Women and property crime; offending and punishment, Suffolk 1770-1820

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and

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the property crimes committed by women in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820, which led them to prosecution at the petty sessions, quarter sessions and assize courts. By situating female property crime within the context of a 'perfect storm' of social and economic change and transition, the thesis suggests that minor thefts tried at the quarter sessions reflected increasing levels of poverty and dearth in the county and contributed to the offender's 'economy of makeshifts', along with all other means by which they could generate income. It additionally suggests that larger and more serious thefts tried at the assizes, including burglary and housebreaking, may have been intended to raise an income from onward sale of the goods stolen.

The study investigates the changing nature of punishments handed down to women convicted by the courts and the application of discretion at the quarter sessions and assizes, including to women who were capitally convicted but recommended for transportation to the new colony of New South Wales. The picture of women's crime, offending and punishment in Suffolk achieved in this study augments knowledge of crime in other regions, including the work of Peter King in neighbouring Essex.

This enquiry also examines almost 1,800 convictions of women at the petty sessions between 1784 and 1792 for the fraudulent reeling of worsted yarn in the domestic spinning industry, which supplied the Norwich weavers. These high numbers over a nine year period indicate the extent and importance of the Suffolk spinning industry to working women as well as the widespread nature of this minor crime. They also foreground the role and status of the inspectors appointed to police this crime and prosecute offenders, before the apparent abandonment of prosecutions in 1793.

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GLOSSARY OF IMPERIAL WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND MONEY

Imperial weights:
16 ozs (ounces) = 1 lb (pound weight)
14 lbs = 1 stone
8 stone (or 112 lbs) = 1 cwt (hundredweight)
1 quarter cwt = 2 stone
160 stone (2,240 lbs) = 1 ton

Measures of grain:
1 bushel of wheat = 60 lbs or 4 stone, 4 lbs.
4 bushels = 1 coomb
1 peck = ¼ bushel

Currency:
12d (pence) = 1s or 1/-
20/- = £1 (1 pound)
1 guinea (1g or 1 gn) = £1 1s or £1 1/-

INTRODUCTION

> 'Tuesday se'nnight a coach-horse belonging to John Cobbold, Esq. of Ipswich, was stolen out of his stable by a woman, who formerly lived servant with him, and who rode the horse from Ipswich to London, it is supposed, in about ten hours, where she offered him for sale to a stable-keeper, who gave notice thereof at one of the Public offices; in consequence she was apprehended, and it is expected will shortly be removed by a Habeas to Ipswich, in order to take her trial at the next assizes.- She was dressed in man's apparel when she rode off with the horse.'[1]

This thesis is an enquiry into women's property crimes in Suffolk and of their experiences in the judicial system in a period encompassing the last decades of the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth. Property crimes have been researched in several other parts of England and Wales but remain generally underexplored in East Anglia.[2] This study of Suffolk aims to retrieve knowledge of women's appropriation of property by theft, embezzlement and fraud and, thus, to contribute towards addressing this gap in our regional knowledge. It further aims to find out if the emerging patterns of female property crime may be tentatively linked to contemporaneous social and economic changes in this county, and are similar to patterns of felony found in other regional studies.

My interest in women's property crime was initially piqued by the novel written by Richard Cobbold, based on the life of Margaret Catchpole and first published in 1847.[3] Catchpole's alleged theft of John Cobbold's horse and her subsequent trial at the Suffolk assizes in Bury St Edmunds in 1797 were widely reported in newspapers in many parts of the country, as confirmed by the above quotation from the *Oxford Journal* which opens this chapter. Catchpole remains arguably one of Suffolk's best known female criminal offenders

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[1] *Oxford Journal*, 10 June 1797.

[2] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women in the 18th Century in the South West of England', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Plymouth, 2000); Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Deirdre Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion, 1780-1830* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press, 2006); Richard J. Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins: The Yorkshire Worsted Spinners, Policing, and the Transformation of Work in the Early Industrial Revolution', 51 *IRSH* (2006), 217–242; Rhiannon Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire, 1735-1775', (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Roehampton, 2013); John Styles, 'Spinners and the Law: Regulating Yarn Standards in the English Worsted Industries, 1550–1800', *Textile History*, 44, 2 (2013), 145–170; Catherine E. Horler-Underwood, 'Aspects of Female Criminality in Wales, c.1730-1830: Evidence from the Court of Great Sessions', (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cardiff, 2014).

[3] Richard Cobbold, *The History of Margaret Catchpole: A Suffolk Girl* (originally published, London: Henry Coulburn, 1847; facsimile edition, Ipswich: The Deben Bookshop, 1971).

but the effect of her notoriety has been to overshadow the criminal behaviours of other women in the county. Hers, however, was not an isolated case of female crime and she was not the only woman to be transported to New South Wales in 1800. The realisation that Catchpole was transported with two other female convicts from Suffolk helped to prompt this enquiry into a broader investigation of women's property crimes in the county between 1770 and 1820.

This thesis is primarily concerned with offences that resulted in a court appearance for the offender and has its origins in the general understanding that fewer women stood accused of property crimes than men and that victims did not always prosecute women. However, it contends that women's property crimes are worthy of investigation because crime can open inroads into their lives which, in many instances, are not recorded elsewhere, as John Beattie has argued.[4] The thesis investigates evidence retrieved from judicial and official documents, as well as other sources such as newspapers and letters.

The fifty-year period covered by this study is one of transition. It coincides with the last fifty years of the era that Peter King designated 'the golden age of discretionary justice', when the death penalty was imposed on increasing numbers of offenders under the expanding 'Bloody Code' of criminal justice, though most were acquitted or reprieved.[5] The enquiry starts just before the transportation of convicts to North America was ended by the American Revolution in 1776. It continues through the introduction of transportation to the new colony of New South Wales in 1787, up until a few years after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The end of the study in 1820 coincides approximately with the repeal of the Bloody Code in 1823.[6]

The period of this study witnessed significant socio-economic turmoil and change for working people in Suffolk who suffered distress caused by the decline of the domestic weaving and hand spinning industries, while dwindling levels of agricultural employment and low wages were brought about by changes in working practices and land management. Rapid growth in the population, in addition to periods of extreme winter weather when the cereal harvests failed, led to dramatic price increases. The impact of such disruption on living

[4] J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 3.
[5] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 355; Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion,* p. 1; Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police and Penal Policy: European Experiences, 1750-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 27: the 'Bloody Code' was 'the slow accretion of statutes authorizing the death penalty' in eighteenth century England.
[6] 7 & 8 Geo. IV, c.27 (1827): *Criminal Statutes Repeal Act (Repeal of Bloody Act).*

standards was particularly hard on women, for whom employment opportunities shrank considerably during this period.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis pursues two related lines of enquiry in Suffolk in the fifty years between 1770 and 1820. The first investigates the prosecution and sentencing of women for property crimes at the quarter sessions and assizes, drawing on evidence retrieved from the judicial books and rolls for these two courts. The second line of enquiry explores prosecutions at the petty sessions in the 1780s and 1790s of women employed in the domestic worsted spinning industry for false and short reeling. A different approach was required for this offence because of the dearth of petty sessions books for this period. Crucially, local newspapers reported the names of women in groups of neighbouring villages who were found guilty of this offence and were fined.[7]

To investigate the prosecution of women at the quarter sessions courts in Suffolk for property crimes, this thesis relies principally on the survival of judicial records. Women's property crimes were systematically and comprehensively recorded from surviving quarter sessions books and rolls, but there are gaps in the archival record in some places and periods. Few indictments have been found and it is possible that some other quarter sessions books for the county may have been lost. Details of these lesser crimes have been derived from the Suffolk county quarter sessions minute books (1781-1801), the Borough of Ipswich sessions books and rolls (1790-1801) and the Borough of Sudbury sessions books (1781-1809), all of which are held at Suffolk Archives (Ipswich).[8]

Quarter sessions minute books record the administrative and criminal work undertaken by the county's four regional courts, which sat in rotation at Beccles (northeast Suffolk), Woodbridge (southeast Suffolk), Ipswich (the central county town) and Bury St Edmunds (west Suffolk). These courts adjudicated cases for the hundreds within the boundaries of each region. The Ipswich county sessions heard cases from the hundreds of Hartismere, Hoxne, Stow, Bosmere and Claydon, and Samford.[9] This region comprised a broad swathe running

[7] *Ipswich Journal*, *Bury and Norwich Post*, and *Norfolk Chronicle.*
[8] Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Suffolk County Quarter Sessions Books, B105/2/47, 1781-1786; B105/2/48, 1786-1789; B105/2/49, 1790-1794; B105/2/50, 1794-1798; B105/2/51, 1798-1801. Borough of Ipswich Sessions Books, C/2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815. Borough of Ipswich Sessions Rolls, C/2/9/1/1/1/138-144, 1790-1796; C/2/9/1/1/1/145-149, 1797-1801. Borough of Sudbury Sessions Books, EE501/2/18, 1781-1836 (to 1809).
[9] R. L. Cross, *Justice in Ipswich, 1200-1968* (Ipswich: Ipswich Corporation, 1968), p. 35-36.

from the county's northern boundary with Norfolk to its southern boundary with Essex. In west Suffolk, to the west of this region, the county sessions at Bury St Edmunds administered justice for the hundreds of the old Liberty of St Edmund.[10] Beccles administered justice for the northeastern hundreds of Mutford and Lothingland, Wangford and Blything, while Woodbridge sessions dealt with the hundreds within the Liberty of St Ethelreda in the southeast of the county.[11]

Evidence of the administrative and criminal work of the two borough quarter sessions courts of Ipswich and Sudbury was examined in separate books and rolls. The Borough of Ipswich comprised 14 parishes, the Borough of Sudbury three parishes. Evidence of female prosecutions from the four county quarter sessions courts and the two borough sessions courts has been transcribed into a database and is summarised in Appendix 1.

