2.3 and 2.4 raises interesting questions. In 1911 the difference between the two was seventy-six. Throughout the war the differential grew. By 1921 Ilminster recorded forty-four fewer cases than in 1911, mainly due to a reduction in offences against county bye-laws. In contrast, owing to substantial increases in offences in relation to dogs, revenue and highways, Frome recorded 514 cases, 128 more than 1911. To a lesser degree, revenue had always been a significant contributor to pre-war summonses, as had obstruction of the highway, but the substantial growth in cases involving bicycles and cars indicate a continuation of war-time primacy.

Ilminster police summoned fewer people for highway, dog or revenue offences but all did feature. The importance of revenue at this time is obvious but the sudden interest in dogs is a distinctly post-war phenomenon. The 1919 national criminal statistics reported an increase of over 300 percent, without explanation.<sup>56</sup> Frome's increase was only slightly short of this national average, whilst Ilminster's cases rose to a lesser degree. The most compelling reason found for this was an outbreak of rabies, caused by soldiers smuggling dogs back from France. Devon

<sup>55</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings of the Standing Joint Committee, 1911-1922.

<sup>56</sup> *J.S. 1919*, p. 7.

recorded almost one hundred cases in eight months and there is evidence of a tightening in regulations as a consequence.<sup>57</sup> Fines were imposed to prevent dogs from Devon crossing into Somerset, and any dogs found to have done so were shot.<sup>58</sup> Some muzzling orders stayed in place until 1921.<sup>59</sup>

Ilminster and Taunton recorded fewer charges in 1921. Frome documented approximately one quarter of the 1911 volume, and Ilminster around one third. As seen in Chapter One, the populations had recovered. Either, behaviour of the population had been changed by war, or the police were adopting a different strategy to crime. Chapter Four will explore this further.

The findings demonstrate the fluid nature of the definition of crime and the impact that external events can have on the behaviour which society agrees to accept or reject. Emsley suggested for instance that prior to the war traffic offences had not been seen as criminal but during the war they accounted for a large percentage of police and court activity.<sup>60</sup> The sudden emergence of dog offences in an emergency situation indicates that an existing law can be more emphatically enforced, whilst the disappearance from the records of vagrancy implies the opposite. The changes in the definition of crime at this point were decided by central government to reflect the demands of war on the home front but also they were interpreted by the police and the public, and prosecutions depended upon that interpretation. This resulted in significant differences within similar communities in the same county.

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<sup>57</sup> *T.C.W.A.*, 23 April 1919, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Western Times*, 28 October 1918, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *T.C.W.A.*, 14 December 1921, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> *Crime, Police & Penal Policy*, p. 439.

## Chapter 3 - Defendants

This chapter identifies those who were accused of crimes, and how their profile may have differed from pre-war defendants. Newspapers provide supporting evidence of familial connections, recidivists and some background. The chapter examines the continuity and change, with a focus on women and children. Given the contemporary concerns regarding moral behaviour it will specifically challenge the accepted opinion that female and, in particular, juvenile crime increased, through closer examination of offending behaviour. As Emsley suggested, war can 'reshape' both the offences and the offenders.<sup>1</sup> As in the previous chapter it provides evidence that the criminal justice system is reflected to a much greater degree in the records than an actual change in behaviour or crime.

### *Continuity*

In late February 1917, Ann Plowman of Taunton was charged with prostitution.<sup>2</sup> The newspaper report mentioned 'loitering' rather than directly referring to soliciting or prostitution, as was common in Somerset in this period.<sup>3</sup> The previous year, on her thirty-second appearance, Ann had been given three months' hard labour for 'being a great danger to soldiers' and the year prior, the same sentence for being drunk and disorderly and being seen talking to soldiers.<sup>4</sup> Within the context of Regulation 40D of DORA, making it illegal for women with venereal disease to have sexual intercourse, this is an indication that they feared Ann might spread disease. Hers was a story of repeat offences, frequent periods of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Future Themes and Research Agendas on Crime and Police in Wartime', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 21 (2017), 77- 86 (78).

<sup>2</sup> D\PS\tau.b/6/1/14, Taunton (Borough) Petty Sessional Divisional Records, Court Register, 1916-1917, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser (TCWA)*, 7 March 1917, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *TCWA*, 9 Feb 1916, p. 4 and 5 May 1915, p. 3.

incarceration and a cycle of poverty on release.<sup>5</sup> Like many others, Ann was referred to as an 'Old Offender' by the newspapers. Sarah Morris of Shuttern, Taunton was another regular in the Taunton Borough Court Sessions. According to the police she was 'difficult to find sober'.<sup>6</sup> Whilst she had long periods of reform, the police accredited these to the deterrent of gaol and the probation system of supervision.<sup>7</sup> In neither case is there evidence that the women's behaviour was changed by the war.

Henry Shobrooke had numerous convictions between 1897 and May 1914, but he next appeared in Taunton Court in May 1919 being sentenced to two months' hard labour for living off immoral earnings and soliciting. At the Michaelmas sessions he received a further six months' hard labour for breaking and entering.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, James Palmer appeared in 1920, adding to his previous forty-two convictions prior to April 1915.<sup>9</sup> These men had their normal pattern of behaviour interrupted by the war but nevertheless returned to it. It may be that, as nineteenth-century statistician Adolphe Quetelet theorised, they had merely transferred their crimes to whichever theatre of war they served.<sup>10</sup>

Each community had familiar names appearing in police records, such as the Joyce family from Castle Street, Frome, who were regularly summoned for failing to send their children to school, obscene language or in fifteen-year-old Russell's case being found in a military store.<sup>11</sup> Likewise the name Chivers appeared frequently, although not from a single address. Seventeen-year-old Stanley was

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<sup>5</sup> Lucy Williams and Barry Godfrey, *Criminal Women 1850-1920* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2018) pp. 129-135.

<sup>6</sup> TCWA, 21 June 1916, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> TCWA, 18 June 1919, p. 3 and 22 June 1921, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Q\SR/877, Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset, Sessions rolls, Michaelmas 1919 and TCWA, 7 May 1919, p. 4 and 22 October 1919, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Q\SR/879, Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset, Sessions Rolls, Spring 1920.

<sup>10</sup> Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police, & Penal Policy: European Experiences 1750- 1940* (Oxford: OUP, 2007) p. 235.

<sup>11</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, Summons book, Shepton Mallet, Radstock, Frome, Weston, 1911-1917, p. 149, p. 150 and p. 161.

summoned for playing football in the street, Frank was charged with stealing snowdrops, and several entries for John Chivers may or may not be connected.<sup>12</sup> Men, women and children from particular families had regular interaction with the police. For example Caroline Button was accused of being drunk and disorderly. Later the same year, the same policeman PC Thorne, caught her sons, Frederick aged thirteen and William aged eight, stealing apples. Frederick received six strokes for the offence. Records show that Frederick had appeared repeatedly, for stealing or damaging crops, both before and during the war.<sup>13</sup> Particular street names also reoccur. Castle Street, The Butts and Innox Hill were favourites in Frome. This may be due to the fact that patrolling police were generally located in the poor, working class streets.<sup>14</sup> There is potential for further research into familial connections and their relationship with the police. Historians have argued that this level of petty crime was the basis of communication between the police and the public.<sup>15</sup>

For some the war brought about changes which resulted in their appearance in court for the first time.

A large proportion of the non-indictable offences are not serious crimes but only contraventions of regulations [...] and it might be expected that in times of stress, such as the country passed through during the period under consideration, such regulations would be enforced with less stringency than usual.<sup>16</sup>

Whilst Farrant's post-war statement illustrates the fluidity of the nature of crime, it dismisses the significant change in interactions between the community and the

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<sup>12</sup> DD|ASC\8/5/13, Summons, Frome, p. 149 and p. 159.

<sup>13</sup> *Shepton Mallet Journal*, 7 October 1913, p. 6, 1 September 1916, p. 2 and 24 November 1916, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Emsley, *Crime, Police & Penal Policy*, p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> Chris A. Williams, 'Counting crimes or counting people, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 4, (2000) 77-93 (79), includes citation from Gatrell and Davis.

<sup>16</sup> *Judicial Statistics, England and Wales, 1919: Part 1 – Criminal Statistics (JS)* (London: HMSO, 1921) p. 7.

criminal justice system which had taken place during the war. Far from seeing the war period as a less stringent society, some historians have argued that DORA was a method of increasing control.<sup>17</sup> The rapidly changing legislation brought many to the attention of police who had had no previous relationship with them and to support adherence to regulations, thousands of additional special constables were enlisted.<sup>18</sup> The summonses entries, due to their volume, are used here to give the clearest insight into the impact of war on the people of Ilminster and Frome.

### *Women and crime*

During 1911 the Ilminster police summoned twenty people for assault, nine being women.<sup>19</sup> Examples reported in the press involved neighbours with long-standing disagreements, in public scuffles. The complainant was frequently the other woman.<sup>20</sup> This finding concurs with research by Lucy Williams and Barry Godfrey, which found that the close physical proximity of neighbours was frequently a cause of friction.<sup>21</sup> During the war however, the most frequent appearances by women in the Ilminster police summons records are for offences involving bicycles and those against the Education Act; prosecutions driven by police or agencies.

Responsibility for the education of children shifted and by 1917, twenty-two percent of summonses were against mothers rather than fathers as was previously the case. In both 1917 and 1921, there was only one case for an assault by a female, with none at all in 1915.<sup>22</sup> The shared experience of war may have changed the nature of community relationships, either actual behaviour or

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<sup>17</sup> Barry Godfrey and Paul Lawrence, *Crime and Justice Since 1750*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 43 and p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings of the Standing Joint Committee, 1911- 1921, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/15, Register of Summons, Ilminster, 1911-1921.

