

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 41

Prisons and Prisoners in Norfolk

'The Quarter Sessions, and Assizes for the city [of Norwich], are held at the Guildhall, and for the county of Norfolk, at the Shire Hall. Only one assize and general gaol delivery was held here yearly till 1832, when an act of Parliament was obtained for the removal of the Lent Assizes from Thetford, for which petitions had been repeatedly sent from Norwich during the preceding fifty years. These assizes generally occupy a week, which, from the great attendance of company, is the gayest period known to the inhabitants of Norwich.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1845) p. 91).

'The inhabitants are generally so employed in their manufactures within doors, that this [Norwich] appears a melancholy place, except on Sundays and public holidays, when the streets swarm with them.' (W. Chase and Co., *The Norwich Directory or Gentlemen's and Tradesmen's Assistant* (Norwich, 1783) p. 65).

Records relating to prisons and prisoners in Norfolk are not straightforward. There are few admission and discharge registers which means that other sources must be consulted. The Record Office holds records of Quarter Sessions and Petty Sessions but Assize records are held in The National Archives (Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU). The Assize judges' reports on criminals, 1783-1830 (HO 47), are searchable on The National Archives's online catalogue <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>. **Unless otherwise stated the records listed below are deposited in the Norfolk Record Office.**

1. Norfolk County Gaol at Norwich Castle

Norwich Castle was built on the instructions of William I and presumably included a prison from the beginning. Francis Blomefield relates that in the 14th year of King Edward III [1340-41] 'the Earls of counties, who had the custody of the royal castles, often refused to suffer the sheriffs to imprison criminals in the castles, though it had been customary so to do; upon which the legislature took it into consideration, and made an Act of Parliament, that gaols which were wont to be in ward of the sheriffs, and annexed to their baliwicks, shall be rejoined to the sheriffs of counties, and that the sheriffs shall have the custody of the same gaols and prisoners there, as heretofore they used to have; and from this very time, this castle hath been the publick gaol of the county of Norfolk....' (Francis Blomefield, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County Of Norfolk* (London, 1806) iii, pp.85-86). It was used to house people awaiting trial at both the Norfolk Quarter Sessions and the Norfolk Assizes. On 2 August 1887 the prisoners were transferred to a new purpose-built prison on Mousehold Heath (off Plumstead Road), Norwich, and the Castle ceased to be used as a prison.

Description of the Gaol in 1845: 'The County Gaol and House of Correction, commenced in 1824, on the site of the old prison, on the east side of the castle, were completed in 1828, at the cost of £50,000. The governor's house contains, besides the family apartments, a chapel and committee room. Branching from it are three radiating wings, each containing a double row of cells on the ground floor, with a day room next the governor's house, and double rows of cells on the upper floor. The number of cells in these wings is 240, and there are 36 in the old Keep. The diagonals, crossing the radiating wings at right angles, contain only a single row of cells, each having an arcade for the use of the prisoners when the weather will not permit their walking in the yard. Behind these are three other diagonal wings, of larger dimensions, with arcades below, and double rows of cells on the upper floor. The mill-house is on the right-hand side of the entrance, and has a machine for raising water (worked by the prisoners) for the use of the establishment. The governor's house being octagonal, and placed in the centre, commands a view of all the wings, day rooms, and yards.....The number [of prisoners] in 1835 was 801, and in 1843, 813.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1845) pp. 90-91).

Records:

- Norfolk Quarter Sessions books, 1565-1955 (with gaps), sometimes include lists of prisoners (both Sessions and Assizes) and record the sentence of people appearing before the Norfolk Sessions (C/S 1, on microfilm MF 653-661 to 1852).
- Quarter Sessions files, 1532-1807 (with gaps), can include depositions of accused and of witnesses (C/S 3). The destruction of the post-1800 Sessions files was authorised by an order of the Court in 1879 (see C/S 4/16 p. 326).
- Quarter Sessions files, including depositions, 1922-71 (C/S 15).
- Registers of convictions (night poaching), 1829-1954 (C/S 6/1-2).
- Register of convictions (juvenile), 1847-81 (C/S 6/3).
- Registers of convictions (Petty Sessions), 1855-1915 (C/S 6/4-5).
- Registers of convictions (general at Quarter Sessions), 1855-1955 (C/S 6/6-12).
- Visiting Justices of the County Gaol minute books, 1809-14, 1825-56, 1864-72, sometimes name individual prisoners (C/S 5/1 and on loan from Castle Museum, available on microfilm MF 879-881).
- Gaol Chapel books, 1816-39, give names of prisoners and other details (available on microfilm MF 881-882).
- Keeper's daily journal, 1822-35 (available on microfilm MF/RO 576).
- Surgeon's journals, 1843-6, 1848-50 (available on microfilm MF/RO 576).
- Diet record book, 1831-2 (available on microfilm MF/RO 576).
- Committee minutes, accounts, correspondence, plans etc, relating to maintenance and restoration of Castle, eighteenth-nineteenth century (C/Saa 1- 2, and microfilm MF/RO 581).