More serious cases of felony are derived from the rolls (1796-1800) of the twice-yearly (Lent and Summer) Suffolk assizes in Bury St Edmunds, which are held at the National Archives in Kew.[12] The assizes held separate courts for the Liberty (the west of Suffolk) and the County (the east of Suffolk), though the records for both assize courts are rolled together at the National Archives.[13] These assize records are supplemented by several assize calendars of prisoners (1801-1807), which were found among early nineteenth century Lackford petty sessions papers and are now also held at Suffolk Archives.[14] The evidence retrieved from the assize court rolls and calendars has been transcribed into a second database which is summarised at Appendix 2.

Petty sessions records of thefts have not survived for the period of this enquiry, which means that individual cases of minor property appropriation handled by these courts cannot contribute to this thesis. However, the petty sessions courts were also tasked with the adjudication of cases that involved the embezzlement of wool and consequent fraudulent false and short spinning of worsted yarn by those employed in the domestic spinning industry. These courts prosecuted groups of spinners from neighbouring villages and were

[10] Edward Martin, 'Hundreds and Liberties', in *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk: Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond and Edward Martin (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), 26-27.
[11] Martin, 'Hundreds and Liberties', pp. 26-27.
[12] The National Archives (TNA), Suffolk Assize Rolls: ASSI 94/1421, 1796, Summer; ASSI 94/1441, 1797, Lent & Summer; ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L; ASSI 94/1488, 1799 L; ASSI 94/1489, 1799 S; ASSI 94/1512, 1800 L; ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S; SA 966/7/1, Lackford Petty Sessions, Assize Calendars: 1801 S; 1801 L; 1802 L; 1803 L; 1805 L; 1806 L; 1807 L.
[13] The National Archives, Kew.
[14] SA, 966/7/1, Lackford Petty Sessions, Assize Calendars: 1801 S; 1801 L; 1802 L; 1803 L; 1805 L; 1806 L; 1807 L.

usually female. Jane Fiske has suggested that these cases were reported in the local press to deter other domestic spinners from appropriating handfuls of washed and combed wool from the wool-comber or yarn-maker who supplied it to them.[15] Brief reports of these prosecutions in newspapers, specifically the *Ipswich Journal*, the *Bury and Norwich Post*, and the *Norfolk Chronicle*, have provided the names of large numbers of spinners convicted of this offence and are transcribed in Appendices 3 and 4.

Newspaper reports have been drawn on further throughout this study to confirm or extend the known details of women's criminal activity. The combination of official documents and newspaper reports, moreover, has enabled the experiences of women from Suffolk who were sentenced to transportation at the quarter sessions or assizes to be observed after their trials. News reports have contributed valuable detail about these experiences, including their conveyance from gaol in Suffolk to hulks or convict ships, and the voyage to New South Wales.[16] British Home Office and Australian Government official documents systematically recorded most of these women's lives from departure from England to arrival in New South Wales; they also recorded their individual lives in the new colony through musters and subsequent pardons.[17] The experiences of 15 women transported from Suffolk between 1787 and 1811 are summarised in Appendix 5.

PROPERTY CRIME: DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIELD

The investigation of women's property crimes in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 in this thesis was inspired by the pioneering studies of J. M. Beattie and Douglas Hay, whose work attempted to establish eighteenth century patterns of crime and criminality from hitherto unexplored and unpublished judicial records.[18] Joanna Innes and John Styles argued that this new history of crime reflected historians' growing interest in cultural and social perspectives

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[15] Jane Fiske, ed., 'Introduction', *The Oakes Diaries: Business, Politics and the Family in Bury St Edmunds, 1778-1827*, *Vol. I, James Oakes's Diaries, 1778-1800* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 1990), 1-200, p. 38.

[16] For example, *The Times*, *Police Gazette*, *Cambridge Independent News*, *Cambridge Intelligencer*, *Chester Courant*, *Gloucester Journal*, *Hull Packet*, *Oxford Journal.*

[17] For example, Home Office, 10: 1, 2 & 3, 1787-1859, Home Office: *Settlers and Convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania*; HO 11, 1787-1870: *Convict Transportation Registers*; HO 13, 1782-1871: *Criminal Entry Books, out-letters, warrants and pardons*; HO 47, 1784-1830: *Judges' Reports on Criminals*. State Library of NSW, *First Fleet convicts*, http://firstfleet.uow.edu.au/details.aspx?surname=Harvey&gender=F&term=&ship=&age=&notes=&-recid=32965 [accessed 16.4.2024].

[18] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*; Douglas Hay, 'Property, Authority and the Criminal Law', in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, 2nd edn., revised by Cal Winslow, Douglas Hay and Peter Linebaugh (London: Verso, 2011), 17-63.

of plebian life 'from below'.[19] It contributed to a rich social history that gave voice to the 'dispossessed and inarticulate' who otherwise remained largely unknown and unheard.[20] This movement evolved through a range of contemporaneous approaches. Beattie borrowed positivist techniques from social science to foreground patterns in the criminal activities of the poor, including women.[21] Hay implemented Marxist interpretations of the prosecution and punishment of criminals through the lens of the unequal relationship between the wealthy who owned property, sought to protect it and administered the law, while the poor who owned far less were more liable to be accused of theft and harshly sentenced.[22] Beattie's positivist research investigated crime in Surrey and Sussex between 1660 and 1800 from the quarter sessions and assize records.[23] Hay delivered ideological interpretations of crime in the county of Staffordshire which were concerned with the social impact of class and privilege on legislative change and judicial practice.[24] Through studies such as these, county and regional boundaries became the geographical and administrative framework within which criminal behaviour and prosecution could be better understood.

Hay's Marxist approach to crime and punishment was contentious. His ideological interpretation was challenged by John Langbein, who argued that the criminal law and procedures existed to 'serve and protect the interests of the people who suffered as victims of crime', many of whom were non-elite.[25] Though judges were from a higher level of society, victims and prosecutors often came from a broader section of the population.[26] Langbein found evidence that juries at Old Bailey trials frequently down-valued the seriousness of around a third of offences and that strong connections existed between clemency and the youth or previous good character of an offender.[27] Peter King also took issue with some aspects of Hay's argument. King accepted that statutes of the Bloody Code favoured property owners at the expense of the labouring poor.[28] However, he also argued that developments such as enclosure and the loss of customary rights had serious implications for rural workers

[19] Joanna Innes and John Styles, 'The Crime Wave: Recent Writing on Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 25, 4 (1986), 380-435 (pp. 380-383).
[20] Innes and Styles, 'The Crime Wave', pp. 380-383.
[21] Innes and Styles, 'The Crime Wave', pp. 382-383.
[22] Innes and Styles, 'The Crime Wave', pp. 382-383.
[23] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, pp. 15-72.
[24] Hay, 'Property', p. 18.
[25] Innes and Styles, 'The Crime Wave', pp. 384-385; John Langbein, 'Albion's Fatal Flaws', *Past & Present*, 98, 2 (1983), 96-120 (p.97).
[26] Langbein, 'Albion's Fatal Flaws', pp. 101; 108.
[27] Langbein, 'Albion's Fatal Flaws', p. 98.
[28] Peter King, *Crime and Law in England, 1750-1840: Remaking Justice from the Margins*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 281-307.

who already faced hardship from low wages and periods of unemployment.[29] He pointed out that labourers and middling men themselves sometimes used the criminal law for the protection of their own property in Essex.[30] King concluded overall that property crime accounted for the majority of indictments in the higher courts in the second half of the eighteenth century.[31] But he maintained that rates of prosecution reflected the victims' inclination to proceed as much as they did the context and nature of the crime.[32]

Like Hay, Beattie recognised that court documents raised questions about power relationships between defendants and the men who controlled the law and held power in the courts.[33] King highlighted the fact that non-capital offences which became capital crimes in this period remained a further area of contestation for many who found themselves accused.[34] Moreover, although research 'from below' focused on how the courts and judicial process worked, it also generated many questions about class relationships in society: for example, between the justices and judges who were responsible for administering the Bloody Code and the offenders who were charged with capital offences and came predominantly from the labouring poor.[35]

Although Beattie's work was criticised because of the incomplete nature of some of the judicial documents he examined, his positivist approach towards crime and punishment from previously unresearched court records of Surrey and Sussex between 1660 and 1800 set an early benchmark for investigating crimes against property and the person.[36] His tentative conclusions also highlighted the importance of considering social and political changes and developments in the interpretation of statistical data derived from court records.[37] In rural areas, he tentatively suggested links between the price index, levels of deprivation, unemployment and crime.[38] In urban environments he suggested possible links between