<sup>20</sup> An example in detail: *Chard and Ilminster News (CIN)*, 28 Jan 1911, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Williams, pp. 13-14.

<sup>22</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/15, Summons, Ilminster.

decisions to prosecute. Whilst the police had previously issued summons, it was the complainants who had driven the legal process and this ceased to be the case during the war. Police activity was increasingly determined by DORA legislation, whilst separate bodies ensured continued implementation of central interests such as school attendance, and welfare regulations.

The 1911 Frome pattern was similar, with twenty-five percent of all defendants summoned for assaults being women. The greatest volume of offences involving female defendants concerned obscene language, a county bye-law.<sup>23</sup> During 1915 the number of assaults fell very slightly but as in Ilminster, women became increasingly responsible for enforcing school attendance, with summonses against them doubling. Falsely claiming separation allowances was a specifically wartime offence. Anne Watts and Martha Payne were fined for overstating the impact of their sons' absence.<sup>24</sup> As DORA legislation increased so did the numbers of women accused of transgressions. Twenty-one of the forty-eight female defendants in 1917, were for DORA and bicycle offences. Assault and language summons were minimal.<sup>25</sup> In both communities drunkenness in women was rarely recorded. Whilst this does not provide evidence of the actual level of drunkenness or disorderly behaviour, it certainly indicates that any such occurrences failed to be a priority to police within those communities.

From the sampled years, Frome recorded the highest number of charges against women in 1911. Eleven cases of drunkenness contributed to the total of twenty-three. These decreased consistently during and immediately after the war.<sup>26</sup>

Charges by Ilminster police provide a smaller sample and female offenders rose

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<sup>23</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, Summons, Frome.

<sup>24</sup> D\PS\ fr /1/17, Frome Magistrates Court Registers, 1911 - 1914, p. 62.

<sup>25</sup> D\PS\ fr /1/19, Frome Magistrates Court Registers, 1915- 1918.

<sup>26</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/12 and DD\ASC\1/13, Registers of Charges, Frome, 1911 - 1917 and 1917 - 1921.

slightly in 1915, but only one was charged with drunkenness and no women were charged in 1917. This contradicts the report in the *Taunton Courier* stating that 'drinking amongst women had increased considerably' and that it was 'high time that further restrictions should be placed on [them]'.<sup>27</sup> National concerns regarding women and drink were recounted regularly in *The Times*. Alarm centred on the separation allowance being spent irresponsibly, the impact of alcohol on national efficiency and to a large degree on the behaviour of women in public, 'without the restraint of their husbands' presence'.<sup>28</sup> The supervision of women by police was encouraged by the War Office as early as November 1914, and the Army Council considered various options regarding use of the separation allowance to control women's behaviour.<sup>29</sup> A national advisory committee was established to investigate the matter.<sup>30</sup> Given that it has been argued that women who failed to conform to acceptable gender norms were harshly treated by courts, it would be expected that any such female behaviour would be evident in police records.<sup>31</sup> However, Frances Heidensohn suggested that the degree of control exerted over women gave them less opportunity to commit crimes.<sup>32</sup> A causal factor may lie in the statement from the 1917 report by the National Council of Public Morals, that 'our streets are now more rigidly supervised than ever before'.<sup>33</sup> Emsley's research has pointed to police priorities including supervision of female conduct.<sup>34</sup> However, there is evidence that larger towns experienced a slightly different pattern.

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<sup>27</sup> Sir Thomas Hughes quoted 16 Feb 1916, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 31 August 1915, p. 3 and 9 August 1915, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Swan, *Law and War: Magistrates in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2017), pp. 183-4.

<sup>30</sup> *The Times*, 10 November 1915, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Clive Emsley, 'Crime and Punishment: 10 years of research (1)', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 9 (2005), 117-138 (p. 12).

<sup>32</sup> Frances Heidensohn, *Women and Crime*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 32 and p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> Godfrey and Lawrence, p. 141.

<sup>34</sup> *Great British Bobby* (London: Quercus, 2009), p. 179 and p. 190.

Prior to 1914 drunkenness and obscene language accounted for forty-three percent of the total number of crimes prosecuted against women in Taunton Borough Petty Court. This may include other 'unacceptable' female behaviour, such as prostitution.<sup>35</sup> This remained similar in 1915 but declined significantly by 1917. The 1917 Petty Court statistics were skewed significantly by an industrial dispute at the Somerset Steam Laundry, without which, there would have been a fall in female defendants. Ten women were charged with four offences each, accounting for a third of the total 126 cases against women.<sup>36</sup> Along with drunkenness and obscene language, evictions and non-payment of rates had diminished by 1917. This trend replicated male prosecutions. There were, however, significant increases in the level of larceny accusations against women. Fourteen of the year's forty-one larceny charges were against women.

Prostitution was more frequently reported in war-time Taunton than in the other communities and in the main with reference to older, repeat offenders like Ann Plowman. Despite the large barracks in Taunton, there is no evidence of a rise in prostitution with only a single case reaching the Summary Court in 1918.<sup>37</sup> The public concerns regarding large army camps and the morals of young girls are not borne out by the national prostitution statistics which more than halved between 1913 and 1919.<sup>38</sup> Charlotte Coleman was one of the few exceptions found in the police records for Frome.<sup>39</sup> She had been lodging with Winifred Parfitt for three weeks when they were both arrested for importuning in December 1917. Coleman was bound over as it was deemed she had been led astray.<sup>40</sup> Parfitt had

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<sup>35</sup> Williams & Godfrey, pp. 14-15.

<sup>36</sup> D\PS\tau.b/1/9 – D\PS\tau.b/1/15 Taunton (Borough) Petty Sessional Divisional Records Courts Registers 1911 – 1921.

<sup>37</sup> *J.S. 1918*, Table XII.

<sup>38</sup> *JS, 1919*, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, Summons, Frome, p. 200.

<sup>40</sup> *Somerset Standard (SS)*, 28 December 1917, p. 3.

previously been accused of 'being at home when soldiers and other men visited' whilst her husband was serving abroad, as well as leading 'at least six girls astray'.<sup>41</sup> In June the following year Coleman was sent to prison for a month for stealing money.<sup>42</sup> Drunk and disorderly cases occasionally mention women being 'seen about at night with soldiers' or similar phrases.<sup>43</sup> Heidensohn argued that prostitution has not been seen as an economic decision but a psychiatric disorder.<sup>44</sup> Certainly, whilst few examples were recorded in these Somerset communities, those who were prosecuted were described in dangerous terms, unlike their clients, who were not named or prosecuted.

The Somerset quarter sessions dealt with a reasonably static number of female offenders, in contrast to the total. Indictable offences for which women appeared in Quarter Sessions or Assize Courts continued to be mainly larceny, attempted suicide, neglect of children and housebreaking. There is no particular pattern in these offences and the volume is low.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Central Somerset Gazette*, 24 December 1915, p. 7, *SS*, 21 December 1917, p. 5.

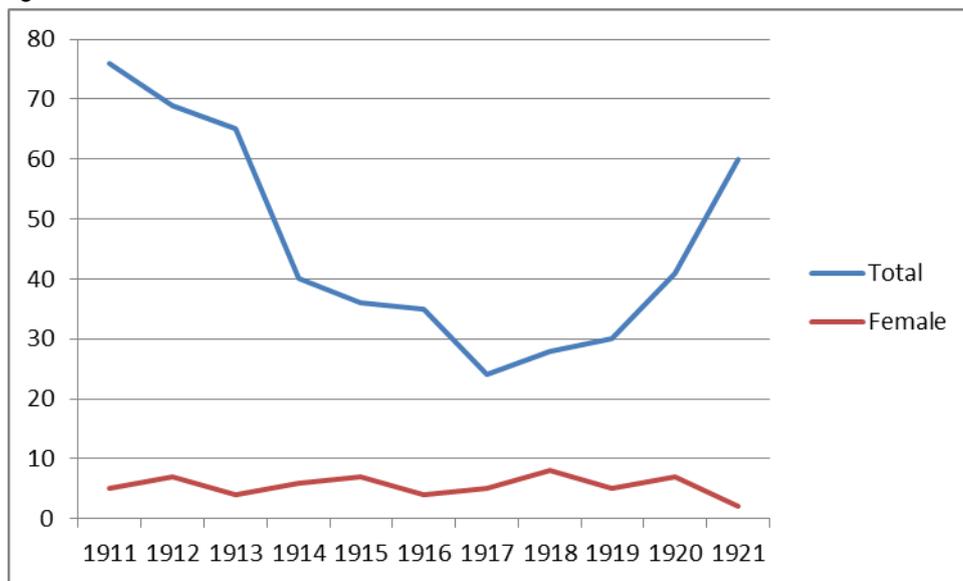
<sup>42</sup> *SS*, 21 June 1918, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> *SS*, 23 August, 1918, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> p. 113.

<sup>45</sup> Q\SR\842- 885, Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset, Session Rolls, 1911-1921.

**Figure 3.1 Comparison of female defendants against total, Somerset Quarter Sessions.<sup>46</sup>**



National statistics for concealment of birth offences, which was a solely female crime, peaked in 1917.<sup>47</sup> Whilst no trace of this crime exists in the Frome or Ilminster police records, Somerset Assizes did proceed with a case from Frome. Emily Davey was accused of murdering her baby, who was born whilst her husband was serving in the army. She was accused of ‘enceinte’, with a ‘scoundrel’ exempt from service and sentenced to nine months’ imprisonment. In the same session another Somerset women, in similar circumstances but whose husband pleaded for her, received three.<sup>48</sup> Whilst this may have been a national concern, the statistics do not point to this being a commonly prosecuted offence in Somerset.<sup>49</sup> It may be an indication of the growing sympathy for infanticide in certain circumstances, which historians Godfrey and Lawrence have traced.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Q\SR\842- 885, Session Rolls, 1911-1921.

