

Question One

The police force was invented in the nineteenth century. There were just two forces in Britain, in 1800; one was the Bow Street Runners, the other, the Thames River police force. Before the Metropolitan Police Force was set up in 1829, the streets of Britain were patrolled by watchmen and parish constables. There were also Special Constables, who could not deal with problems, such as riots (Which were common in Britain.).

The Metropolitan Police Force (Or 'Met') was set up by Sir Robert Peel. These officers were a mixture of the watchmen and special constables, their duties were to patrol the streets and settle disturbances, such as riots. Sometimes, the 'Met' helped the army. There was confusion between the two forces. The British people did not like seeing the 'redcoat' uniform of the army, and so the uniform of the Metropolitan Police Force were given a new uniform. It was blue with a top hat, tail-coat, and few badges and decorations, also armed with a truncheon. These changes were made so that they would not be confused with the army.

There were problems when setting up this force. Many of the recruits for the Metropolitan Police Force were dismissed, on counts of drunkenness. Also, the public did not like these officers. This was mainly because of crown control, and the way that the 'Met' handled it (Mostly by the baton charge, which resulted in the deaths of many people). They soon got a reputation for being violent when trying to control a situation. They were not seen as 'friendly bobbies', and attacks on policemen were common. The 'Met' was not the only police force in London, but its methods were not used elsewhere in Britain. A police officer that patrolled the street was there to prevent riotous behaviour, the Metropolitan Police Force were more in charge of dealing with people, such as prostitutes and beggars, but not solving crime. Street crimes decreased rapidly, but crimes such as burglaries increased.

Detectives were first used by the Metropolitan Police Force in 1842. There were not many of these officers, there were two inspectors and six sergeants. The public did not like the idea of these detectives at first. They believed that, as they would be in plain clothes, they would not be easily seen as policemen. The Home Office was also concerned, but they worried that the detectives would soon become corrupt officers. Detective work did not begin until the 1860s. A sergeant and inspector investigated a murder in Wiltshire. Detectives began to take photographs of criminals in 1862. They were used to start a 'Rogues Gallery'. This was created because it was thought that the different shapes of criminals' heads could be used to decide which crimes they had committed.

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10.4

History Coursework

The Detective Department was set up in 1869, but it did not work out as planned. Just as the Home Office had feared, most of the inspectors in this department were found guilty of being corrupt officers.

The Detective Department was soon set up once more, this time, with the added 'CID' (Criminal Intelligence Department). This improved the work of the department.

The way that the police were dealing with murder cases changed too. Any officer that was investigating was instructed, 'the body must not be moved, nor anything about it or in the room or place interfered with, and the public must be excluded.' This would help with forensics, as the crime scene would still be the same as it was when the crime took place.

Footprints began to be appreciated, in the nineteenth century, and forensics started to be used also. In 1884, a man was convicted of murder, because the paper used for his pistol wadding, was the same as the paper that was recovered at the scene of the crime. In 1892, a new method of identification was introduced. The method (The Alphonse Bertillion) involved measuring parts of the body, assuming that nobody would have the same measurements as another human being. Also, fingerprinting began in 1901.

From the very beginning of the police force, in the nineteenth century, the methods of which crime was dealt with changed greatly. The introduction of forensics and fingerprinting massively increased the amount of crime that was solved. The public never really liked having these officers, especially when they had the same uniform as the army. They thought that they dealt with things too violently. In some cases, this may be true. Such as the baton charge, which killed a PC during a riot at Cold Bath Fields in London. Setting up the Metropolitan Police Force brought many changes to the police. When they were brought into service, the amount of crime on the street went down (Although the number of burglaries went up). 'CID' was introduced, which led to improvements in the police work of the detectives. The police force was concerned about keeping crime levels down, by having officers on the beat, but this was not enough to stop some criminals.