[29] King, *Crime and Law*, p. 282.
[30] Peter King, 'Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800', *The Historical Journal,* 27, 1 (1984), 25-58 (p. 58); King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 356-358.
[31] King, 'Decision-Makers and Decision-Making', p. 25.
[32] King, 'Decision-Makers and Decision-Making', p. 25.
[33] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 3.
[34] King, *Crime and Law*, pp. 281-307.
[35] Hay, 'Property', pp. 40-44.
[36] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, pp. 140-264; Richard Ward, 'Print Culture and Responses to Crime in Mid-Eighteenth Century London', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010), pp. 15-16; Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police and Penal Policy: European Experiences, 1750-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 27.
[37] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, pp. 140-264.
[38] J. M. Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime in England, 1660-1800', *Past & Present*, 62, 1 (1974), 47-95, (pp. 92-95).

population increase and a rise in indictments.[39] Beattie further suggested that the impacts of war and subsequent demobilisation on employment, wages and prices had a bearing on crime levels because the resultant adverse economic conditions meant that working people struggled to make ends meet.[40] These factors combined suggest that the poor were the group most likely to offend against property, whether in rural or urban situations. Beattie's tentative conclusions have been a starting point for other regional studies of crime, including this study of women's property crime in the largely rural county of Suffolk between 1770 and 1820.

Investigation of a centralised legal system from the evidence in written official documents excludes, by its nature, consideration of informal systems of justice that were not written down or recorded in other ways. But it does not follow that these systems did not exist. Carolyn A. Conley found that systems of 'traditional patterns of judicial discretion and extra-legal community sanctions' in Kent were still favoured over court procedures in the nineteenth century.[41] Distinctions between formal prosecution and informal sanctions, and the application of law by local justices and assize court judges were not clear-cut either. Conley argued that the men who administered justice needed to be able to mediate these boundaries, as well as understand the varying attitudes of people from different levels of society towards what was, and was not, acceptable in their society.[42] King also argued that there were inconsistencies between the sentences enshrined in law and the attitudes of prosecutors, juries and judges.[43] He argued that the very young, the middle aged and women were likely to be treated more leniently than young male adults, for example.[44] King also showed that 'not found', acquittal, mitigation, jury nullification and judges' right of reprieve peaked around 1800 in Essex.[45] This enabled many property offenders to escape capital punishment. Of property crimes heard at the Old Bailey between 1791 and 1822, King found that women were less likely than men to be convicted, more likely to avoid public trial and less likely to face the harshest sentences.[46] This contributed to his assertion that the 75 years before the setting up of professional police forces and the repeal of the Bloody Code constituted a 'golden age of discretionary justice'.[47]

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[39] Beattie, 'Pattern of Crime', pp. 59-60; 74.
[40] Beattie, 'Pattern of Crime', pp. 92-95.
[41] Carolyn A. Conley, *The Unwritten Law: Criminal Justice in Victorian Kent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 3.
[42] Conley, *The Unwritten* Law, pp. 3-4.
[43] King, *Crime and Law*, pp. 61-62.
[44] King, *Crime and Law*, pp. 61-62.
[45] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 1 & 355.
[46] King, *Crime and Law*, pp. 166-171.
[47] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 355.

Hay's research raised questions about the unequal relationships between victims, prosecutors and defendants in eighteenth century criminal prosecutions but also confirmed the importance of the county or region for understanding plebian life 'from below'. The regional studies of crime in Surrey and Sussex by Beattie, and Essex by King, contributed significantly to the growing interest in this field, which has extended to include studies of crime in different regions. The next section focuses on women's property crime in other regions of England and Wales.

WOMEN'S PROPERTY CRIME: REGIONS, PATTERNS AND NETWORKS

Although the history of early modern and modern crime became a strongly dynamic area of research in the 1980s and 1990s, Garthine Walker argued that it was slow to privilege women's participation in criminal activity.[48] However, the rise of women's history in the quest for knowledge about women's past lives stimulated interest in their roles as instigators of crime, not just as victims. Deirdre Beddoe asserted that this reflected the impact of the second wave of the women's feminist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s in defiance of the prevalent 'male view of history' when women realised they had not been included in the historical record.[49] The historiography generated by this second wave subsequently brought gender, women and theft to the fore, initially from the perspective of their unequal relationship with wealthy property owners and employers. Frank McLynn proposed that property offences against employers resulted from 'his or her life of deprivation juxtaposed to the privilege of employers'.[50] He acknowledged that household theft was risky, especially if it involved violence, but also claimed that women's crimes were generally less serious than men's and women were more likely to be acquitted on capital charges because they presented less danger to society.[51] He further asserted that because women were required 'to behave with proper deference and submission' and at men's behest, their criminal activities were seen as transgressions of the expected norms of female behaviour.[52] This seems to suggest that women's criminal actions may have considered to be pale imitations

[48] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social*, pp. 3-4.
[49] Deirdre Beddoe, *Discovering Women's History: a Practical Guide to Researching the Lives of Women since 1800*, 3rd edn. (London: Longman, 1998), p. 1.
[50] Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 124.
[51] McLynn, *Crime and Punishment*, p. 128.
[52] McLynn, *Crime and Punishment*, p. 128.

of men's. However, transgression against gendered expectations of female behaviour may also highlight society's attitudes towards deviance.

Society's expectations of deferential behaviour from the lower orders towards the wealthy and, specifically, the nature of obligation demanded from female workers by employers were further examined by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall.[53] They argued that because women and girls were likely to be employed as live-in servants to householders and shop-owners and their daily interactions and responsibilities were principally to middle class women and their children, hierarchy, status and obligation were reinforced on a daily basis.[54] Employment in these circumstances probably meant that women's basic necessities of board and lodgings were met by employers, on top of which they may have received a small income, depending on age and status.[55] Servant women may not have lived in abject poverty, but thefts did take place from their employers (or former employers), as this thesis will show.

Research into property crime in different geographical regions of England and Wales has highlighted common themes and differences between regions and has also foregrounded differences between men and women's crimes. Philips' study in the Black Country, which focused on the period between 1835 and 1860, found that men committed three times more property crime than women.[56] Women were responsible for 30% of larceny cases and the receipt of stolen goods, but only 20% of fraud, forgery and currency offences.[57] Philips plausibly argued that men's roles as breadwinners not only imposed greater responsibility on them to break the law but they also spent time at work away from home which gave them more opportunities to commit crimes.[58] He omitted to suggest what opportunities might have been afforded to women to commit crimes, but suggested by implication that if women were restricted by child rearing and maintenance of the household, opportunities for theft were probably restricted to their immediate locality. Conley's study of Victorian crime in Kent echoed Philips' findings. Based on evidence from the assize and quarter sessions court records between 1859 and 1870, Conley found that men committed three times as many

[53] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002, 2nd edn.), pp. 380-396.
[54] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 380-396.
[55] Michael Stone, ed., *The Diary of John Longe, Vicar of Coddenham: 1765-1834*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 2008), pp. 178-209. Stone lists the various payments made for servants' dress, as well as their salaries.
[56] David Philips, *Crime and Authority in Victorian England: The Black Country, 1835-1860* (London: Croom-Helm, 1977), pp. 147-148.
[57] Philips, *Crime and Authority*, p. 147.
[58] Philips, *Crime and Authority*, p. 149.

crimes as women overall.[59] She also found that women accounted for 15% of non-violent property crimes and 5% of violent robberies in her study.[60] These percentages are low, but they nonetheless indicate that women's property thefts in Kent in this period were not insignificant.[61]

Despite the apparently low incidence of female property crime detected in the studies of Philips and Conley, subsequent work has continued to validate the female experience of crime and criminality in its own right, though usually in comparison with male crime. It has also foregrounded the hesitancy among victims to prosecute women. Indeed, King found gender to be 'a crucial variable in predicting […] vulnerability to prosecution' across all non-violent and violent categories of property crime in Essex (1740-1820).[62] King's research indicated that women comprised merely 9% of property offenders at Essex assize courts and 20% at quarter sessions courts.[63] A broadly similar pattern was found by Rhiannon Markless in a study of crime in Yorkshire between 1735-1775.[64] Here women's burglary and theft amounted to 15% of assize and 29% of quarter sessions cases respectively.[65] Markless found that prosecutions of women for thefts of cloth, clothing, household goods and food were higher than male prosecution for thefts of similar items.[66] Significantly she recognised that overall numbers of female property crimes in Yorkshire remained relatively stable as the population increased between 1735 and 1775, while male property crimes rose over the same period, especially during periods of demobilisation and high unemployment.[67] These simultaneous trends had the effect of showing a fall in women's property thefts in this forty year period as a percentage of the total number of thefts committed.[68]

Several other local and regional studies have highlighted the apparent propensity of female offenders to steal items of cloth and clothing. Amy Williams' study in the largely rural counties of Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Cornwall (the Western Assizes Circuit) suggested that clothing and fabric thefts accounted for between 41% and 56% of female property crime between 1740 and 1784.[69] She suggested that female convictions appeared to account for a