<sup>47</sup> *J.S*, 1922, Table D.

<sup>48</sup> *Wells Journal*, 26 October 1917, P. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *J.S*, 1914 and 1918, Table VI.

<sup>50</sup> p. 121.

Heidensohn has suggested that the degree of unknown female crimes may differ from the overall.<sup>51</sup> Given these theories, there may have been unrecorded cases.

### *New Offenders*

New types of offenders appeared during the war. Wealthy landowner, Mary Bonham Christie, who would later purchase Brownsea Island, was charged with food wastage in July 1918, also appearing for a second time on allegations of failing to cultivate land. She was found guilty on two counts and fined.<sup>52</sup> Members of the upper classes rarely appeared in court but as a consequence of war some did so, although not all apparently faced the same justice. Leopold Canning, Lord Garvagh, was one of two men charged with military offences in Taunton Borough Petty Court. Both cases were adjourned until 22 January 1917. Whilst school teacher Stanley Fern re-appeared and was found guilty of failing to submit himself to a medical, Lord Garvagh did not appear then, or at any future date on the charge of being absent without leave.<sup>53</sup> In March of that year, he did however transfer from the army to the Royal Flying Corps, still giving a Taunton address.<sup>54</sup> These examples are rare and in the main the defendants continued to be those of the working classes. It has been suggested that a small number of cases involving the upper classes helped maintain an appearance of neutrality.<sup>55</sup>

Shopkeepers fell foul of new and rapidly changing food controls. The first case of selling new bread in Ilminster was prosecuted in September 1917. Fining the offender one pound the chairman stated what a very serious case this was and

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<sup>51</sup> p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> SS, 12 July 1918, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> D\PS\tauau.b/1/14, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> Enrolment Paper, Canning, Leopold (Lord Garvagh), British Royal Air Force, Airmen's service records 1912-1939 Image, Findmypast, OU Library.

<sup>55</sup> Godfrey and Williams, p. 60.

threatened more serious consequences for other such transgressions.<sup>56</sup> In 1917 twenty-one traders were charged for selling milk priced contrary to the food order.<sup>57</sup> The seriousness of these offences was stated at the time, despite Farrant's later dismissal as being non-criminal transgressions. Swan contends that the speed of law-making made for poor legislation which left magistrates and the public confused.<sup>58</sup> Not all transgressions are clearly identified from records as some were classified as DORA and some not.

Local residents could become enemy aliens and find themselves in court. Ellen Schulte was born in Frome and married a German in 1914. On the outbreak of war her husband returned to Germany, writing that he would not be supporting her or their child. Despite being known, Schulte received one month's hard labour for returning to Frome without permission, to seek the support of her mother.<sup>59</sup>

There were no cases of bigamy in Somerset in 1913 or 1914. In April 1915 Charles Crocker's appearance was the only one.<sup>60</sup> By 1917 the frequency of cases had become of great concern. Five were heard at the Midsummer Somerset Assizes.<sup>61</sup> In June 1918 Justice Clavell Salter expressed his concern over 'a crime which was shockingly prevalent' during the Assizes. Most of the men charged were serving in the army like Crocker and in many cases the situation was revealed due to the claiming of separation allowances.<sup>62</sup> These discoveries were an unforeseen consequence of war and generally involved people with no other criminal record.

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<sup>56</sup> *CIN*, 29 September 1917, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> *D\PS\tau.b/1/14*.

<sup>58</sup> p. 146.

<sup>59</sup> *SS.*, 22 February 1918, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *J.S. 1913 and 1914*, Table VI, *D\PS\tau.b/1/13*, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> *Shepton Mallet Journal*, 8 June 1917, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Central Somerset Gazette*, 28 May 1915, p. 2.

Some claimed the war made them into criminals. When Frederick James Hines appeared at the Michaelmas Assizes in 1920 his mother wrote a letter to plead for leniency. She described his horrific war experiences which included being buried alive in December 1914, being gassed in Ypres and being wounded at the Somme and Arras. He received wounds to his right leg, left arm and back and now suffered from shellshock. He was sentenced to twelve months' hard labour.<sup>63</sup> Newspapers report a life of petty crime, mainly theft, from this point onwards.<sup>64</sup>

### *Children and crime*

The rise in juvenile crime was of concern during and after the war. The causes of this increase were much debated and included a want of sugar, the influence of cinema, lack of family control and the absence of male role models.<sup>65</sup> At the outset of World War Two, academics, such as Mannheim and Edith Abbott studied the previous war's national statistics. They showed a significant rise in 1915, which continued in the following two years before slowly falling again.<sup>66</sup> Abbott's examination of the criminal justice system was in order to determine the most effective deterrent or punishment, rather than its potential to influence the figures. Emsley more recently argued that 'moral panic' is often directed towards the conduct of young men and there is certainly evidence that this was the case by both press and politicians. However, local evidence does not point to a general crime wave in the juveniles of Somerset.<sup>67</sup>

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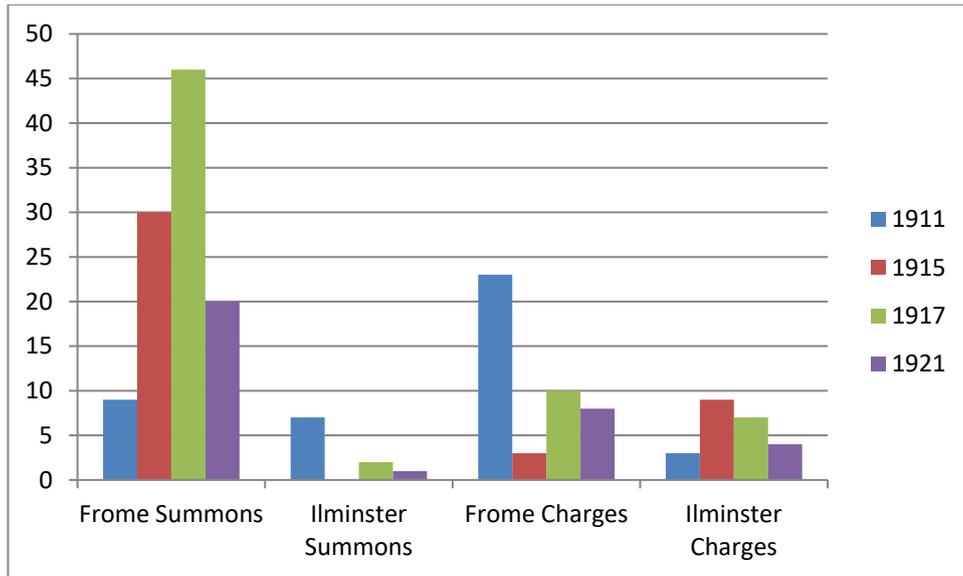
<sup>63</sup> Q\SR\881.

<sup>64</sup> Examples: *TCWA*, 24 April 1918, p. 5 and 8 November 1947, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> *TCWA*, 1915 October 1919, p. 1, 17 May 1916, p. 1 and 10 July 1918, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Edith Abbott, 'Juvenile delinquency during the First World War: Notes on the British Experience, 1914-18', *Social Service Review*, 17 (1943) 192-212 (192).

<sup>67</sup> *Crime, Police, & Penal Policy*, p. 444.

**Figure 3.2 Comparison of Juvenile Offence records.<sup>68</sup>**

Frome Summons records most clearly indicate a rise in juvenile offender rates. Closer examination of these offences challenges the argument that juvenile behaviour deteriorated.

The thirty summoned juveniles in 1915 were all boys. Eleven were accused of malicious damage and ten of those were involved in just three incidents. Three boys, part of a larger group, were found guilty of damaging the property of magistrate, Lord Hylton. Later the same month four boys aged between ten and twelve were reported by magistrate, George McMurtrie, for damaging his growing grass. They were dismissed after paying sixpence each. In the same court three older boys were fined five shillings each for a similar offence.<sup>69</sup> The court dismissed two boys accused of stealing snowdrops in March. Only two offenders were actually charged with larceny and one for receiving which are the offences which Abbott cited as alarming to the authorities at this time.<sup>70</sup>

Fifteen boys were summoned for malicious damage in 1917. In June, nine boys were accused of damaging a wall and a stall door. All were dismissed. The five

<sup>68</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, DD\ASC\8/5/14, DD\ASC\7/1/15, DD\ASC\7/1/12, DD\ASC\7/1/13 and DD\ASC\7/1/16.

<sup>69</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, p. 153 and p. 154.

<sup>70</sup> Abbott, p. 193.

boys found guilty of damaging hay were fined. Seven children were summoned for stealing growing fruit and vegetables; four boys for stealing peas and apples and ten-year-old Bessie Hamblin, her younger brother Alfred, and another boy, were fined for stealing apples. Two of the ten larceny cases were against fifteen-year-old Ephraim Sheriton and Arthur Markey who stole three cigarettes. The charge against thirteen-year-old Joseph, accused of stealing firewood with his mother, was dismissed and the Button brothers' larceny offence was for stealing picked apples.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, the larceny case against Arthur Maggs and Leonard Head, which was dismissed, was for apples.<sup>72</sup> Whilst there were three cases involving shop goods and money, these offences do not indicate a wave of serious crime. In an environment of rationing, the children may have been tempted or encouraged to supplement the family's resources. Interestingly, Frome charges and Ilminster summonses show a downward trend.

The veracity of the theory of absent fathers as a frequent explanation for boys' behaviour is questioned by some. Emsley argues that the sudden increase in 1915 occurred when most working-class, married men were still at home, before conscription.<sup>73</sup> Given that a number of occupations in Somerset were exempted from conscription, some men remained throughout.<sup>74</sup> It is interesting to note therefore, how frequently the fathers appeared in court. Basil Barber and Leonard Singer claimed to have stolen because they were hungry; their fathers disputed this and the boys received six strokes of the birch.<sup>75</sup> In 1916 the father of Pricilla and Dorothy Marsh of Ilminster paid a five-pound fine for their theft of cabbages.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, pp. 190 - 194.