- Nominal registers (giving prisoners' names and details such as date and place of committal, date and place of trial and of conviction, offence, sentence, education, age, height and colour of hair, trade or occupation, religion and birth place, number of previous convictions and date of discharge), 1879-87 (available on microfilm MF 1284-1286).

Museum: Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Meadow, Norwich NR1 3JU (tel. 01603-493635). The dungeons in the Keep are open to the public. The nineteenth century Prison buildings are used for administrative purposes.

2. County Bridewells or Houses of Correction

In addition to the County Gaol in Norwich Castle, the Norfolk Quarter Sessions had responsibility for five County Bridewells or Houses of Correction at Acle, Aylsham, Swaffham, Little Walsingham and Wymondham. The County Gaol and each Bridewell had assigned to them a Committee of Visiting Justices whose task was to inspect and report to Quarter Sessions on conditions in their particular prison.

Records:

- Sessions minute books of administrative business, 1799-1968, include reports during nineteenth century of Visiting Justices, of Keepers and of Surgeons of County Gaol and of the various Bridewells (C/S 4). Surgeons' reports name individuals who died in prison.

2.1 Acle Bridewell

A resolution to repair Acle Bridewell, dated 18 July 1767, is recorded in the Quarter Sessions order book (C/S 2/11). However, by 1785 it was in 'so ruinous a condition' that the Court of Quarter Sessions sold the building and its site to John Drake of Fleggburgh, farmer. An enrolled copy of the deed, dated 12 January 1785, is to be found in miscellaneous road order book number 13 (see C/Sce 1/13).

2.2. Aylsham Bridewell

Appears to have been closed in 1825 following the completion of new buildings at Norwich Castle (see resolutions of Quarter Sessions on 12 January 1825 and 13 April 1825 (C/S 4/4 pp129 and 174-176) and also the comments on Wymondham Bridewell below).

Records:

- Register of prisoners, 1801-25 (C/Saa 8/1).

2.3 Swaffham Bridewell

Description of the Bridewell in 1868: 'The County Prison, which was erected in 1787, and considerably enlarged in 1844 at a cost of £1,500. It has a residence for the governor, and contains 67 cells and 3 hospital rooms. The prisoners are employed in mat making, sacking weaving, tailoring, shoemaking, oakum picking, and pumping water from a well 150 feet deep.' (J.G.Harrold and Co., *Directory of Norfolk and Norwich*, (London and Norwich, 1868) pp.610-611).

White's *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1883) p. 711 records: 'The County Prison at Swaffham has been discontinued under the Prisons Act, and was pulled down in 1881.'

Records:

- Plans, 1843 (C/Saa 3/13-15).

2.4 Little Walsingham Bridewell

Description of the Bridewell in 1845: 'The Bridewell, erected about the year 1787, on the plan recommended by Mr. Howard [John Howard, the prison reformer], has been enlarged and fitted up as a county House of Correction, since the removal of the Quarter Sessions from Aylsham. It was enlarged in 1822 and 1843, so that it has now 53 cells and several day-rooms, and airing yards, and a well ventilated infirmary. There are here four tread wheels for grinding corn, etc., and the prison is now conducted on the 'silent system', which is found to be very beneficial, by preventing the prisoners from instructing each other in their nefarious arts. The number of prisoners is generally about 50.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1845) p. 680).

On 11 January 1861 'Walsingham Quarter Sessions were held for the last time. Sir Willoughby Jones, who presided, informed the Grand Jury that the Sessions would be removed part to Swaffham and part to Norwich, "on account of the expenses being so great in proportion to the number of prisoners for trial." On March 1st the Bridewell ceased to be used as a house of correction, and the prisoners were removed to Norwich Castle.' (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals* (Norwich, 1901) ii, p. 103).

Records:

- Petitions against closure, 1828 (C/Saa 3/16-17).