[59] Conley, *The Unwritten Law,* p. 70.
[60] Conley, *The Unwritten Law*, p. 70.
[61] Conley, *The Unwritten Law*, pp. 145-146.
[62] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 196.
[63] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 196.
[64] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 246-247.
[65] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 246-247.
[66] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 246-247.
[67] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 243-244.
[68] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 243-247.
[69] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', p. 97.

growing percentage of thefts when male breadwinners were away from home in the armed forces.[70] Furthermore, when female work was mainly limited to service, animal husbandry, dairy production and the putting-out system of textile industries in the eighteenth century, yarn and fabric theft seemed to become an increasingly 'important currency' for women.[71] Williams suggested that access to higher value goods may have made selling for profit more attractive to offenders at times, rather than stealing directly for sustenance.[72] She also suggested that thefts of valuable goods such as gold and silver may have been evidence of an embryonic material culture in this part of the country.[73] Furthermore, she found that female convictions at the quarter sessions courts between 1735 and 1785 indicated a strong relationship between thefts and high prices on the Schumpeter-Gilboy price index.[74]

The suggestion that theft may have been an individual decision based on individual circumstances resulted from Anne-Marie Kilday's investigation of the link between poverty and crime in eighteenth century rural Oxfordshire.[75] By focusing strategically on petty theft, Kilday aimed to find out thieves' motivations: either 'acquisitiveness, opportunism in the context of relative prosperity or greed'.[76] She argued that by conducting research in a relatively prosperous rural county the influence of endemic poverty, which was present in poorer areas, was removed.[77] However, her examination of the relationship between indictments and wage rates, prices and weather conditions was unable to establish a link between poverty and theft.[78] Nevertheless, Kilday suggested that the goods stolen were indexical of individuals' socio-economic circumstances: both male and female defendants stole foodstuffs or small livestock that could be turned into food or passed on to others to consume.[79] Kilday further suggested that this was opportunistic theft in response to 'temptation or desperation' and there was a link between thefts and high prices.[80] On the other hand, she found that women stole clothing because they were fully aware of its re-sale

[70] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', p. 97.
[71] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', pp. 75-77, 97.
[72] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', p. 97.
[73] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', p.98.
[74] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', pp. 92-95.
[75] Anne-Marie Kilday, 'Criminally Poor? Investigating the Link Between Crime and Poverty in Eighteenth Century England', *Cultural and Social History*, 11, 4 (2014), 507-526 (pp. 520-521).
[76] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 508.
[77] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 508.
[78] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 520.
[79] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 514.
[80] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 517.

value and its ability to relieve poverty.[81] Kilday thus reinforced Amy Williams' conclusion that textiles were a kind of currency for women in the eighteenth century.[82]

Other regional studies have emphasised distinctions in female criminal activity between rural and urban contexts. Lynn MacKay's investigation of women's motives for theft in London in the 1780s found that the kinds of goods stolen reflected their daily social and employment networks.[83] Reinforcing Walker's findings in early modern Cheshire, MacKay found that women were most likely to steal clothes and household goods.[84] Furthermore, they were likely to steal from people known to them because their daily activities were usually carried out within their own neighbourhoods.[85] However, this daily engagement in local networks limited the range of goods accessible to them, whereas possibilities for men who worked in a wider range of contexts included industrial items, tools, livestock and horses.[86]

Shani D'Cruze and Louise Jackson have argued that experiences of crime in large cities were unrepresentative of the rest of the country.[87] This seems to be confirmed by Deirdre Palk's study of female property crimes tried at the Old Bailey (1780-1830), based on an assessment of three specific capital crimes: shop-lifting, pick-pocketing and Bank of England forgery.[88] Palk showed that women were charged with shop-lifting and pick-pocketing in large numbers, but formed a smaller group of money forgers.[89] Her evidence was derived from data within a growing commercial city 'with endless temptations and opportunities for crime'.[90] She accounted for the high participation of women in crime in London by their 'often wretched and irregular work opportunities'.[91]

Beverly Lemire also linked theft to the poverty and lack of work available to women in urban situations. But she contended that the increasing market for stolen goods in pre-industrial and early industrial London was evidence of a 'second tier of demand' available to low income families who were influenced by clothing trends, but could not afford the new

[81] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 515.
[82] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', pp. 75-77, 97; 92-95.
[83] Lynn MacKay, 'Why They Stole: Women in the Old Bailey, 1779-1789', *Journal of Social History*, 32, 3 (1999), 623-639 (pp. 625 & 629).
[84] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 162; MacKay, 'Why They Stole', p. 633.
[85] MacKay, 'Why They Stole', p. 633.
[86] MacKay, 'Why They Stole', p. 629.
[87] Shani D'Cruze and Louise A. Jackson, *Women, Crime and Justice in England since 1660* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 18.
[88] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion*, pp. 45, 73 & 93.
[89] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, pp. 45, 73 & 93.
[90] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, pp. 12-13.
[91] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, pp. 12-13.

fashions worn by the better-off.[92] The demands of the second tier were met by a second-hand market that resulted from legal and illegal dispersal.[93] Legal dispersal involved clothing sold on by the wealthy; illegal dispersal involved stolen clothing. Legally and illegally dispersed goods became the itinerant chapman's stock-in-trade and the market-place for the 'second tier of demand'. For the poor consumer, second-hand clothing was part of a legal trade and also a 'desirable end to criminal acts'.[94]

This historiography of women's property crime has confirmed that women in different regions constituted a small proportion of the total number of property offenders overall. It has also suggested a connection between theft, perpetrators' economic circumstances and high prices. Alannah Tomkins has additionally argued that crime in general was influenced by gender; however, women's poverty resulted from variables outside their control: 'wages, warfare and weather'.[95] Women's wages were always substantially lower than men's (including for work of similar equivalence) and frequently inadequate for their own maintenance.[96] At the same time the stability of women's work was particularly subject to the ebbs and flows of demand. Much of the work women undertook when men were away at war ceased to exist when hostilities ended and men returned home.[97] Moreover, bad weather caused poor harvests and rising prices, especially in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and this impacted particularly on single women who relied on their own meagre earnings to survive.[98]

Tomkins also affirmed that women's poverty resulted from illness and vulnerability at certain life cycle stages (single motherhood and widowhood, for example).[99] Tomkins further asserted that when the material conditions of women's lives became difficult they developed strategies to alleviate distress, turning increasingly to prostitution and theft.[100] Samantha Williams has also confirmed the existence of a strong link between property crime, personal poverty and deprivation: theft was part of an 'economy of makeshifts' by which the

[92] Beverly Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes', *Journal of British Studies*, 27, 1 (1988), 1-24 (pp. 2-3).
[93] Lemire, 'Consumerism', p. 4.
[94] Beverley Lemire, 'The theft of clothes and popular consumerism', *Journal of Social* History, 24 (1990), 255-276 (p. 256).
[95] Alannah Tomkins, 'Women and Poverty', in *Women's History, Britain 1700-1850 : An Introduction*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 152-173 (pp. 154-55).
[96] Tomkins, 'Women and Poverty', p. 154.
[97] Tomkins, 'Women and Poverty', p. 155.
[98] Tomkins, 'Women and Poverty', pp. 154.
[99] Tomkins, 'Women and Poverty', pp. 155-157.
[100] Tomkins, 'Women and Poverty', pp. 158-159.

'dispossessed and inarticulate' working poor made ends meet.[101] Their makeshifts strategy brought together all available sources of financial relief, including wages and the proceeds of property crime.[102] The connection between criminality and poverty may be pertinent to this study of women's property crimes in Suffolk and will be discussed later in this thesis.

PROPERTY CRIME: THE IMPACT OF PRINTING ON CRIME PREVENTION

This historiography next considers the impact of developing print technology, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, on attempts to prevent property crimes and bring perpetrators to justice. The development of this technology has enabled historians to examine crime through surviving, contemporaneous printed materials.[103] Beattie has argued that offences against property were the crimes most likely to be reported in the London press in the eighteenth century and the experience of crime became a source of general concern as a result of these reports.[104] However, newspapers were also used to promote attempts to prevent crime from happening.

In a study of the development of local newspapers, John Styles has argued that crime advertisements (newspaper notices which gave details of the crime and the goods stolen, descriptions of suspects and the reward offered for information leading to conviction) and separately printed handbills (which included similar details but could be distributed by hand immediately after printing), enabled information to be circulated quickly in the public domain.[105] Styles confirmed that 'crime advertising' from the 1720s had been a minor feature of all provincial newspaper advertisements, which increased substantially throughout the eighteenth century.[106] He further argued that victims who paid for these advertisements believed they would offer the means of detaining criminals and recovering their stolen

[101] O. H. Hufton, *The Poor in Eighteenth-Century France, 1750*-1789, cited in Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760-1834* (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical society in association with The Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 7-8. The concept of the 'economy of makeshifts' was originally used by Hufton to describe financial coping strategies of poor French families. It has since broadened to mean all activities used by single people and families to sustain life.
[102] Lucy E. Huggins, 'Crime and Economies of Makeshift: Experiences of Poverty in the Old Bailey, 1750-1799', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 2018), pp. 24-25.
[103] Ward, 'Print Culture', p. 16.
[104] J. M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 466.
[105] John Styles, 'Print and Policing: Crime Advertising in Eighteenth-Century Provincial England', in *Policing and Prosecution in Britain, 1750-1850*, ed. by Douglas Hay and Francis Snyder (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 55-111.
[106] Styles, 'Print and Policing', p. 59.

property.[107] The swift capture of those responsible for theft, therefore, depended on the speed with which the news could be circulated and thieves could be detected.