<sup>72</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/14, p. 82.

<sup>73</sup> *Crime, Police, & Penal Policy*, p. 444.

<sup>74</sup> Swan, p. 165.

<sup>75</sup> *SS*, 30 November 1917, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> *CIN* 29 July 1916, p. 3.

Samuel Mitchell became a regular in the Ilminster Petty Court after his nine-year-old son was found guilty of breaking and entry, and theft. Mitchell elected to have him sent to industrial school until he was sixteen. However he repeatedly refused to pay for the boy's costs of one shilling a week. By March 1918 Mitchell owed one pound and still refused to pay. He was imprisoned for one month.<sup>77</sup> David Parker concluded in his study of Hertfordshire children that 'there is little recorded evidence of an alarming tide of youth crime' and given the studies of the police records in Ilminster and Frome, the same should be said of them.<sup>78</sup> In 1925, Sir Cyril Burt questioned the degree to which incomplete statistics reflected a juvenile crime wave and also recognised that there were divides between rural and urban as well as north and south of England.<sup>79</sup> Taunton Borough Court provides a comparative picture for a larger rural community

Whilst the figures are not available for 1921, there is clear evidence that more boys were charged with serious offences during the war. This corresponds with Andrew Emeny's research of Southend, both in the increase and the nature of the offences.<sup>80</sup> In 1911 only three percent of cases in court involved juveniles. This rose to more than twelve percent in 1915, with a total of sixty-two offences, before falling again in 1917. Wilful damage and larceny accounted for the majority of appearances during the war and by 1917 a number of girls were also accused.<sup>81</sup> The twenty-one larceny and twenty-six wilful damage cases in 1915 included a number of repeat offenders. Albert Taylor was committed to Bath Industrial School in July 1915, having been involved in several incidents. William Burge aged nine,

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<sup>77</sup> *CIN*, 27 November 1915, p. 5, 21 April 1917, p. 4 and 16 March 1918, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> *Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007), p. 52.

<sup>79</sup> *The Young Delinquent*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London: LUP, 1961), pp. 633-634.

<sup>80</sup> 'When Bill Sykes Junior came to visit: the rise in juvenile crime in Southend during the Great War', *The Local Historian*, 48 (2018), 180-193 (191).

<sup>81</sup> D\PS\tau.b/1/12 – D\PS\tau.b/1/15.

appeared in turn for theft, cruelty to animals and wilful damage throughout the summer and his mother requested he be sent to industrial school as well. The courts did not oblige until 1918. Taylor's mother was employed in vital war work and his father was serving. In contrast Burge's mother did not work, however his father had died, as had his older brother.<sup>82</sup> Whether personal circumstances impacted on court decisions or not, Burge's childhood had been traumatic and this may have been reflected in his behaviour. In other cases the boys who appeared sounded naughty rather than criminal or troubled. Brothers Albert and Henry and their friend Willie, aged between nine and ten, appeared once for stealing rabbit skins to sell for money to buy sweets.<sup>83</sup> The National Council for Public Morals reported 'children brought before the courts for offences which cannot be called crimes' and 'sometimes with too great zeal'.<sup>84</sup>

### *Men and crime*

Despite any fluctuations in female or juvenile crime in Frome in 1917, adult males continued to be in the majority of those summoned. The Registers of Charges provide the most consistent evidence for analysis of adult male ages and will therefore be used below. In Frome, adult males under fifty accounted for around sixty percent of charges in both 1911 and 1921, but rose to between seventy and eighty percent in 1915 and 1917. In Ilminster the same group accounted for between seventy and seventy-five percent in pre- and post-war samples but during the war fell to between fifty and sixty-two percent.<sup>85</sup>

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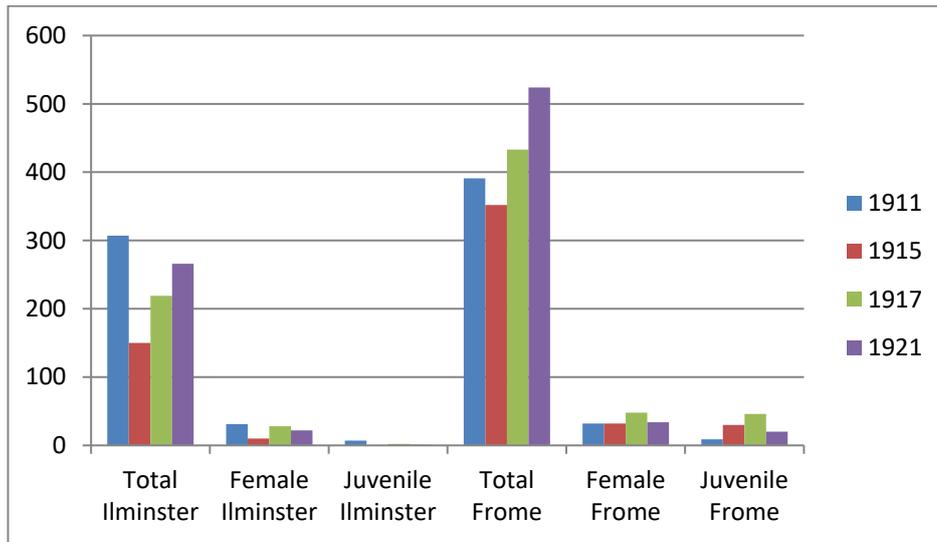
<sup>82</sup> TCWA, 14 July 1915, p. 6, 28 July, p. 2, 4 August 1915, p. 5, 27 February 1918, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> TCWA, 10 January 1917, p. 3.

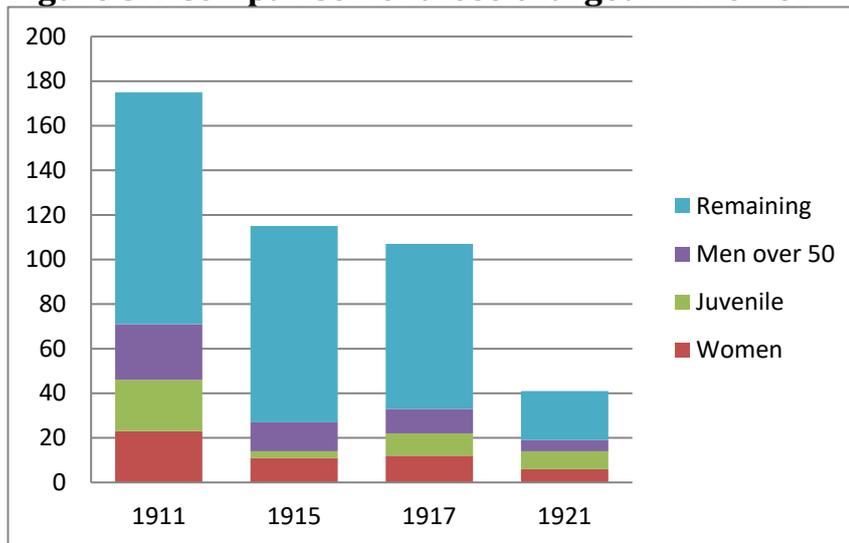
<sup>84</sup> *The Cinema, its present position and future possibilities* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1917), p. xxxvii.

<sup>85</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, DD\ASC\8/5/14, DD\ASC\7/1/15, DD\ASC\7/1/12, DD\ASC\7/1/13 and DD\ASC\7/1/16.

**Figure 3.3 Comparison of female and juvenile defendants against total summoned.<sup>86</sup>**



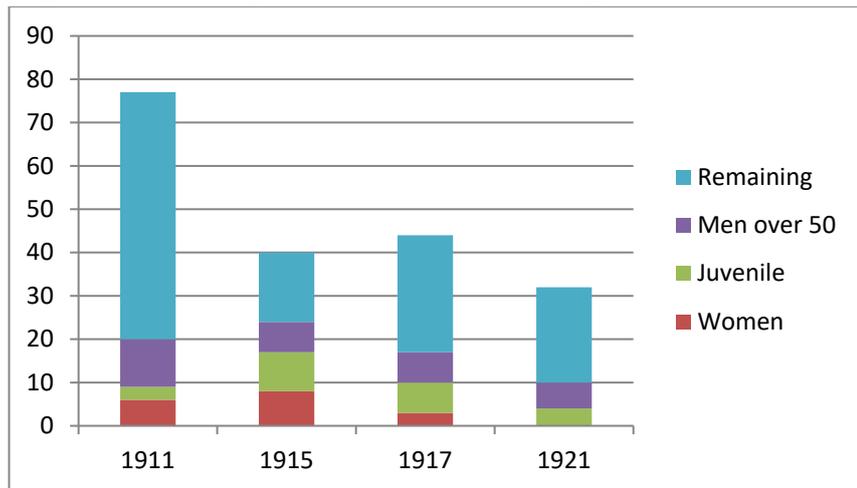
**Figure 3.4 Comparison of those charged in Frome.<sup>87</sup>**



<sup>86</sup> DD\ASC\8/5/13, DD\ASC\8/5/14, DD\ASC\7/1/15, DD\ASC\7/1/12, DD\ASC\7/1/13 and DD\ASC\7/1/16.

<sup>87</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/12 and DD\ASC\7/1/13.

**Figure 3.5 Comparison of those charged in Ilminster.<sup>88</sup>**



Regardless of the behaviour of women and children, or the crimes being introduced and prioritised, recorded crime continued to be an adult male phenomenon. Through detailed review of the police records it is evident that the level of female crime in these Somerset towns fell during the war and that whilst juvenile appearances increased, they were not always proven cases and rarely of a serious nature. There is also evidence that at community level the records indicate different patterns in recorded events and in those involved. Findings in Taunton more closely match the trends of juvenile and female recorded crime being discussed at the time, supporting the theory that there was a difference between the rural and urban experiences as purported by Burt. The indication is that there were fewer offences reported by private citizens in smaller communities, which changed the pattern of crimes recorded.