Museum: Walsingham Bridewell is open to the public occasionally. Enquire at Tourist Information Office (tel. 01328-820510).

2.5 Wymondham Bridewell

Quarter Sessions resolved on 12 January 1825 (C/S 4/4 p.129) that the House of Correction at Aylsham and at Wymondham 'be abolished as soon as

the new County Gaol shall be completed' and on 13 April 1825 (C/S 4/4 p.174-176) it was resolved that the sale of both Bridewells should be carried into effect. The Aylsham Bridewell does appear to have been closed permanently but on 6 April 1831 (C/S 4/5 p.248) the County Surveyor was authorized to carry out repairs at Wymondham Bridewell. On 4 January 1832 (C/S 4/5 p.301) the Clerk of the Peace was instructed to place advertizements in local newspapers 'that the House of Correction at Wymondham...is opened for the Reception of Female Prisoners and of persons committed for Re-examination.' An order for the discontinuance of Norwich Gaol and Wymondham Bridewell was issued on 9 March 1878 (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals* (Norwich, 1901) ii, p. 284).

Description of the Bridewell in 1845: 'The divisional County Prison, or Bridewell, at Wymondham, was erected in 1787, on the plan recommended by the philanthropic Mr. Howard; but after the removal of the prisoners to the new gaol at Norwich, in 1827, it remained unoccupied till 1832, when it was re-opened, chiefly for the incarceration of females; and those sentenced to hard labour are employed in washing and sewing for the male prisoners at Norwich. The average number of prisoners, in 1842, was 19.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1845) p. 447).

Records:

- Visiting Justices Committee minute book, 1832-64 (C/S 5/15, unfit for production).
- Charge book, 1850-66 (ACC 2003/49, Chief Superintendent Frank D Slack QPM Collection, available on microfilm MF/RO 643/4-644/1).

Museum: Wymondham Heritage Museum, The Bridewell, Wymondham (tel. 01953-607494).

3. Borough Gaols and Bridewells

3.1 City of Norwich Common Gaol

From 1412 until 1597 the Common Gaol of the City of Norwich was in the cellars of the Guildhall (Francis Blomefield, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County Of Norfolk* (London, 1806) iv, pp. 228, 232). From 1597 to 1826 the Gaol was situated opposite the Guildhall on Guildhall Hill in a building which had formerly been The Lamb Inn. Imprisonment in the Common Gaol often amounted to a death sentence and many deaths from disease occurred there. In the twelve months from January 1688/9 to December 1689 thirteen inquests were heard on prisoners who had died there (NCR Case 6a/1/24-25, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36-37, 39-42, 44). Of these, eleven were not criminals but were prisoners for debt. Illnesses cited in the inquests include black jaundice, scurvy, dropsy, consumption and hectic fever.

On 7 August 1826 the prisoners were moved to purpose-built premises outside St Giles' Gates in the hamlet of Heigham (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals* (Norwich, 1901) i, p. 258). The Gaol was closed in May 1878 and the prisoners were moved to the County Gaol at the Castle (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals* (Norwich, 1901) ii, p. 284). The Roman Catholic Cathedral was subsequently built on the site.

Description of the Gaol in 1845: 'This commodious prison was begun in 1824, and finished in 1827, from a plan by Mr. Philip Barnes, a native architect. It cost about £30,000, and is a large quadrangular building, with towers at the angles of the four wings, and encloses 1a. 2r. 34p. The gaol contains 8 yards, 8 day rooms, and 69 sleeping cells. Both have recently undergone repairs and alterations, and a school-room has been erected. The whole is securely built and well-ventilated, and supplied with water pumped from the tread wheel in the house of correction, into the cisterns of the four towers, and sent thence in pipes to the various apartments. The number of prisoners incarcerated in 1843, was 859, of whom 129 were debtors, but here are seldom more than 80 or 100 at one time. Six of the 14 airing yards are sunk three feet below the others, so that the governor may command a full view of the whole from the inspecting gallery of his house.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk*, (Sheffield, 1845) p. 88).