David Philips' examination of the growing use of print for tackling property crime linked technology directly to the expansion of prosecution associations before the first police force was set up in London in 1829.[108] Prosecution associations were private institutions which were largely set up by local property owners across the country in the second half of the eighteenth century with the purpose of the 'pursuit, arrest and prosecution of offenders.'[109] They set out their aims in Articles of Association and produced and circulated handbills about members' stolen property. They also paid rewards in return for information that led to successful conviction.[110] Prosecution Associations spread word of their existence and purpose by placing advertisements in local newspapers which named members, provided details of dates and places of annual meetings and occasionally detailed local property thefts.[111] By publicising details of members, thefts and rewards for successful prosecution, these private associations sought ultimately to protect the members' own property by preventing crime.

The historiography of crime developed further to explore the growing importance and status of lawyers in the prosecution process and lawyers' overall position in the organisation and function of prosecution associations. While the rise of print and its growing use in newspaper advertisements and handbills may have increased general awareness of property crime among the reading public, John Langbein claimed that solicitors played a central role as Secretaries to prosecution associations that were set up from the 1770s.[112] Philips found that solicitors, many of whom were Justices of the Peace, took control of most aspects of the affairs of prosecution associations, derived a regular income from this work and charged separately for each extra duty performed.[113] Philips' research highlighted the solicitor's growing role in the enforcement and prosecution of criminal procedure, particularly at the pre-trial stage.[114] King argued, however, that the growing importance of the solicitor's role

[107] Styles, 'Print and Policing', pp. 59, 88 & 97.
[108] David Philips, 'Good men to Associate and Bad Men to Conspire: Associations for the Prosecution of Felons in England, 1760-1860' in *Policing and Prosecution*, 113-170; Douglas Hay and Francis Snyder, 'Using the Criminal Law, 1750-1850: Policing, Private Prosecution, and the State', in *Policing and Prosecution*, 3-52 (p. 5).
[109] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', p. 119.
[110] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', pp. 136-139.
[111] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', p. 138.
[112] John Langbein, 'The Prosecutorial Origins of Defence Counsel in the Eighteenth Century: The Appearance of Solicitors', *Cambridge Law Journal*, 58, 2 (1999), 314-365 (pp. 322-324).
[113] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', pp. 136-137.
[114] Langbein, 'Prosecutorial Origins', pp. 322-324.

also evidenced an increase in the costs of prosecution.[115] Furthermore, it additionally signalled an increasingly unequal relationship between the different participants in the court process itself: between wealthy victims who could afford the advice of, and representation by, a professional prosecutor and poorer victims who would have to prosecute the defendant themselves without professional advice. The ascendance of solicitors was seen as self-fulfilling: their role in associations gave them direct contact with the members of society who were most likely to use their legal services in the future.[116] Nevertheless, because prosecution was expensive, King's research found that few cases ever went to court.[117]

Langbein also argued that the solicitor's growing role in prosecution associations indicated the changing involvement of the legal profession in local measures to prevent crime.[118] His claim that most associations were set up in rural areas appears to qualify popular assumptions that little crime took place there.[119] Langbein took Philips' assertions a step further to argue that prosecution associations were significant in the 'lawyerisation of criminal investigation and prosecution' in both urban and rural parts of the country.[120]

Investigations into the impact of technology have shown that 'moral panics' about crime could be provoked by newspaper reporting. King's research into articles written in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* found that 'panic' reports had an impact on property crimes in Colchester.[121] The *Chronicle's* poorly substantiated reporting actually led to a crime wave in 1765 as this newspaper sought to increase its circulation and take advertising finance away from its rival, the *Ipswich Journal*.[122] The case did have unintended positive consequences, however, as Colchester Corporation increased street lighting and local subscription schemes were set up to pay towards future prosecutions of property criminals.[123]

Although King affirmed the importance of print and local newspapers in the prevention of eighteenth century property crime and its link to the rise of prosecution associations in his regional area of study, he questioned the power held by these associations.[124] While some

[115] Peter R. King, 'Prosecution Associations and Their Impact in Eighteenth-Century Essex', in *Policing and Prosecution*, 171-207 (p. 203).
[116] Langbein, 'Prosecutorial Origins', p. 334.
[117] King, 'Prosecution Associations', p. 203.
[118] Langbein, 'Prosecutorial Origins', p. 334.
[119] Langbein, 'Prosecutorial Origins', p. 334.
[120] Langbein, 'Prosecutorial Origins', pp. 347.
[121] Peter King, 'Newspaper Reporting, Prosecution Practice and Perceptions of Urban Crime: The Colchester Crime Wave of 1765', *Continuity and Change*, 2 (1987), 423-454.
[122] King, 'Newspaper Reporting, p. 439.
[123] King, 'Newspaper Reporting, p. 435.
[124] King, 'Prosecution Associations' p. 172.

associations prospered, few prosecutions ever took place and a number ceased to exist, as did attempts by the magistracy to create an Essex county-wide association.[125] King found that associations tended to specialise according to the types of property crime endemic in their area (thefts from oyster fisheries in coastal Essex, for example) and that their greater success lay in galvanising victims' awareness of the need to prosecute those who stole their property.[126]

The development of printing and its value as a means of advertising property crime, the growth of prosecution associations and their involvement in crime prevention in Suffolk, and the expansion of the solicitor's role in pre-trial procedure are highly pertinent in this thesis to the case of Margaret Catchpole, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. When Catchpole attempted to sell John Cobbold's horse in London, she was arrested for stealing it from Cobbold's stable in Ipswich and Ipswich Prosecution Association was involved in her successful prosecution.[127]

SENTENCING, PUNISHMENTS AND DISCRETION

Peter King's assertion that the criminal justice system was 'shot through with discretion' in the 'golden age' of the long eighteenth century resulted from evidence that has shown that a high proportion of property offenders escaped punishment, particularly before 1800.[128] While the Bloody Code continued to expand, discretion between 1740 and 1820 was exercised by a wide range of people involved in prosecutorial and judicial procedure, including the sentencing of convicts. These participants included the victims of property crime who chose not to appear in court to prosecute offenders who may have faced the death penalty. They also included jurors who reduced capital charges to a lesser charge and judges who held the automatic right to reprieve prisoners convicted of capital offences and impose an alternative sentence.[129]

King's work was extended by other researchers into eighteenth century criminal justice, including Deirdre Palk, Shani D'Cruze and Louise Jackson, and Rhiannon Markless.[130] Palk concluded that discretion in sentencing towards a defendant in London was usually founded

[125] King, 'Prosecution Associations', pp. 201-202.
[126] King, 'Prosecution Associations', p. 205.
[127] National Library of Australia, MS 4211, *Papers of Margaret Catchpole, 1797-1917.*
[128] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 355.
[129] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 256-98 & 355.
[130] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*; D'Cruze and Jackson, *Women, Crime and Justice*; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire'.

on their gender.[131] Markless found that it was likely to be applied in Yorkshire to women who faced the death penalty. She argued, however, that women's punishments were 'consistently more severe' when this threat was removed.[132] As public physical punishments became increasingly unacceptable, King showed that punishments handed down to women in Essex for non-capital property crimes in the late eighteenth century were already in the process of shifting towards imprisonment and a monetary fine.[133] This appears to echo Beattie's earlier finding that the whipping of women had almost died out in Surrey by the end of the century.[134] The application of discretion in Suffolk will be considered further in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

For several women from Suffolk who had been capitally sentenced at the assizes in the period of this study, transportation was a discretionary sentence (a partial verdict or reprieve from the death penalty awarded) that was carried out when the colony of New South Wales opened up in 1787. Transportation, as D'Cruze and Jackson recognised, became the 'predominant sentence for property crime in the eighteenth century' and 'modified the history of women's imprisonment'.[135] The transportation of women to New South Wales is probably the best recorded form of discretionary justice in England and Wales because of the survival of detailed official records of convicts' passages to Australia and their lives there.