<sup>88</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/16.

## Chapter 4 - Criminal Justice

Having examined the crimes recorded and people being charged or summoned, this chapter explores the impact of the war on those who administered the law in Somerset, both as individuals and within their official roles. It looks at the changes in policing resulting from the loss of experienced policemen, the impact of DORA on legislation and the magistrates who covered the courts relevant to Ilminster, Frome and Taunton. It does not extend to the prison system. Within the context of the ongoing debate regarding the value of historical criminal statistics, evidence is provided to support the interactive view that the statistics indicate priorities of the criminal justice system, rather than crime. Emsley argued that whilst centralisation of policing was happening prior to war, the debate is how much war impacted on the pace of the process. Evidence found at the local level suggests that war increased the speed. Outcomes will also engage with the debate regarding gender bias within the justice process and the degree to which it responded to or created any evidence of a juvenile crime wave.

### *The impact on policing*

Whilst many counties were disrupted by changes in the justice personnel, this was minimised in Somerset as the Chief Constable, Captain Metcalfe and his deputy Tom Brown continued to manage the force throughout the war, reporting to a reasonably stable Standing Joint Committee (SJC). Wall suggested that forces had inadequate leadership due to absentee Chief Constables.<sup>1</sup> Whilst Metcalfe did serve in the army throughout, evidence exists that he continued to be involved in county force decisions and policies. The Somerset force was greatly depleted by

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<sup>1</sup> David S. Wall, *The Chief Constables of England and Wales: The socio-legal history of a criminal justice elite* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 52.

the loss of experienced policemen after the introduction of conscription. Of the 375 establishment only 261 were employed by December 1918. Numbers were re-enforced by over 4000 Special Constables from the beginning and various Women Patrols in later years.<sup>2</sup>

Like most Chief Constables of the time, Captain H C Metcalfe was an ex-military man. Unusually, he had moved to Somerset having held the same post in a larger force.<sup>3</sup> His deputy Brown was a career policeman, who had served in many parts of Somerset, coming up through the ranks.<sup>4</sup> The SJC was comprised of local gentry, landowners, ex-military men and business owners. As Wall found, Chief Constables were usually from a similar socio-economic group to the committee members, rather than the working-class background of most policemen.<sup>5</sup> During much of the war Brown deputised for Metcalfe at SJC meetings and in a day-to-day capacity, therefore it is worth noting that despite his policing experience, Brown spent much of the war reporting to and managing the expectations of a social group who were more accustomed to interacting with their own elite class. In addition, whilst Metcalfe's continued involvement may have been helpful, there is also the possibility that it created uncertainty as to who made which decisions. Clarity would have been vital, given the size of the task and the large but often inexperienced force recruited to enforce the rapidly changing laws. David Englander asserted that Chief Constables became subordinate to the military authorities as well as gradually becoming more directly connected to the Home Office than the SJC. Both contributed to strengthening links to central government

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<sup>2</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings of the Standing Joint Committee, 1911- 1921, pp. 8-11.

<sup>3</sup> Wall, p. 4, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> *Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser (TCWA)*, 26 August 1925, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Example: DD\ASC\4/8/1, Papers relating to women police patrols in the borough of Taunton, 1914-1918, June and July 1917.

rather than the traditional local networks.<sup>6</sup> Throughout, the Inspectors of Constabulary also continued to monitor forces and issue certificates of efficiency, which were required in order to obtain fifty percent of their funding.<sup>7</sup> Brown's role would arguably involve many conflicting demands.

In October 1914, Metcalfe advised the SJC that twenty-five reservists had been called up and the force had lent fourteen men to be drill instructors for the military.<sup>8</sup> Prior to conscription Chief Constables retained the right to release military aged men, however it was suggested in July 1915 by the *Police Review and Parade Gossip*, that the Somerset SJC were limiting the number of those allowed to enlist to only a further ten, from a total of 193 men of military age within the force.<sup>9</sup> By December 1915 it was reported that twelve policemen from the Ilminster division had volunteered under the Derby scheme, which was the final call to arms prior to conscription.<sup>10</sup> Crucially, although 190 county policemen had done so, the SJC left it to Metcalfe to decide if any could be released.<sup>11</sup> Chief Constables were not alone in attempting to prevent dilution of their skilled and experienced workforce. Across the country industry, agriculture and services were resisting pressure to recruit unskilled men and, in particular, women.<sup>12</sup> The initial vacancies had been filled by Class A. First Reserves, who were in the main retired policemen. In addition to the Special Constables the Church Lads' Brigade was recruited for

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<sup>6</sup> Military intelligence and the defence of the realm: the surveillance of soldiers and civilians in Britain during the First World War, *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 52 (1987), 24- 32 (p.25.).

<sup>7</sup> *Police (counties and boroughs, England and Wales), Report of His Majesty's inspectors of constabulary for the year ended 29th September 1917* (London: HMSO, 1918), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings of the SJC, pp. 8-11.

<sup>9</sup> *TCWA*, 5 January 1915, p. 3 and 21 July 1915, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Chard and Ilminster News (CIN)*, 18 December 1915, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Shepton Mallet Journal*, 7 January 1916, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Simon Heffer, *Staring at God: Britain in the Great War* (London: Penguin Random House, 2019), pp. 281-287.

observational duties.<sup>13</sup> Whilst the 1915 Inspector of Constabulary report stated that six to eight specials equated to one experienced officer, the original instruction from the Home Office in August 1914, stated that Chief Constables should not recruit more than an additional fifty percent above their authorised number.<sup>14</sup>

Metcalfe had greatly exceeded this number. Importantly therefore, the Somerset force was not critically short of men until conscription came in. This supports the previous arguments that supervision of the public may have been more stringent than ever. There were constables who volunteered for the military but did not serve. For example although P.C. Horler volunteered in December 1915, he was still in Ilminster in April 1917, when he summoned eight people for lighting offences.<sup>15</sup> The Constabulary Inspectors Report of 1917 also suggested that as time passed, special constables became more experienced and therefore effective.<sup>16</sup> However by January 1918 ninety-seven men of the potential 375-strong force were serving in the military.<sup>17</sup> By the end of the war the SJC recognised that 121 policemen had served, ten of whom died.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the depletion of the original force, Howard Taylor cited the re-employment of retired officers as part of the reason for the general malaise which existed in the police during the war.<sup>19</sup> Receiving a top-up of their existing pension rather than receiving a full wage, these experienced officers were cheaper than new recruits, causing much resentment. One newspaper suggested that a constable with twenty-six years' service received an additional ten shillings and

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<sup>13</sup> C\PO\1/2/1, Proceedings of SJC s, p. 8-11.

<sup>14</sup> C\PO\1/1/3, Minutes of the Standing Joint Committee and sub-committees, 1912-1918.

<sup>15</sup> *CIN*, 28 April 1917, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Police Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, 1917*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *TCWA*, 2 January 1918, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 31 December 1918, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> 'Forging the job: a crisis of 'modernization' or redundancy for the police in England and Wales, 1900-39', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 39 (1999), 113-135 (119).

nine pence a week, over and above his pension.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the war the SJC minutes recorded repeated requests for pay rises in an attempt to keep abreast with inflation. However as Emsley stated, war bonuses were used to avoid increasing pensionable wages. Like other forces across the country there is the suggestion of a disgruntled, ageing workforce, which was not being paid in line with rising inflation. Emsley also found that hard-fought-for rest days were being ignored due to shortages.<sup>21</sup> As Howard Taylor stated, they were 'depleted and diverted like never before'.<sup>22</sup> It would be highly likely that changes in personnel, the morale of the individuals and demands of war would impact on the relationship between policemen and their community.

It is argued that war provided justification for increased state control, which included the gathering momentum of centralised authority over the police.<sup>23</sup> Wall stated that parliament first became involved in the detail of policing during the debates regarding rest days in 1910.<sup>24</sup> It is also suggested that the expansion of state responsibilities due to the war and the necessity to introduce nationwide regulations exposed the inequalities of disparate police forces.<sup>25</sup> The need to standardise would have been vital in either case. A number of structures were established which created relationships between forces and with the Home Office. The District Conference system is identified by Emsley as one of these.<sup>26</sup>

Following the Western Counties Conference in July 1918, Brown requested that

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<sup>20</sup> TCWA, 9 June 1915, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *The English Police* (Harlow: Longman, 1991), pp. 130-32.

<sup>22</sup> 'Forging the job', p. 119.

<sup>23</sup> Barry Godfrey and Paul Lawrence, *Crime and Justice Since 1750, 2nd edn* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p.24, Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police & Penal Policy: European Experiences 1750-1940* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), p. 445.

<sup>24</sup> Wall, pp. 49-50.