Records:

- Norwich City Quarter Sessions minute books, 1511-1846 (NCR Case 20a, available on microfilm MF 612-620).
- Quarter Sessions minute books, 1839-1971 (N/S 2/1-11).
- Quarter Sessions files of indictments and recognizances, 1538, 1547, 1554, 1563-1749 (a few gaps), 1760-1838 (NCR Case 11a-f).
- Quarter Sessions files of interrogations and depositions, 1549-54, 1557-1600, 1648, 1684-1711, 1717, 1722-65, 1770-90 (NCR Case 12a-b).
- Quarter Sessions files, 1921-71 (N/S 1)
- Quarter Sessions copies of witnesses' depositions, 1855-90 (N/S 5)
- Discharge of insolvent debtors minute book, 1720-81 (NCR Case 20a/35, available on microfilm MF 620).
- Visiting Justices' order books, 1846-78 (N/S 10)
- Gaol Committee minute books, 1799-1836 (NCR Case 19c).
- Gaol Committee minute books, 1836-78 (N/TC 11/1-6).
- Gaol deliveries in Book of Pleas, medieval (NCR 17b).
- Gaol delivery lists, 1482-1504 (NCR Case 6h/12).
- Sessional returns of prisoners, 1681-2, 1702-1833 (NCR Case 12d).
- Gaoler's certificates of numbers, 1808-34 (NCR 12d).
- Calendar of prisoners, 1830 (NCR Case 12d).
- Debtors' papers, 1614-1781, including writs of distringas, 1614-18, and schedules of individuals' property and discharges of debtors, 1678-1781 (NCR Case 15c-f).
- Coroners' inquests, including prisoners, 1669-1835 (NCR Case 6a, indexed catalogue available).

- Police charge book 1, 1836-8 (ACC 2003/49, Chief Superintendent Frank D Slack QPM Collection, available on microfilm MF/RO 643/4).
- Police registers of indictable offences (or crime registers), recording date reported, classification of offence, where and when committed, details of person against whom committed, details of accused and result, 1911-66 (N/PO 1/1-40). NB Closed to public inspection for 50 years.
- **Museum:** The Guildhall, Guildhall Hill, Norwich. Tours of the building, including the former court (now a tearoom) and the cells in the cellar, can be pre-booked through Tourist Information Centre, The Forum, Norwich (tel. 01603-727927).

3.2 Norwich Bridewell

Was used to punish those guilty of lesser crimes (particularly unmarried mothers). The death rate from disease was high here too. It was closed following the construction of the new City Gaol outside St Giles' Gates and, together with the old Common Gaol on Guildhall Hill, was sold on 3 June 1829 (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals* (Norwich, 1901) ii, p. 286). Most of the prisoners in the Bridewell were sentenced at the Mayor's Court, which functioned as a Petty Sessions Court.

Records:

- Mayor's Court books, 1424-1835, with gaps (NCR Case 16a, available on microfilm).
- Bridewell Committee minute books, 1793-1820 (NCR Case 19c).
- Account books, 1585-1751 (NCR Case 19c).
- Calendar of prisoners, 1706 (NCR Case 5m).
- Coroners' inquests, including prisoners, 1669-1835 (NCR Case 6a, indexed catalogue available).

Museum: Bridewell Museum, Bridewell Alley, Norwich NR2 1AQ (tel. 01603-493635).

3.3 Great Yarmouth Gaol and Bridewell

Description of the Gaol in 1845: 'The Gaol and Bridewell, in Gaol street, form commodious prison buildings, all erected in 1818, at the cost of £3397 except the Old Gaol, which fronts the street, and has a neat court room, in which the Quarter Sessions are held. The floors of the new buildings are divided into galleries, each having a number of cells, with a sick and day room. The roof of each cell, in the lower range, is composed of a huge block of stone, which forms the floor of the one immediately above it, and the whole are well aired and ventilated. The yards are so divided as to admit of a complete classification of the prisoners; the debtors being kept apart from the felons, and the tried from the untried.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1845) p. 256).

Records:

- Great Yarmouth Borough Quarter Sessions records attached to Borough Court rolls, 1502-1503, 1509-1521, 1523-1524, 1531-1623, 1630-1651, 1661-1676, with gaps (Y/C 4).
- Quarter Sessions books, 1567-1594, 1597-1702, 1704-1732 (Y/S 1/1-4, available on microfilm MF 1030-1031).
- Quarter Sessions books, 1903-1959 (ACC Howard, Killin and Bruce 20/10/1971).
- Quarter Sessions waste (draft) books, 1640-1644, 1676-1688 (Y/C 9/1-2).
- Quarter Sessions waste (draft) books, 1707-1796, 1811-1864 (Y/S 2/1-9, available on microfilm MF 1031-1033).
- Quarter Sessions files, 1700-1863, with gaps (Y/S 3).
- Quarter Sessions files, 1943, 1945-1971 (ACC Howard, Killin and Bruce 20/10/1971 and 27/2/1976).
- Recorder's minute books, 1872-1880, 1882-1883, 1887-1893 (Y/S 11/1-3).
- Recorder's minute books, 1914-1968 (ACC Howard, Killin and Bruce 20/10/1971).
- Quarter Sessions register of appeals, 1898-1958 (ACC Howard, Killin and Bruce 20/10/1971).
- Clerk of Peace's case books, 1911-1964 (ACC Howard, Killin and Bruce 20/10/1971).