The interest of historians such as Deirdre Beddoe in transportation as a sentence and convict records as an untapped source of evidence introduced feminism into the study of women's crime 'from below' in the 1970s.[136] Beddoe was specifically concerned with the large numbers of women who were sentenced to transportation 'beyond the seas' for long periods.[137] These women had not all been reprieved from capital convictions but included many who were sentenced directly to transportation for lesser crimes at the quarter sessions.[138] Beddoe's aim was to restore to public awareness the 300 Welsh women transported to Australia and reinstate their identities.[139] She argued that these women were almost all characterised in nineteenth century Britain and Australia as evil, degraded and slovenly, but the government made no provision for them and many were forced into

[131] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 176.
[132] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 8-9.
[133] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[134] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 614.
[135] D'Cruze and Jackson, *Women, Crime and Justice*, p. 128.
[136] Deirdre Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women: A study of women transported from Wales to Australia, 1787-1852* (Barry: Stewart Williams, 1979).
[137] Beddoe, *Discovering Women's History,* p. 1.
[138] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, pp. 11-12.
[139] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict* Women, pp. 12-21.

prostitution to survive.[140] She concluded that the purpose of transportation to the colony for them had been 'simply as objects of sexual gratification for the men' who far outnumbered them.[141]

Beddoe's largely qualitative feminist approach was extended in work by Portia Robinson in the 1990s, which sought to recreate the lives of all women from Britain and Ireland who were transported between 1788 and 1828 and to explore what ultimately happened to them.[142] Robinson's commitment to processing large numbers of previously unresearched sources (before the availability of digitization and the internet) was exceptional. She sought to examine the reality behind the trope of the 'damned whore' who was transported from England (1788-1827) and Ireland (1791-1828).[143] Robinson appears to have adopted the mantra that many women who were tried for theft in London had been prostitutes, but claimed they did not pursue this trade in New South Wales.[144] She conceded, however, that the many women who worked at the Government Factory in Paramatta were forced to 'prostitute themselves to obtain the basic necessities of life' because of the lack of housing provision.[145] On arrival in the colony, other women were assigned as servants where their basic needs were met by their employers.[146]

Deborah Oxley built on the work of Beddoe and Robinson in the late 1990s to confront what she perceived as the 'nineteenth-century disdain' towards convict women which was embedded in Australian and British assumptions. Oxley challenged the attitudes that viewed these women as 'dissipated idlers and abandoned whores'.[147] Furthermore, she argued that while transported men came to be seen as the 'human capital' on which the colony had largely been founded over the passage of time, women's contributions remained largely obscure.[148] Oxley's research into the social origins and criminal pasts of thousands of women

[140] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, p. 15-16.
[141] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, p. 130.
[142] Portia Robinson, *The Hatch and Brood of Time: A study of the first generation of native-born white Australians, 1788-1828* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[143] Portia Robinson, *The Women of Botany Bay: A reinterpretation of the role of women in the origins of Australian society*, 2nd edn., rev. by Portia Robinson (Ringwood, Victoria; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993).
[144] Robinson, *Women of Botany Bay,* p. 96.
[145] Robinson, *Women of Botany Bay*, p. 261.
[146] Robinson, *Women of Botany Bay*, pp. 225-226.
[147] Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: the Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.
[148] Oxley, *Convict Maids*, pp. 1-3; 13.

who were transported between 1826 and 1840 established that most were single, under 35 years of age and skilled in domestic service.[149]

THE ARGUMENT

This review of the historiography of crime 'from below' has shown that Beattie's research in Surrey and Sussex in the early 1970s led to a considerable body of research into male and female criminality in other regions of eighteenth century England and Wales. The studies of Garthine Walker in Cheshire, Rhiannon Markless in Yorkshire and Deirdre Palk in London, for example, compared male and female participation in criminal activities, including property crime, and their experiences in the judicial system.[150] Peter King's research in Essex focused centrally on property crime and 'the ways it was dealt with, defined, and perceived'.[151] Amy Williams' study of women's crime in general in the west country counties of Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Cornwall highlighted women's property crime as an important theme.[152] The historiography has shown that women's property crime has emerged as an important sub-discipline which has enabled comparisons between different regions. These studies have confirmed that women in several regions of England and Wales regularly targeted cloth, clothing and food, for example.

Up until now, women's property crime in Suffolk in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has not undergone systematic and comprehensive investigation. The aim of this thesis is to establish the kinds of goods stolen or obtained by fraudulent means by women in Suffolk in this period. It further aims to investigate women's experiences in the judicial system and the changing nature of punishments hand down to them, including transportation to New South Wales. The objective of this thesis is first to undertake an examination of sources of primary evidence of prosecution and sentencing and to compare the goods stolen with evidence from other studies of property crime, particularly King's study in Essex and William's study in the west country counties. The surviving evidence is limited (few indictments remain, for example), but there is sufficient detail in the court books, other official documents and newspapers to justify this investigation of women's lives and property crimes in Suffolk. Official records and other informal documents relating to the women who

[149] Oxley, *Convict Maids*, pp. 235-237.
[150] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, pp. 159-197; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 243-265; Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, pp. 38-88.
[151] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 1 & 169-217.
[152] Williams, 'Criminality of Women', pp. 89-143.

were sentenced to transportation between 1787 to 1810 will also enable their experiences to be investigated.

With the exception of a small number of high profile cases, prosecutions of most female property criminals in Suffolk in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries remain largely unknown and unresearched. V. A. C. Gattrell investigated the aggravated theft carried out by the servant Sarah Lloyd at the premises of her employer in Hadleigh in 1800, her prosecution at the assizes in Bury St Edmunds and her execution for this capital offence.[153] Popular publications have been written by authors including Richard Cobbold, Richard Deeks and Laurie Chater Forth about the life and criminal activities of Margaret Catchpole in 1797 and 1800 in Ipswich.[154] These books do not consider Catchpole's actions in the wider context of life in Suffolk or the process by which she was apprehended and imprisoned in Newgate before she was brought back to Ipswich to face trial at the assizes.

This thesis will examine the cases of Lloyd and Catchpole in greater depth but will additionally investigate the prosecution, verdicts and sentencing of over 200 other women at the quarter sessions and assizes. It will additionally investigate just under 2,000 cases of fraudulent reeling of washed and combed wool that were tried at the petty sessions and mostly involved women. Regional studies have generally neglected minor crimes of this type because so few records of summary adjudications have survived.[155] There is a similar deficit in surviving petty sessions books in Suffolk for the period of this study. However, Jane Fiske's work on the life of yarn-maker and banker James Oakes found that 500 cases relating to fraudulent spinning were reported in newspapers between 1784 and 1785.[156] In this study, and in the absence of petty sessions books, newspaper reports from the last three decades of the eighteenth century will provide a great deal more evidence of this widespread crime in Suffolk. These newspapers are the *Ipswich Journal*, the *Bury and Norwich Post* (and its predecessors) and the *Norfolk Chronicle.*

[153] V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 339-353.
[154] Cobbold, *The History of Margaret Catchpole*; Richard Deeks, *Transportees from Suffolk to Australia, 1787-1867* (Fressingfield: Seven Sparrows Publishing, 2000); Laurie Chater Forth, *Margaret Catchpole: the Hawkesbury's convict midwife* (Richmond, N.S.W.: Laurie Chater Forth, 2006); Laurie Chater Forth, *Margaret Catchpole, her life and her letters: the story of a woman who became a legend* (Richmond, N.S.W.: Laurie Chater Forth, 2012).
[155] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 83.
[156] Fiske, 'Introduction', p. 38.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Previous studies highlighted in the historiography have concluded that there were differences between men and women's criminal activities in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, they have suggested links between acts of theft, embezzlement and fraud, and regional factors including the price index, levels of deprivation and unemployment.[157] This study aims to find out if female prosecutions for property crime can be related to similar contextual factors in Suffolk. It also aims to establish if these crimes are similar to property crimes in other regional research. Finally, it seeks to explore the sentences handed down to women through Peter King's concept of the 'golden age of discretionary justice'.[158] The questions raised by the research for this thesis are addressed throughout the chapters that follow and will be directly addressed in the conclusion. These are as follows:

- Question 1: Are the changing socio-economic circumstances of the population in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 reflected in women's property crimes in this period?
- Question 2: Does the study of patterns of women's crime in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 confirm or challenge the findings of other regional studies?
- Question 3: How were women convicted of property crime in Suffolk punished and how did sentencing practices change over time?
- Question 4: How does this investigation of prosecution, sentencing and the operation of judicial discretion in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 extend our knowledge of women's experiences in the criminal justice system?

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

Chapter 1 of this thesis explores the changing socio-economic context in which women committed property crimes in Suffolk in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and thus contributes directly to the first question above. It argues that the lives of ordinary men and women in this predominantly rural and agricultural county were adversely effected by a number of significant developments and events over this period, including the increased demand for basic foodstuffs from an expanding population and the impact of poor harvests on rising prices and food supplies.

[157] Beattie, 'Pattern of Crime', pp. 92-95.
[158] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 355.