<sup>25</sup> Barry Godfrey, Chris A Williams and Paul Lawrence, *History & Crime: The History of Criminal Statistics* (London: Sage Books, 2008), p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> *The English Police*, p. 129.

the SJC should adopt a pay-scale in line with Wiltshire and Dorset.<sup>27</sup> The evidence he had gathered made it clear that adjoining forces were earning more, giving him a stronger negotiating position. When the Home Office suggested the formation of a police association in 1918, Metcalfe nominated a sergeant and a constable to represent his force, despite the SJC concerns regarding the centralisation of decision making.<sup>28</sup> Whilst the County Chief Constables Club existed prior to the war, providing social and professional networks for the senior officers, there was no equivalent relationship for more junior ranks. There is no evidence as to whether or not Somerset County policemen were union members or particularly militant. The only evidence of requests for improved terms and conditions are within the SJC minutes. However, the national tension around the state of policing by the end of the war meant that Somerset policemen benefited from the post-war standardisation of terms and conditions as it was recognised that they were amongst the worst off.<sup>29</sup>

From the outbreak of war, Metcalfe was requested to utilise women police patrols. The Somerset County Committee for Work amongst Women and Girls, presided over by Lady Waldegrave, paid for the training and initial salaries but nonetheless met with resistance from Metcalfe and Brown. Much of their archived wartime correspondence discussed their strong feelings that women would be 'superfluous' and even after encouragement from the Home Office, Brown carried out a full survey of other county forces in order to garner evidence.<sup>30</sup> Taunton Town Council was particularly keen to have female patrols, as Emsley argued, for 'morality

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<sup>27</sup> TCWA, 10 April 1918, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> TCWA, 9 October 1918, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> TCWA, 21 July 1915, p. 3 and 3 July 1918, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> DD\ASC\4/8/1, Papers relating to women police patrols in the borough of Taunton, 1914-1918, Letters and questionnaires, June 1917.

policing'.<sup>31</sup> Eventually Metcalfe conceded despite believing that they 'would not be able to do the job of a male constable'.<sup>32</sup> The passion and effort in resisting this development is all the more interesting given the shortage of resources. It may provide a reason why there are few records of prostitution, soliciting and loitering in Taunton. There is the potential that such offences were not recorded in order to support the argument that there were no morality concerns. The delicate balance between conflicting demands is evident for Brown and his officers. Whilst under personal pressures of war, they were struggling with financial constraints and an ever changing role in society.

### *Magistrates and Standing Joint Committee members*

In July 1918 Lance Corporal Lane took his place as a magistrate in the Taunton Borough Police Court, marking a significant change in the socio-economic makeup of those on the bench.<sup>33</sup> John Lane was a labour councillor and a postman, prior to enlisting.<sup>34</sup> He was the first labour representative to sit on the bench, as well as the first representing working-class people. Wall's research found that previous magistrates represented aristocracy, gentry and the affluent industrialists.<sup>35</sup> Many were also part of the SJC and therefore had a very strong influence on the criminal justice system in Somerset. For example Russel Robson Tanner chaired the Frome Petty Sessions, served as a deputy chair for the Quarter Sessions and on the SJC. He was also a director and joint owner of Butler & Tanner, a significant

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<sup>31</sup> *The English Police*, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup> DD\ASC\4/8/1, Letters 27 May and 2 June 1917.

<sup>33</sup> *TCWA*, 17 July 1918, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Swan, *Law and War: Magistrates in the Great War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books Ltd, 2017), p. 231.

<sup>35</sup> pp. 92-93.

printing works.<sup>36</sup> He exemplified the degree of authority held by individuals over the life of local inhabitants.

Many of the magistrates and SJC were directly impacted by the war. Arthur Fownes Somerville was a magistrate, deputy chair of the Quarter Session until 1939 and chair of the SJC from 1917 until 1932. He inherited the Dinder estate in 1876, by which time he had also been called to the bar.<sup>37</sup> Both of his sons served during the war, James as a Commander, seeing action in the Dardanelles and Harold in the Rifle Brigade.<sup>38</sup> They were career military men and both survived. Chair of the Quarter Sessions until 1919, Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey, was likewise a local estate owner, with a legal background and who had two sons and a grandson serving, again all survived.<sup>39</sup> Others were less fortunate. Taunton magistrate, Mr Eland Clatworthy's eldest son and business partner was killed in Mesopotamia on 6 January 1916.<sup>40</sup> Lord Bath, who sat on the Frome Petty Sessions and the SJC, lost his eldest son in France on 13 February 1916.<sup>41</sup> The Right Hon. Henry Hobhouse, member of the SJC and Quarter Sessions magistrate, had a very different experience.<sup>42</sup> His son, Stephen, was a conscientious objector who refused to serve in any way. He was imprisoned twice, the second time for two years' hard labour. He was eventually released on the grounds of ill-health after much petitioning from his mother. After the war, mother

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<sup>36</sup> [www.fromemuseum.wordpress.com/collection/printing/butler-and-tanner/](http://www.fromemuseum.wordpress.com/collection/printing/butler-and-tanner/) (accessed 22 November 2019) and *TCWA*, 1 July 1914, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *TCWA*, 28 November 1942, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> [www.hmshood.com/crew/biography/somerville\\_bio.htm](http://www.hmshood.com/crew/biography/somerville_bio.htm), and [www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/transcript?id=GBM/LIVES/4191939](http://www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/transcript?id=GBM/LIVES/4191939) (both accessed 23 November 2019).

<sup>39</sup> 'Gerald Edward Chadwyck-Healey', 'Oliver Nowell Chadwyck-Healey' and 'Edward Randell Chadwyck-Healey', *Who's Who*, via OU library.

<sup>40</sup> [www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/transcript?id=GBM/LIVES/845592](http://www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/transcript?id=GBM/LIVES/845592), (accessed 24 November 2019), and *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 28 January 1916, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> [www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records/1294781/second-lieutenant-john-alexander-thynne-british-army-dragoons/](http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records/1294781/second-lieutenant-john-alexander-thynne-british-army-dragoons/) (accessed 23 November 2019).

<sup>42</sup> *Wells Journal*, 06 April 1917, p. 2.

and son produced a report for an inquiry into the prison system.<sup>43</sup> These examples serve to illustrate that despite the different social background, war impacted on those involved in administering justice, as well those appearing before it. It was also suggested by Somerville that the demands of war had killed Lord St Audries, the previous chair of the SJC.<sup>44</sup>

Magistrates used the courts to prosecute offences as well. Lord Waldegrave and his colliery manager, McMurtrie both brought employment issues before the Frome Sessions. McMurtrie prosecuted the seven boys mentioned above for damaging his grass. He also presided in the children's court when William Millward was fined two shillings for playing snowballs and knocking off someone's hat.<sup>45</sup> His son, Douglas McMurtrie saw action in Passchendaele and the battle of Cambrai. Aged nineteen and already a captain he became a prisoner of war in March 1918. Additionally, McMurtrie's brother John was killed in July 1917.<sup>46</sup> As the manager of a key employer, in times of coal shortages and with family serving, the demands of wartime may have influenced McMurtrie's decisions. Although not analysed, the anecdotal evidence points to some harsh decisions on his part towards juvenile boys.

#### *Administration of justice*

Ilminster magistrate, Jefferys Charles Allen-Jefferys regularly expressed his personal view of offenders or offences.<sup>47</sup> Of Lily Rowswell, who was charged with disorderly conduct, he said 'It is quite clear what sort of girl you are by your

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<sup>43</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 16 November 1916, p. 4, *Daily Herald*, 22 December 1917, p. 11, *Western Chronicle*, 29 April, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 31 December 1918, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Somerset Standard*, 12 January 1917, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Chris Howell, *No Thankful Village* (Chilcompton: Fickle Hill, 2002), pp. 150- 181.

<sup>47</sup> Various Jefferys or Jefferies in records; adopted final Jefferies/Jefferys in 1899 and reverted to Allen in 1917, *CIN*, 23 June 1917, p. 2.

manner in court!<sup>48</sup> He also became embroiled in a written altercation in the *Chard and Ilminster News* with Frederick Tomlin, chauffeur for the Cricket St Thomas estate. Initially Allen-Jefferys wrote condemning all motor cars as 'very dangerous', stating that he had never had an accident in his horse and carriage. Tomlin responded the following week that he should hate to appear before Allen-Jefferys in court for a motor offence. After Allen-Jefferys complained at the implication of bias on his part, a smear on his character, Tomlin wrote a full apology.<sup>49</sup> However, when, the following year Tomlin pleaded guilty before the Ilminster bench for failing to shade a domestic light, Allen-Jefferys asked him if he was an Englishman, as he 'looked foreign'. Tomlin's next letter appeared the following week, clarifying that he was British and whilst he had been rejected for service, his two brothers were doing so and he resented the implication. Most interestingly Allen-Jefferys had been involved in a motor-car accident in 1909, when he, a relative and the chauffeur were thrown from the car.<sup>50</sup> In late 1917 he increased the fine imposed for vehicle lighting offences in Ilminster to ten shillings, threatening to raise it to one pound if the number of offenders continued.<sup>51</sup> A full quantitative analysis of his sentencing of vehicle offences may prove interesting.

Vincent Upton Langworthy remained chairman of the Ilminster bench until he died in 1918, aged eighty. The newspapers likewise reported his comments on offenders. When four factory hands were fined for shouting and laughing outside a church on a Sunday evening, he commented, 'time such behaviour was put a stop to'.<sup>52</sup> However, other magistrates appeared less concerned about juvenile

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<sup>48</sup> *CIN*, 31 March 1917, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *CIN*, 16 December 1916, p. 7, 23 December 1916, p. 3, 30 December 1916, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> *CIN*, 21 April 1917, p. 4, 28 April 1917, p. 5 and *TCWA*, 12 May 1909, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *CIN*, 1 December 1917, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> *CIN* 29 July 1916, p. 3.

behaviour at the time. For example the cinema licence in Chard was granted without comment.<sup>53</sup>

Some policemen also seemed keen to pursue the letter of the law, whether DORA or not. Sergeant Denning summoned Robert Gummer for using indecent language in his own house, because it could be heard outside.<sup>54</sup> This may indicate knowledge of the individual and have been a preventative measure. More pedantically, P.C. Brimble summoned Cyril Watts for pushing his bicycle after running out of lamp oil. It was stated that he should have carried the bike.<sup>55</sup> Others seemed to recognise the difficulties inherent in new laws. Superintendent Thomas Bartlett admitted that many people removed the tissue paper from their vehicle lights as they were unable to see.<sup>56</sup> Despite this admission, the agreed confusion regarding the 'drip fed laws', and the different weekly lighting-up/shading times, the summonses kept increasing.<sup>57</sup>

The variations in sentencing indicate the crimes which became increasingly concerning. The Somerset Assizes Courts in 1919 heard eight bigamy cases. The first, in January, was treated leniently because the defendant had served in the army but by July all were given sentences designed to deter; up to nine months' hard labour. Pre-war cases were far more likely to receive short prison sentences rather than penal servitude. Hon. Sir. John Sankey called one female defendant a 'bad, wicked woman' and stated that another case was 'the worst he had met', illustrating the changing attitude.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *CIN*, 18 August 1917, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> *CIN*, 27 December 1915, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> *CIN*, 28 October 1916, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> *CIN*, 2 June 1917, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> *CIN*, 2 June 1917, p. 6 and 9 December 1917, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> *TCWA*, 29 January 1919, p. 6, *Wells Journal*, 18 July 1919, p. 2 and *Shepton Mallet Journal*, 31 October 1919, p. 4.