Please note that microfilm copies of all the records listed below are available in both the Norfolk Record Office and in the Local Studies Section of Great Yarmouth Library, Tolhouse Street, Great Yarmouth NR30 2SH.

- Gaol books (giving name of prisoner, date of committal and discharge, name of prosecutor, nature of offence), 1798-1865 (Y/L 2/1-3, available on MF 1872).
- Bridewell book, 1822-1838 (Y/L 2/4, available on MF 1872).
- Committal and discharge books (with separate sections for debtors and Bridewell inmates), 1819-1838 (Y/L 2/5-6, available on MF 1873).
- Gaol registers (with particulars of each prisoner including state of education), 1808-1875 (Y/L 2/8-15, available on MF 1873-1876).
- Indexes to Gaol registers references Y/L 2/9-14, 1838-1875 (Y/L 2/16-18, available on MF 1876).
- Analyses of registers, 1840-1870 (Y/L 2/19, available on MF 1876).
- Daily number books, 1837-1873 (Y/L 2/22-24, available on MF 1877).
- Summary of convictions register, 1852-post 1872 (Y/L 2/25, available on MF 1877).
- Register of prisoners' belongings, 1867-1875 (Y/L 2/26, available on MF 1877).
- Register of employment, 1868-1875 (Y/L 2/27, available on MF 1878).

- Register of admissions (with religious denomination), 1868-1873 (Y/L 2/28, available on MF 1878).
- Journal of admissions and discharges, 1869-1876 (Y/L 2/29, available on MF 1878).
- Register of particulars of prisoners convicted under 1st schedule of 1869 Habitual Criminals Act, 1870-1873 (Y/L 2/30, available on MF 1878).
- Discharge books, 1850-1874 (Y/L 2/31-33, available on MF 1878).
- Dietary book (showing amounts consumed by each prisoner), 1839-1844 (Y/L 2/34, available on MF 1879).
- Provisions account book, 1835-1843 (Y/L 2/35, available on MF 1879).
- Receipt and consumption account books (showing daily consumption by each diet class, with weekly accounts), 1845-1875 (Y/L 2/36-42, available on MF 1879-1881).
- Diet class book (showing numbers in each diet class), 1852-1867 (Y/L 2/43, available on MF 1881).
- Gaol account books, 1850-1875 (Y/L 2/44-45, available on MF 1882).
- Gaol Keeper's journals, 1825-1876 (Y/L 2/46-51, available on MF 1882-1883).
- Surgeon's journals (with lists of prisoners treated and their diseases at back), 1838-1875 (Y/L 2/52-55, available on MF 1884).
- Chaplain's journals, 1847-1865 (Y/L 2/56-58, available on MF 1884-1885).
- Chaplain's private journal, 1856-1865, later used for accounts of money taken at Tolhouse (Museum) door, 1886-1887 (Y/L 2/59, available on MF 1885).
- Schoolmaster's journal, 1853-1862 (Y/L 2/60, available on MF 1885).
- Visiting Justices' order book, 1846-1875 (Y/L 2/61, available on MF 1885).
- Visiting Justices' minute books, 1843-1876 (Y/L 2/62-63, available on MF 1885-1886).
- Visitors' book (for unofficial visitors), 1843-1879 (Y/L 2/64, available on MF 1886).
- Gaol Sessions minute book, 1853-1876 (Y/L 2/65, available on MF 1886).
- Misconduct book, 1849-1875 (Y/L 2/66, available on MF 1886).
- Register of prisoners committed for re-examination, 1875-1877 (Y/L 2/67, available on MF 1886).

Museum: Tolhouse Museum, Tolhouse Street, Great Yarmouth NR30 2SH (tel. 01493-745526).