Chapter 1 also investigates population growth in Suffolk from evidence in the decennial census of 1801 and the demographic research of Wrigley, Davies, Oeppen and Schofield.[159] It additionally investigates the long term consequences of population growth on employment and resources, as well as the shorter term impact of prolonged periods of extreme winter weather on harvests and wheat prices, through the research of J. H. Brazell and G. E. Fussell.[160] The decrease in opportunities for women's employment in agriculture is linked to changes in agricultural practice that have been identified by David Dymond and Peter Northeast, and K.D.M. Snell.[161] The chapter also examines the decline of the domestic woollen and spinning industries in Suffolk, drawing on Arthur Young's *General View* for evidence of its impact on the livelihoods of women and children.[162] Furthermore, through Margaret Thomas's research into the Suffolk Yeomanry, it investigates repercussions on the local population of political measures to increase military manpower in the county and strengthen Suffolk's coastal defences during the war with France.[163]

Chapter 2 investigates the nature and extent of women's property crimes in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 from an examination of books and rolls for the county and borough quarter sessions courts, and the assize courts. To understand the context in which women committed these crimes and the scale and timing of their offences, the chapter first investigates all male and female crimes around the turn of the eighteenth century from surviving assize Calendars of Prisoners. To establish the nature and extent of women's property offences, the chapter similarly examines all male and female crimes for which offenders were tried at the four Suffolk quarter sessions courts and the Borough of Sudbury quarter sessions between 1800 and 1801 (a period of very high wheat prices). The chapter aims to find out why women were motivated to steal or to obtain goods by fraudulent means.

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[159] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for taking Account of Population of Great Britain and the Increase or Diminution thereof (Parish Register), 1801*; E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen and R. S. Schofield, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[160] J. H. Brazell, *London Weather* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968); G. E. Fussell, 'Some Land and Produce Prices in late 18th Century Suffolk', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, 16, 2 (1953), 137-143.

[161] David Dymond and Peter Northeast, *A History of Suffolk* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985); K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[162] Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1813*, (Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers) Limited, 1969).

[163] Margaret Thomas, ed., *Cornelius Collett and the Suffolk Yeomanry, 1794-1820: Defending Suffolk against the French* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 2020).

This chapter compares evidence of property crime in Suffolk with evidence from studies in other parts of the country. In so doing, it responds to the second research question of similarities (or differences) in patterns of evidence in Suffolk and in other regional studies of female property crime. It shows that most of the women prosecuted for theft at the two higher courts in Suffolk were accused of stealing cloth and cloth-related goods. This concurs with previous studies, including the research of John Styles in Yorkshire, Garthine Walker in Cheshire and Lynn MacKay in London.[164] The chapter further examines the types of goods appropriated for evidence of change over time and suggests that some thefts may offer evidence of women's increasing awareness of, and growing participation in, consumerism.

Chapter 3 investigates convictions at the petty sessions of over 1,900 individual domestic hand spinners (the majority of whom were women and girls) across villages and towns in Suffolk between 1770 and 1800 for the embezzlement of oiled and combed worsted wool and consequent fraudulent reeling of yarn. The chapter contributes significant detail of the experiences of individual women in the judicial system for offences in this industry after the *Worsted Act for Suffolk of 1784*.[165] Keith Sugden's research into the decline of the Norwich weaving industry between 1700 and 1820 focused on weavers, because evidence of 'temporal change' in the employment of spinners was lacking.[166] The focus on Suffolk spinners in this chapter thus extends Sugden's research. It also responds to the second and third research questions.

The focus on convictions of Suffolk spinners who supplied the Norwich weavers in the 1780s and 90s foregrounds the decline of the domestic spinning industry. It additionally exposes difficulties inherent in a vertically-disintegrated business structure in which spinners were employed by Suffolk yarn-makers who sold finished yarn to the weavers in Norwich, while the weaving industry itself was in decline. The remaining cloth production shifted towards high quality cloths which mixed worsted and other fine yarns. Annual decreases in spinning convictions suggest that employment in the Suffolk spinning industry was under strain as demand fell for yarn in Norwich. Remote from the Norwich weavers, the industry appears to have fallen out of kilter with the weavers' changing needs. Following the research particularly of John Styles and Benjamin Schneider, this chapter also considers the nature,

[164] John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2007); Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*; Lynn MacKay, 'Why They Stole'.
[165] 24 Geo. iii, St. 2, c. 3 (1784): *The Worsted Act (Woollen Manufactures Acts)* for Suffolk.
[166] Keith Sugden, 'Clapham revisited: the decline of the Norwich worsted industry (c. 1700-1820)', *Continuity and Change* 33 (2018), 203-222 (p. 220), n.37.

scale and distribution of fraudulent reeling in Suffolk alongside seemingly arbitrary cuts in wages when trade was slow.[167]

The last part of Chapter 3 explores a few cases of embezzlement in Sudbury, which relate to the decaying weaving industry in southwest Suffolk and northwest Essex (SWS-NWE), where some domestic weaving still continued. In these cases, women were prosecuted at quarter sessions for the Borough of Sudbury for property crimes including the embezzlement of quantities of woollen yarn which had been delivered to weavers to turn into cloth.[168] This section draws on David Dymond's observations on the decline of weaving in this region throughout the eighteenth century and K. H. Burley's confirmation that attempts to revive it were limited to the production of bunting by women.[169] Pockets of weaving lingered on in SWS-NWE but did not require the vast numbers of workers previously employed. The few surviving cases in Sudbury suggest that employees in southwest Suffolk may have turned away from the dying SWS-NWE weaving industry towards the Bury spinning industry, which continued to operate in the same area in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 4 investigates the possible reasons why women in Suffolk may have become susceptible to committing property crime between 1770 and 1820, with particular emphasis on poverty and the ways in which poor women may have made ends meet. It examines survival strategies, including 'economies of makeshifts' which have been identified by Stephen King and Margaret Hanly in Lancashire, and Samantha Williams in Bedfordshire.[170] The strategy of the economy of makeshifts may have included minor property crimes, for which women were prosecuted at the petty sessions and quarter sessions. Chapter 4 also explores the vulnerable points in women's lives when they may have become susceptible to stealing goods, including between the ages of 16 when single people first left home to go into service and 26 when they may have reached a point of stability in their lives by marrying. This

[167] John Styles, 'Spinners and the Law: Regulating Yarn Standards in the English Worsted Industries, 1550–1800', *Textile History*, 44, 2 (2013), 145–170; Benjamin Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment in the British Industrial Revolution: The Destruction of Hand Spinning', *Past & Present*, 270, 1 (2026), 106-149.

[168] SA, Borough of Sudbury Sessions, EE501/2/18 1781-1836.

[169] David Dymond, *700 Years of Textile Making* (Lavenham: Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, 2015), p. 14; K. H. Burley, 'An Essex Clothier of the Eighteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 11, 2 (1958), 289-301 (p. 289).

[170] Margaret Hanly, 'The economy of makeshifts and the role of the poor law: a game of chance?', in *The Poor in England, 1700-1800: an Economy of Makeshifts*, ed. by Steven King and Alannah Tomkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 76-99 (pp. 76-77); Steven King, 'Making the most of opportunity, the economy of makeshifts in the early modern north', in *The Poor in England*, 228-257 (pp. 233-235); Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760-1834*, (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical society in association with The Boydell Press, 2011).

part of the chapter also compares evidence in Suffolk with Peter King's evidence of the increased susceptibility of women in Essex to committing crime at these predictable times of change.[171] It adds further evidence to the response to first question of the connection between crime and changing social and economic circumstances.

Following the discussion of female offenders in the last chapter, Chapter 5 turns to the role of the prosecutor in judicial procedure at the end of the eighteenth century and attempts to identify the social status of the men who prosecuted them for offences against property. The chapter also considers women's experiences within the prosecutorial situation and contributes further to the fourth research question. The chapter also draws on Peter King's research into prosecutors in Essex.[172] From a limited number of cases where details of prosecutors can be traced, the chapter suggests the extent to which the relationship between offender and victim was usually unequal, with the social status of most prosecutors midway between the poor and very rich while defendants appear to have been poor. Through the research studies of David Philips and John Styles, Chapter 5 also investigates the development of printing technology and its importance for the prevention of crime to the growing number of prosecution associations in Suffolk in the last decades of the eighteenth century.[173]

Chapter 5 additionally explores the pre-trial roles of Ipswich Prosecution Association and its Secretary in the prosecution of Margaret Catchpole. Her case differs from all other women accused of property crime in this study because the crime itself, the theft of John Cobbold's horse, took place in Ipswich although Catchpole was detained and committed in Middlesex. Moreover, she was detained by a new kind of stipendiary Justice of the Peace who had been appointed under the 1792, *Middlesex Magistrates Act.*[174] This magistrate applied the letter of the law, despite Cobbold's wish not to prosecute his former live-in cook and nurserymaid. The chapter suggests that the benevolence of the Cobbold family towards Catchpole remained with her from her detention in Newgate until the later years of her life in New South Wales.

Chapter 6 has a two-fold purpose: it first investigates the verdicts and punishments handed down to women for crimes tried at the quarter sessions and assize courts. Although little documentary evidence survives on how crimes were committed, the goods that were stolen, verdicts and punishments were usually recorded carefully by the court clerk. These

[171] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 201-207.
[172] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 35-46.
[173] David Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', pp. 113-170; Styles, 'Print and Policing', pp. 55-111.
[174] 32 Geo. III, c. 53 (1792): *Middlesex Magistrates Act.*

entries have allowed small distinctions to be identified between the sentencing of women in Suffolk and in neighbouring Essex, as well as changes in sentencing policy over time and the application of judicial discretion.[175] This also provides a response to the fourth research question on evidence of discretionary justice in the sentences handed down to women convicted of property crimes.