Some courts appeared more lenient or sympathetic. For example Ann Plowman's last sentence for loitering was for only one month.<sup>59</sup> Ann was then admitted to a home for the destitute where she died in 1922.<sup>60</sup> This may indicate sympathy for the individual as there are many examples of harsher sentencing during the war. Whilst Heidensohn claimed a conspiracy by judges to reinforce 'the proper female role', there are examples which would support such a theory. Frederick and Julia Burt were found guilty of being drunk and disorderly; he was fined whilst she was given one month hard labour.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, William and Emma Carter who had fifteen children were accused of neglect of the youngest three. William was sentenced to three months' hard labour, Emma to six.<sup>62</sup> There are many similar examples in 1911 and therefore this cannot be deemed to be a consequence of wartime changes.<sup>63</sup>

The qualitative research points to a continuation of the previous social structure within the criminal justice system. As David Parker found in Hertfordshire, power remained with the same people, despite the war.<sup>64</sup> That structure supports the view that the system was prejudiced against the poor.<sup>65</sup> However, most of the police in direct contact with communities continued to be working-class, struggling with similar daily problems.

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<sup>59</sup> TCWA, 7 March 1917, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Lucy Williams and Barry Godfrey, *Criminal women 1850-1920: Researching the lives of Britain's Female Offenders* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2018), p. 135.

<sup>61</sup> *Somerset Standard*, 22 March 1918, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> *CIN*, 20 October 1917, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> DD\ASC\7/1/11, Register of Charges, Frome, 1911.

<sup>64</sup> Parker, David, *Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007), p. 35.

<sup>65</sup> Clive Emsley, 'Crime and Punishment: 10 years of research (1)', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 9 (2005), 117-138.

## Chapter 5 - Conclusion

### *Summary*

In researching crime in Ilminster, Frome and Taunton, this dissertation sought to reveal any changes which occurred as a result of World War One, on the crimes, the defendants or the criminal justice system. Whilst Chapter Two looked at the police and court statistics for those communities, the knowledge that this did not constitute an actual record of all criminal activity means that this is a study of trends and criminal justice priorities rather than criminal behaviour. Trends implied a difference according to the size of the community. Newspapers provide context which is missing in the official records. Comments made by defendants are rare finds, whether they pleaded guilty or not. As Emsley stated, the statistics provided a starting point for more research.

Chapters Three and Four examined the people involved on both sides of the process more closely. By researching the official records and supporting newspaper reports, it proved possible to challenge the concept of a national, juvenile crime wave. Many of the boys appeared to be naughty, potentially needing more discipline but not criminal. Equally, women were being prosecuted for domestic issues such as education and none payment of rates, which had previously been considered male responsibilities. DORA legislation, particularly involving lighting, became a burden to the public and justice system alike, and accounted for most wartime interactions. Despite conscription and improved employment prospects for men on the home front, they continued to appear most often as defendants in police and court records.

The magistrates were generally of an age to remain at home, but many of them served in senior roles in government. For example, Lord Hylton was Lord-in-

Waiting to the King for the duration and joint Chief Government Whip in the coalition.<sup>66</sup> Lord St Audries was on the War Agricultural Committee and Col Skrine was Paymaster General until his death.<sup>67</sup> As Peter King suggested there is evidence that working-class members of each community were actively involved in filtering the outcome of behaviour, deciding when to prosecute or not, but the social structure of the court system remained consistently upper-middle and upper class until the very end of the war.<sup>68</sup> Women were not employed in the courts until 1920.<sup>69</sup>

### *Further Research*

The archives provided a rich source of information which could yield further details. Closer analysis of police and defendants could indicate patterns in prosecutions. Equally analysis of sentencing may provide evidence of any bias towards particular offences or groups in society. A closer study of one town would produce greater detail of frequent offending individuals or families and provide potential trends in recidivist behaviour. Comparison with the same communities during World War Two would potentially provide useful insight into the current research into why the trend in crime statistics differed between the two wars.<sup>70</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This study has provided an initial examination of the impact of the First World War on crime in a rural county. It exposed areas for further research and it raised questions which require similar research to be carried out in other communities, for

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<sup>66</sup> TCWA, 2 June 1945, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Western Daily Press*, 31 December 1918, p. 2 and *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, 13 March 1915, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> *Crime, justice, and discretion in England, 1740–1820* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 358.

<sup>69</sup> TCWA, 21 July 1920, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Zoe Alker and Barry Godfrey, 'War as an opportunity for divergence and desistance from crime, 1750-1945', in *Criminology and War: Transgressing the Borders*, eds by S. Walklate and Ross McGarry (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 82.

comparison. There is clear evidence that resources of the criminal justice system were directed towards the war effort, and in particular DORA legislation. What it has not been able to discern is the behaviour of individuals within those communities in relation to the laws which had been of concern before the war; only that they were no longer recorded as events. This concurs with the majority view of historians, that records provide evidence for criminal justice behaviour, not criminal behaviour. There is also evidence of war exposing crimes which may have been prevalent beforehand, such as bigamy.

The greatest value of such a local study is being able to analyse the defendants by age and gender, which is not possible in national statistics. Doing so has provided clear evidence that these small rural communities did not experience a juvenile crime wave. Nor is there evidence of a breakdown in the moral behaviour of women. Whilst the war disrupted behaviour, the changes in legislation had the greatest impact on police and court activity, and did not result in the breakdown of society.

## Appendix 1 Sample of data gathered from archive - DD ASC 7/1/13

<b>District</b>	<b>Date in 1917</b>	<b>M/F/</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>CHARGE</b>	<b>Custody</b>	<b>Magistrate</b>	<b>Disposed of</b>	<b>Age</b>
Frome	02-Jan	M	Navy	Simple Larceny	Sweet	Tanner and Haring	Fined	26
Frome	04-Jan	M	Labourer	Simple Larceny	Brice	Porter Gross and Duckworth	Fined	22
Frome	05-Jan	M	Painter	Begging	Sweet	Gross	Fined	69
Frome	07-Jan	M	No occupation	Simple Larceny	Gingell	Porter and Davy	Bound over	15
Frome	09-Jan	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Day	Woodland	Military Authorities	28
Frome	12-Jan	M	Labourer	Misbehaviour	Sweet	Gross and Tanner	14 days HL	29
Frome	15-Jan	M	Rag and Bone man	Simple Larceny	Trenchard	Woodland and Gross	14 days HL	36
Frome	20-Jan	F	Wife of a soldier	Simple Larceny	Freeby	Woodland and Gordon	14 days HL	26
Frome	21-Jan	M	Saddler	Assault	Freeby	Porter and Gross	1 month HL	65
Frome	21-Jan	M	Saddler	Assault	Freeby	Porter and Gross	2 months HL	65
Frome	23-Jan	M	Saddler	Malicious Damage	Freeby	Porter and Gross	Fined	65

Frome	25-Jan	M	Driver	Simple larceny	Underhill	Woodland and Gordon	Fined	36
Frome	25-Jan	M	Driver	Simple larceny	Underhill	Woodland and Gordon	Fined	27
Frome	25-Jan	M	Driver	Simple Larceny	Underhill	Woodland and Gordon	Fined	27
Frome	28-Jan	M	Miner	Drunkenness	Underhill	Lord Hylton and Davy	Fined	35
Frome	30-Jan	M	Miner	Drunkenness	Insp Edwards	Lord Hylton and Porter	Fined	29
Frome	02-Feb	M	Sailor	Navy	Moxey	Marquis of Bath, Shore	Military Authorities	19
Frome	02-Feb	M	Sailor	Larceny	Moxey	Marquis of Bath, Shore	Dismissed	19
Frome	04-Feb	M	Gunner (Army)	Assault	Underhill	Woodland and Gordon	Discharged	26
Frome	05-Feb	M	Carter	Breaking and entering	Young	Marquis of Bath, Shore	Trial at Quarter sessions	22
Frome	09-Feb	M	Labourer	Larceny by servant	Penny	Tanner and Harding	Bound over	56
Frome	09-Feb	F	Tailoress	Drunkenness	Freeby	Tanner and Harding	21 days HL	56
Frome	09-Feb	M	Labourer	Receiving stolen goods	Penny	Tanner and Harding	Discharged	61
Frome	09-Feb	F	Charwoman	Drunkenness	Conibere	Tanner and Harding	7 days HL	34
Frome	11-Feb	M	Tallow chandler	Drunkenness	Andrews	Tanner	fine	34
Frome	12-Feb	M	Labourer	Simple Larceny	Dobbe	Porter and Tanner	21 days HL	25