3.4 King's Lynn Gaol

The Borough Gaol at Lynn was maintained by the Bishop of Norwich at the Steward's Hall in the Tuesday Market Place until 1527, when the Mayor and burgesses took over this function. They used the New Hall in Saturday Market Place, on the site of the present Gaol House, which was rebuilt in 1784. Parts of the adjoining Trinity Hall undercroft were used as additional cells from the 1570s until 1937 and as a Bridewell from 1615. From 1866, convicted

prisoners from Lynn were sent to the County Gaol at Norwich.

Description of the Gaol in 1845: 'The borough Gaol, which adjoins the Guildhall, was enlarged and improved in 1831, at the cost of £2,300. It has a neat white brick front, with apartments for the gaoler; and in the rear are cells and lodging rooms, with four day-rooms, and four small yards for the prisoners. The debtors and felons are kept separate, and every other classification is adopted which the confined limits of the prison will allow. It has accommodations for about fifty prisoners, but the number incarcerated at one time seldom exceeds thirty, and the imprisonment of female debtors but rarely occurs.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1845) p. 526).

Records (held in King's Lynn Borough Archives, The Old Gaolhouse, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ):

- King's Lynn Borough Quarter Sessions books, 1726-1858, 1866-1957, include lists of prisoners (KL/C 20).
- Quarter Sessions minute books, 1620-1661, 1679-1680, 1689, 1693, 1729-1865, include lists of prisoners (KL/C 21).
- Quarter Sessions files, 1816-1971, with gaps (KL/C 22).
- Gaol delivery roll, 21 Mar 1455 (KL/C18/1). Text is published in D. M. Owen, *The Making of King's Lynn* (Records of Social and Economic History, new series 9, 1984), pp 429-430, where date is erroneously given as 1453.
- Records of alterations to Gaol buildings and of appointment and payment of gaolers can be found in Hall books and Chamberlains' accounts in Borough Archives.

Museum: Tales of the Old Gaolhouse, The Old Gaolhouse, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ (tel. 01553-774297).

3.5 Thetford Borough Gaol

Records:

- Thetford Borough Quarter Sessions books, 1610-1626, 1632/3-1639 (T/C 1/9 and T/QS 1).
- Quarter Sessions minute books, 1751-1833, 1839-1951 (T/QS 2-7).
- Quarter Sessions files, 1897-1898, 1938-1951 (T/QS 8 and T/QS 24).
- Recorder's notebooks, 1937-1947 (T/QS 22-23).
- Clerk of Peace's letter book, 1916-1923 (T/QS 21).
- Surgeon's visiting book, including annual reports to Quarter Sessions, 1841-56 (C/PO 1/51).
- Chaplain's visiting book, 1841-57 (C/PO 1/52).
- Receiving book, containing details of prisoners, 1839-55 (C/PO 1/53).
- Receiving book (males only), 1855-7 (C/PO 1/54).
- Reports of charges coming under cognizance of Constabulary, 1858-81 (C/PO 55).

4. HM Prison/Young Offenders' Institution, Norwich

16 July 1887 'The new prison on Plumstead Road, Norwich, designed by the surveyor to the Prison Department, and built by Messrs. W. and T. Denne, of Walmer, Kent, was completed on this date. The prisoners were transferred from the Castle to the new prison on August 2nd.' (Charles Mackie, *Norfolk Annals* (Norwich, 1901) ii, p. 381). It accommodated both male and female prisoners until December 1924, when the women were transferred to Holloway Prison in London. In 1925 Ipswich Prison was closed and the male prisoners were transferred to Norwich.

Description of the Prison in 1890: 'Her Majesty's Prison for the county is situated on Plumstead Road beyond the Britannia Barracks. It was built in 1886-7 by the Government in substitution for Norwich Castle as a prison for the county and city. The principle on which it is built is the most approved – one long building with three floors of cells, the upper floors being reached by galleries – so that complete supervision can be exercised. The prison stands in extensive walled-in grounds. Mr. A.E. Dent, the governor, resides close by.' (William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1890) p. 526).

