**Crimes 1700-1900 (Industrial Britain)**

In 1700-1900 crimes changed once more. Religious uncertainty had improved, as the monarchs stayed Protestant, but allowed Catholics to live quietly in peace. The last execution for heresy was 1612.

Wealth also increased so the crime of vagabondage greatly decreased.

Finally, people became more educated and worried less about witchcraft – it stopped being a crime in 1736.

**Highway Robbery**

Highway robbery became a huge problem in Industrial Britain. This was where gangs of criminals stopped people travelling on quiet country roads and threatened or beat them, before taking all their money. Most highwaymen were ruthless e.g. one highwayman’s mask slipped off his face. To stop his victim telling people who he was, he cut out her tongue!

It became a problem because:

* More urbanisation happened in the Industrial Period. This meant that the countryside had very few people living in it, meaning there was lots of quiet roads.
* There was no police force and town constables did not work in the country.
* Handguns became easier and cheaper to get hold of.
* There were very few banks so people carried a lot of money.
* After the Civil War there were many soldiers who no longer had jobs and were used to violence.

This crime became a serious problem as many travellers feared them and it began to disrupt trade between different towns. However, in the 1800s the crime began to stop because:

* The banking system improved so that people carried less money
* Horseback patrols were set up around towns and high rewards were given for informing on highwaymen
* **Stagecoaches** were introduced where travellers could rest for the night.(like a hotel)

**Smuggling**

In the 1700s smuggling became a huge crime in coastal areas – bringing in tea, cloth, wine and spirits without paying import tax (custom duty). These taxes were seen as very important to the government as they were the main source of income.

**In 1748 there was about 20,000 active smugglers across the country**. It was a popular crime with the public as it reduced the prices of goods and it did not cause anyone any harm. However, smuggling gangs could be very large, between 50-100 people, and were well armed. They would often resort to violence to stop people interfering. The Hawkhurst Gang in 1748 became known for their violent treatment of custom officials who tried to stop them.

**Poaching**

Poaching was the act of hunting game (rabbits, deer, peasants etc.) on someone else’s land. This was a common crime, as very few people owned a large amount of land. People poached for many different reasons. Some did it to improve their family’s diets, while some did it for fun. However, 1700-1900 also saw poaching gangs begin to increase.

This gangs worked together to avoid being caught and poached large numbers of animals. They would then take these into cities and sell them at markets. They could gain a large price for selling their goods and many people made a lot of money in this black-market way of selling.

Although game-keepers worked hard to stop poachers, it was difficult to find them guilty in court as often their friends would make up alibis and lie in court.