Frome	12-Feb	M	Labourer	Simple Larceny	Freeby	Porter and Tanner	21 days HL	25
Frome	15-Feb	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Day	Woodland	Military Authorities	18
Frome	15-Feb	M	Waiter	Theft	Gingell	Porter, Tanner and Davy	1 month HL	19
Frome	15-Feb	M	Waiter	Theft	Gingell	Porter, Tanner and Davy	1 month HL	19
Frome	16-Feb	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Crocker	Woodland	Military Authorities	21
Frome	19-Feb	M	Gunner (Army)	Burglary	Trenchard	Woodland	Trial at Quarter sessions	38
Frome	23-Feb	M	Pedlar	Drunkenness	Penny	Porter and Gross	Fined	61
Frome	24-Feb	M	Stoker	Larceny by Servant	Penny	Porter and Gross	Bound over	30
Frome	24-Feb	M	Stoker	Larceny by Servant	Penny	Porter and Gross	Withdrawn	30
Frome	25-Feb	M	Cutler	Drunkenness	Freeby	Tanner	Bound over	36
Frome	27-Feb	M	Miner	Non-payment of child maintenance	Gibbs	Davy and Carter	Order to pay	29
Frome	04-Mar	F	School Girl	Simple Larceny	Penny	Porter and Gross	Bound over	14
Frome	04-Mar	F	Factory hand	Simple Larceny	Penny	Porter and Gross	Bound over	13

Frome	05-Mar	F	Domestic servant	Receiving stolen goods	Penny	Porter and Gross	Bound over	17
Frome	05-Mar	M	Tinsmith	Non-payment of child maintenance	Bird	Porter and Gross	Bound over	46
Frome	10-Mar	M	School boy	Breaking and entering	Thorn	Shore and Davy	6 strokes	12
Frome	10-Mar	M	School boy	Breaking and entering	Thorn	Shore and Davy	3 strokes	10
Frome	10-Mar	M	Gunner (Army)	Army (AWOL)	Thorn	McMurtrie	Military Authorities	35
Frome	25- Mar	M	Labourer	Simple Larceny	Burnett	McMurtrie and Delve	1 month HL	47
Frome	25- Mar	M	Miner	Simple Larceny	Burnett	McMurtrie and Delve	1 month HL	22
Frome	27-Mar	M	Driver	Housebreaking	Parfitt	Woodland	Trial at Quarter sessions	22
Frome	27- Mar	M	Driver	Simple Larceny	Parfitt	Woodland	Trial at Quarter sessions	22
Frome	06-Apr	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Trenchard	Gordon	Military Authorities	22
Frome	11-Apr	M	Driver	Drunkenness	Underhill	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	28
Frome	23-Apr	M	Driver	Simple Larceny	Staple	Shore and Woodland	Fined	32

Frome	24-Apr	F	Laundress	Simple Larceny	Parfitt	Shore and Woodland	Detention & Probation	14
Frome	26-Apr	M	Van-man	Unlawful Possession	Parfitt	Batten, Pool, Parker, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Trial at Quarter sessions	42
Frome	26-Apr	M	Manager (Steam Laundry)	Unlawful Possession	Parfitt	Batten, Pool, Porter, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Fined	60
Frome	26-Apr	M	Van-man	Simple Larceny	Parfitt	Batten, Pool, Porter, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Assizes	42
Frome	27-Apr	M	Licensee	Unlawful Possession	Parfitt	Batten, Pool, Porter, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Assizes	40
Frome	28-Apr	M	Stoker	Unlawful Possession	Parfitt	Batten, Pool, Parker, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Trial at Quarter sessions	47
Frome	28-Apr	M	Licensee	Unlawful Possession	Parfitt	Batten, Pool, Porter, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Fined	65
Frome	28-Apr	M	Haulier	Unlawful Possession	Trenchard	Batten Pool, Porter, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	Fined	56

Frome	28-Apr	M	Stoker	Larceny by servant	Parfitt	Batten Pool, Porter, Woodland, Gordon and Tanner	1 month HL	47
Frome	01-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Underhill	Woodland	Military Authorities	23
Frome	04-May	M	Labourer	Larceny by servant	Thorn	Davy & Thatcher	Fined	53
Frome	15-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Moxey	Woodland	Military Authorities	48
Frome	15-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Moxey	Woodland	Military Authorities	37
Frome	18-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Mitcham	Woodland	Military Authorities	19
Frome	19-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Andrews	Gross	Military Authorities	31
Frome	19-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Andrews	Gross	Military Authorities	21
Frome	21-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Moxey	Woodland	Military Authorities	18
Frome	29-May	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Trenchard	Woodland	Military Authorities	36
Frome	16-Jun	M	Miner	Drunkenness	Marsh	Davy ,Thatcher, Hurst	Fined	29

Frome	19-Jun	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Staple	Woodland	Military Authorities	44
Frome	02-Jul	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Insp Stewart	Hurst	Military Authorities	34
Frome	02-Jul	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Insp Stewart	Hearse	Military Authorities	37
Frome	06-Jul	M	No occupation	Attempt to murder	Gillbanks	Shore, Porter, Gross, Gordon, Tanner	Assizes	51
Frome	10-Jul	F	Wife of a soldier	Murder	Mitcham	Shore, Woodland and Gordon	Assizes	28
Frome	15-Jul	M	Miner	Larceny	Thorn	McMurtrie & Thatcher	Fined	22
Frome	14-Aug	M	Miner	Abduction (girls under 16)	Staple	Woodland & Tanner	Assizes	59
Frome	21-Aug	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Parfitt	Woodland	Military Authorities	27
Frome	23-Aug	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Summers	Woodland	Military Authorities	34
Frome	26-Aug	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Allen	Woodland	Military Authorities	21
Frome	26-Aug	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Allen	Woodland	Military Authorities	19
Frome	11-Sep	M	Soldier	Simple Larceny	Parfitt	Shore Woodland and	1 month HL	17

Gordon								
Frome	17-Sep	M	Weaver	Larceny by servant	Underhill	Shore, Porter and Gross	Fined	63
Frome	22-Sep	M	Munitions	Drunkenness	Underhill	Shore and Davy	Fined	22
Frome	22-Sep	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Thorn	Lord Hylton and Davy	Military Authorities	18
Frome	23-Sep	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Trenchard	Davy	Military Authorities	16
Frome	24-Sep	M	Miner	Theft	Stewart	Lord Hylton, Shore and Davy	Fined	21
Frome	24-Sep	M	Miner	Theft	Stewart	Lord Hylton, Shore and Davy	Fined	16
Frome	05-Oct	M	Carpenter	Simple Larceny	Mitcham	Davy, Woodland and Tanner	Assizes	52
Frome	08-Oct	M	Miner	Simple Larceny	Stewart	Davy and McMurtrie	Assizes	21
Frome	09-Oct	M	Miner	Breaking and entering	Stewart	Davy and McMurtrie	Assizes	21
Frome	09-Oct	M	Miner	Attempted Breaking and Entering	Stewart	Davy and McMurtrie	Assizes	21

Frome	14-Oct	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Parfitt	Woodland	Military Authorities	23
Frome	14-Oct	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Parfitt	Woodland	Military Authorities	26
Frome	17-Oct	M	Thatcher	Drunkenness	Underhill	Shore and Porter	Fined	48
Frome	19-Oct	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Freeby	Woodland	Military Authorities	21
Frome	21-Oct	M	Soldier	Drunkenness	Trenchard	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	36
Frome	21-Oct	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Trenchard	Woodland and Tanner	Military Authorities	36
Frome	07-Nov	F	Married woman	Simple Larceny	Burnett	Shore, Davy and Lee	Fined	22
Frome	09-Nov	M	Labourer	Army (AWOL)	Greedy	Woodland	Military Authorities	25
Frome	11-Nov	F	Married woman	Prostitution	Young	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	37
Frome	12-Nov	M	Soldier	Army (AWOL)	Trenchard	Woodland	Military Authorities	48
Frome	17-Nov	M	Soldier	Drunkenness	Heyluer	Davy ,Woodland and Tanner	Fined	37
Frome	17-Nov	M	Soldier	Assault	Heyluer	Davy, Woodland and Tanner	1 month HL	37

Frome	22-Nov	M	Clerk	Larceny by servant	Trenchard	Gross, Woodland and Tanner	Trial at Quarter sessions	26
Frome	23-Nov	M	Errand Boy	Simple Larceny	Moxey	Gross, Woodland and Tanner	6 strokes	13
Frome	23-Nov	M	School boy	Simple Larceny	Moxey	Gross, Woodland and Tanner	6 strokes	12
Frome	03-Dec	M	Labourer	Larceny by servant	Staple	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	32
Frome	03-Dec	M	Labourer	Simple Larceny	Staple	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	32
Frome	07-Dec	M	Labourer	Begging	Parfitt	Woodland and Tanner	10 days HL	45
Frome	13-Dec	M	Soldier	Indecent assault (females)	Trenchard	Shore, Woodland and Tanner	Assizes	29
Frome	15-Dec	F	Married woman	Prostitution	Trenchard	Woodland and Tanner	14 days HL	30
Frome	15-Dec	F	Married woman	Theft	Trenchard	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	30
Frome	16-Dec	M	Miner	Simple Larceny	Thorn	Shore, McMurtrie, Thatcher and Hearse	Fined	45
Frome	21-Dec	M	Plumber	Simple Larceny	Trenchard	Woodland and Tanner	Fined	43
Frome	25-Dec	M	Sailor	Navy (AWOL)	Moxey	Marquis of Bath, Shore, Porter	Military Authorities	20
Frome	26-Dec	M	Soldier	Drunkenness	Mitcham	Marquis of Bath, Shore, Porter	Fined	20

Frome	26-Dec	M	Soldier	Assault	Mitcham	Marquis of Bath, Shore, Porter	Fined	27
Frome	26-Dec	M	Soldier	Assault	Mitcham	Marquis of Bath, Shore, Porter	Fined	27

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