Records:

- Nominal registers (giving prisoners' names and details such as date and place of committal, date and place of trial and of conviction, offence, sentence, education, age, height and colour of hair, trade or occupation, religion and birth place, number of previous convictions and date of discharge): both male and female prisoners, 1879-1883; female prisoners only, 1883-1907 and 1921-24; male prisoners only, 1884-1885, 1887-1890, 1894-18966 and 1900-1964 (HMP 1; 1879-1937 available on microfilm MF 1284-1295).
- Indexes to nominal registers, 1879-1898 and 1937-1964 (HMP 2; 1879-98 available on microfilm MF 1296).
- Record of conviction registers, 1906-1935 (HMP 3).
- Registers of Aliens and Commonwealth Citizens, 1921-1972 (HMP 4).
- Photograph album of prisoners, 1907-1935 (HMP 5, unfit for production, available on microfilm MF/RO 622/6).
- Calendars of prisoners, 1927-1964 (HMP 6).
- Governor's journals, 1901-1988 (HMP 7). NB Closed to public inspection for 70 years.
- Britannia Annexe Governor's journals, 1970-1984 (HMP 8). NB Closed to public inspection for 70 years.
- Visiting Committee minute books, 1913-1971 (HMP 9). NB Closed to public inspection for 70 years.
- Visiting Committee minutes and observation books, 1963-1972 (HMP 10). NB Closed to public inspection for 70 years.
- Chairman of Visiting Committee's papers, 1863-1910 (HMP 11).
- Prison Inspector's and Director's minute books, 1881-1991 (HMP 12). NB Closed to public inspection for 70 years.

- Governor's annual reports, 1932-1958 (HMP 13).
- Visitors' books, 1898-1989 (HMP 14). NB Closed to public inspection for 30 years.
- Visitors' comments book, 1922-1938 (HMP 15).
- Registers of officers, 1882-1972 (HMP 16). NB Closed to public inspection for 50 years.
- Officers' pay books, 1915-1926 (HMP 17).
- Registers of temporary officers, 1924-1958 (HMP 18).
- Record of corporal punishments, 1927-1945 (HMP 19)
- Record of prisoners' petitions, 1894-1960 (HMP 20).
- Registers of prisoners' applications, 1955-1976 (HMP 21).
- Statistics registers relating to remand and trial prisoners, 1936-1965 (HMP 22).
- Special search registers, 1972-1991(HMP 23). NB Closed to public inspection for 50 years.
- Governor's orders books, 1965-1977 (HMP 24). NB Closed to public inspection for 70 years.
- Governor's papers, 1889-1992 (HMP 25). NB Closed to public inspection for 70-75 years.
- Medical Officer's papers, 1940-1960 (HMP 26). NB Some papers closed to public inspection for 100 years.
- Steward's papers, 1960-1965 (HMP 27).
- Pattern books, 1911-1965 (HMP 28).
- Tools ledgers, c. 1960 (HMP 29).
- Canteen records, 1970-1972 (HMP 30).
- Staff housing records, 1970-1986 (HMP 31). NB Closed to public inspection for 50 years.
- Prison photographs, 1983-c 1987 (HMP 32).
- Copies of Prison Commission/Service circulars and memoranda, 1885-1960 (HMP 33).
- Copies of Prison Service monthly circulars, 1940-1966 (HMP 34).
- Copies of Prison Service staff circulars and notices, 1954-1967 (HMP 35).
- Indexes to Prison Service circulars and memoranda, 1943-1958 (HMP 36).
- Books of reference, 1884-c. 1964 (HMP 37).

5. Norfolk County Constabulary Lock-ups: cell books, charge registers etc.

Suspects were held in these lock-ups only briefly before being transferred to Norwich Prison.

- Harleston, cell book, 1882-1915 (C/PO 1/18).
- Docking, cell book, 1882-1937 (C/PO 1/21).
- Wells, cell book, 1892-1944 (C/PO 1/22).
- Cromer, cell book, 1883-1923 (C/PO 1/24).
- Loddon, returns of criminal cases heard, 1893-1909 (C/PO 1/38-39).

- Loddon, receipts issued by Norwich Prison to Loddon constables for prisoners and their belongings delivered, 1891-1912 (C/PO 1/40-44).
- Pulham, register of charges, 1883-6 (C/PO 1/49).
- North Walsham, register of charges, 1886-8 (C/PO 1/56).

6. County Treasurer's abstracts of accounts, 1835-1882 (C/T 1/1-7)

Include lists of persons tried by the County Assizes and payments to policemen for transporting prisoners (sentenced at Petty Sessions, Quarter Sessions and Assizes) between various lock-ups and the County Gaol.

7. Petty Sessions

The less serious offences were tried before the Petty Sessions Courts. The County of Norfolk had 25 Petty Sessional Divisions which were based on the old hundreds. The Boroughs (Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Norwich and Thetford) had their own Petty Sessions.

Records:

The records of Petty Sessions Courts do not survive very well. Some, such as North Erpingham, have records dating from the 1840s whilst others, such as Freebridge Lynn, have nothing before the 1950s.

- Registers of convictions at County Petty Sessions (giving little detail), 1855-1915 (C/S 6/4-5).
- See catalogues PS 1-30.

8. Calendars of prisoners

Calendars of prisoners: Norfolk Assizes

- 1693-4, 1748-50, 1752-67, 1769, 1771-85, 1788, 1794, 1796, 1798, 1806-11, 1813-16, 1818, 1820, 1823, 1832-8, 1840-4, 1846-8, 1852-3 (microfilm copy of a private collection available on MF/RO 36/1).
- 1808, 1816-92 (with gaps) (microfilm copy of collection in Norfolk Heritage Centre, Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, available on MF/RO 611/5).
- December 1863-January 1922, October 1952-April 1971 (C/S 10/17-18).
- July 1888-March 1890 (MC 21118/1 available on microfilm MF/RO 611/4).
- 1927-1964 (HMP 6/1-18).

Calendars of prisoners: Norfolk Quarter Sessions

- 1826-96 (with gaps) (microfilm copy of collection in Norfolk Heritage Centre, Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, available on MF/RO 611/5).
- January 1862-December 1971 (C/S 10/1-16).
- July 1888-March 1890 (MC 21118/1 available on microfilm MF/RO 611/4).
- 1927-1964 (HMP 6/1-18).

Calendars of prisoners: Norwich City Assizes

- 1823-95 (with gaps) (microfilm copy of collection in Norfolk Heritage Centre, Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, available on MF/RO 611/5).
- July 1888-March 1890 (MC 21118/1 available on microfilm MF/RO 611/4).
- 1927-1964 (HMP 6/1-18)

Calendars of prisoners: Norwich City Quarter Sessions

- 1823-95 (with gaps) (microfilm copy of collection in Norfolk Heritage Centre, Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, available on MF/RO 611/5).
- July 1888-March 1890 (MC 21118/1 available on microfilm MF/RO 611/4).
- 1927-58 (N/S 4/7).
- 1927-1964 (HMP 6/1-18).
- May 1963-July 1971 (C/S 10/19).

Calendars of prisoners: Great Yarmouth Borough Quarter Sessions

- July 1888-March 1890 (MC 21118/1 available on microfilm MF/RO 611/4).
- 1927-1964 (HMP 6/1-18).
- March 1965-September 1971 (C/S 10/20).

Calendars of prisoners: King's Lynn Borough Quarter Sessions

- Printed, 1868-1933, included in Sessions files (KL/C22/77-272, available at King's Lynn Borough Archives).
- 1927-1964 (HMP 6/1-18).
- Written or typed at front of each Sessions file, 1937-71 (KL/C22, uncatalogued, available at King's Lynn Borough Archives).
- January 1965-April 1968 (C/S 10/21).

9. Index of persons sentenced to transportation

People were often sentenced to transportation 'beyond the seas' for what we would regard as very minor crimes, such as theft of a loaf of bread or a pocket handkerchief. They could be sentenced by the Assize Courts and also by the various Quarter Sessions Courts. An index is available in the Searchroom of persons sentenced to transportation. It has been compiled from the Quarter Sessions minute books and (in the case of persons sentenced at the Assizes) from the accounts of the trials in the local newspapers. It is not comprehensive because a number of people sentenced to death subsequently had their sentence commuted to transportation for life by the Crown and it is difficult to pick these cases up in the local records. However, references to these cases can be found in the Assize judges' reports, 1783-1830, in The National Archives (HO 47). They are searchable on The National Archives' online catalogue <http://catalogue.pro.gov.uk>.

For information about online indexes to those who were transported, see NRO leaflet 14 *Researching Ancestors transported to Australia*.

10. England and Wales Criminal Registers, 1791-1892

These are registers of all persons charged with indictable offences in England and Wales. The original registers are held at The National Archives, and can be searched online *via* the Ancestry website <www.ancestry.co.uk>. The information given in the registers may include the name, age and birthplace of the accused, when and where he or she was tried, the crime and sentence, the date of execution or release, by whom the accused was committed and to whom he or she was delivered. The registers are useful in identifying the court which heard the case, so that you can look for any surviving court records.

11. Local newspapers

These contain accounts of trials at both the Assizes and Quarter Sessions. They are available for consultation on microfilm in the Norfolk Heritage Centre, Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, The Forum, Norwich.



If you need this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the County Archivist on 01603 222599 and we will do our best to help.

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