The second part of the chapter highlights the experiences of women who were sentenced to transportation, either directly by magistrates at the quarter sessions courts or by judges at the assizes, in commutation of the death penalty for a capital sentence. This final part also looks at evidence from several official and unofficial sources to consider if transportation was the means by which magistrates could be rid of troublesome women, as Rhiannon Markless has suggested.[176] Whether transportation was a reprieve for a capital offence at the assizes (and, therefore an example of discretion) or a direct sentence from the quarter sessions court, it remained a harsh sentence that effectively meant that most women were banished to remain in New South Wales after the expiry of their term of punishment.

[175] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 278-296; See also Appendices 1 and 2.
[176] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 107.

CHAPTER 1: SUFFOLK, 1770-1820

This chapter explores the socio-economic context in which the population of Suffolk lived and worked in the period encompassing the last decades of the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth. The chapter investigates several long and short term developments which directly affected people's lives and over which they had little control. Long term developments included the steady expansion of the population of Suffolk in the second part of the eighteenth century and the impact of this growth on the availability of employment for men and women. The decline of the domestic spinning industry in the 1780s and 1790s also impacted in the long term on the ability of women and children to earn a supplementary wage. Shorter term factors such as prolonged icy winters followed by thaw, flooding and subsequent poor harvests exacerbated the dearth and adequacy of basic food supplies and led to sharp increases in the price of wheat. In these testing circumstances the working population was liable to significant hardship, particularly in the period between 1793 and 1815 when the country was at war with France, and men of working age were recruited to the army and navy, leaving families behind with limited means to support themselves. This chapter provides an overview of the effects of contextual factors on the population of Suffolk, which may have led married, widowed and single women to commit property crimes.

1.1 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT OF POPULATION GROWTH

A problem for the government in the eighteenth century was that the size and dispersal of the population was unknown before the collection of data from 1700 onwards was mandated by the *Census Act, 1800*.[1] The first decennial census, the *Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for taking Account of Population, 1801* published vital statistics that were collated from parish records in England, Wales and Scotland.[2] The *Abstract* established the overall size of the British population, its geographical dispersal and the distribution of citizens by age and gender. Its compiler, John Rickman, suggested this information would help the government to formulate military recruitment in the continuing wars with France.[3] However,

[1] 41 Geo. III, c.15 (1800): *The Census Act*; Histpop: online historical population reports (University of Essex), http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/AssociatedView?path=Browse&active=yes&mno=2009&assoctitle=Census%20Act,%201800&assocpagelabel= [accessed 20 May 2024].

[2] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for taking Account of Population of Great Britain and the Increase or Diminution thereof (Parish Register), 1801*.

[3] UK Parliament website, https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/collections/1800-population-act [accessed 19 May 2024].

Parliament failed to use this data to predict whether supplies of foodstuffs in Britain would be sufficient to sustain not only the army and navy but the country's growing population during periods of war when imports were difficult and working men were recruited for military action.

The *Abstract* showed that the overall population of England and Wales increased substantially over the course of the eighteenth century, from 5,512,900 in 1700; to 6,523,000 in 1750; and 9,165,400 in 1801.[4] Allowing for possible inaccuracies in the parish figures that were contributed to the *Abstract*, the population as a whole almost doubled during the eighteenth century. However, research conducted by Wrigley, Davies, Oeppen and Schofield into 404 parish registers across England has suggested that the scale of this population surge could be better understood in the wider context of Europe. Wrigley *et al* estimated that by 1820 population growth in England had outstripped the four large nations of Germany, Italy, Spain and France.[5] Between 1550 and 1820, the population of England rose by 280%, the populations of the other four countries increased by 51, 67, 56 and 79%, respectively. Wrigley *et al* further illustrated the scale of increase, by calculating average populations since 1550. In this year, the population of England was calculated to be around 3,000,000, while populations of the other countries ranged from 9,000,000 in Spain to 17,000,000 in France. By 1820, they estimated the population of England had reached 11,570,000, a significant increase of almost four times its size in 1550.[6] The populations of the other four countries had risen to an average of 20,250,000, which was far less than the increase in England.

In a 'drastic simplification' of their research Wrigley *et al* argued that variations in the rates at which populations increased were more convincingly explained by increases in fertility than in mortality.[7] Wrigley and Schofield's research into demographic trends in England between 1541 and 1871 confirmed that a lowering of the age at which women married reduced the age at which they gave birth to first children and thus boosted their overall fertility potential.[8] For example, during the eighteenth century, women's ages at first marriage dropped from a mean of 24 years and 9 months between 1750 and 1799 to 23 years

[4] PP 1801, VII, 'Observations on the Results of the Population Act' [11], in *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, p. 455.
[5] E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen and R. S. Schofield, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 547-548.
[6] Wrigley *et al*, *English Population History*, p. 548.
[7] Wrigley, *et al*, *English Population History*, p. 549.
[8] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, with contributions from Ronald Lee and Jim Oeppen, *The Population History of England 1541–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 266.

and 4 months in 1800.[9] By the end of the century, this extension of women's fertility through younger marriage may have accounted for at least one additional child per marriage, assuming that younger women continued to have children throughout their fertile period and reached the menopause at the same age as older marriers. However, Barry Reay's survey of the demography of three combined villages in the Weald of Kent has indicated that women's ages at first marriage between 1800 and 1834 were lower than Wrigley and Schofield's findings.[10] Reay found that women aged 15-19 and 20-24 (the youngest groups surveyed) accounted for the greatest number of first marriages.[11] He nonetheless concurred with Wrigley *et al* that unless family limitation were practised, women of younger age at marriage were likely to have greater numbers of children than women who married later.[12] The evidence in Suffolk parish registers at the end of the eighteenth century does not easily allow connections to be made directly between the mother's own date of birth and the age at which her first child was born. However, the steady increase in births in Suffolk appears to suggest that a widespread decrease in the ages at which women married may have contributed to the rising population and that family limitation was not widely practised.

1.2 POPULATION GROWTH IN SUFFOLK, 1770-1820

The questionnaire used to compile the *Abstract* required ministers of religion in each 'parish, township or place' to provide nominated Justices of the Peace with numbers of inhabited houses, families in occupation, non-inhabited houses and individuals by gender living in the parish, excluding men who were serving in the regular forces or militia, the navy and registered vessels.[13] It also required annual numbers of baptisms and burials by gender every ten years between 1700 and 1780, and in each subsequent year to 31 December, 1800.[14] Finally, it required numbers of marriages between 1754 and 1800.[15] Results for each

[9] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p. 255.
[10] Barry Reay, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 43; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p. 255.
[11] Reay, *Microhistories*, p. 43.
[12] Barry Reay, *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 95-98.
[13] *The Census Act*, *1800*, Histpop.org [accessed 20 May 2024].
[14] *The Census Act*, *1800*, Histpop.org [accessed 20 May 2024].
[15] *The Census Act*, *1800*, Histpop.org [accessed 20 May 2024].

county were produced by amalgamating the numbers of baptisms, burials and marriages recorded in the parish registers and these figures were sent on to the Privy Council.[16]

Table 1.1: Annual baptisms, marriages and burials in Suffolk at 10-year intervals, 1700-1770; yearly 1780-1800[17]

	Baptisms Male	Baptisms Female	Total Baptisms	Burials Male	Burials Female	Total Burials	Total Marriages
1700	2,174	2,163	4,337	1,587	1,653	3,240	n/k
1710	1,931	1,885	3,816	1,863	1,935	3,798	n/k
1720	1,983	1,932	3,915	2,429	2,384	4,813	n/k
1730	2,144	2,061	4,205	2,229	2,339	4,568	n/k
1740	2,180	2,161	4,568	1,802	1,889	3,691	n/k
1750	2,292	2,161	4,452	1,808	1,847	3,655	964 (1754)
1760	2,444	2,270	4,714	1,761	1,967	3,728	1,353
1770	2,807	2,572	5,379	1,997	2,161	4,158	1,398
1780-1789	28,945* Average per annum = 2,895	27,345* Average per annum = 2,734	56,290* Average per annum = 5,629	20,336* Average per annum = 2,034	22,219* Average per annum = 2,222	42,555* Average per annum = 4,256	14,785* Average per annum = 1,479
1790-1799	31,809* Average per annum = 3,181	30,116* Average per annum = 3,012	61,925* Average per annum = 6,193	18,529* Average per annum = 1,853	19,881* Average per annum = 1,988	38,410* Average per annum = 3,841	15,795* Average per annum = 1,580
1800	3,060	2,999	6,059	1,871	1,930	3,801	1,538

(* indicates ten annual totals have been added together.)

The aggregated information from 472 Suffolk parishes published in the *Abstract* indicates that the county population increased steadily over the course of the eighteenth century as rising baptisms gradually surpassed burials. It also indicates that Suffolk's population increased from 156,800 in 1750 to 217,400 in 1801. Table 1.1 confirms the annual numbers of male and female baptisms, marriages and burials in Suffolk from contributing parishes, sampled at ten-year intervals between 1700 and 1770. It also shows the ten-year totals for the periods 1780-1789 and 1790-1799, the average for each year within the ten-year period, and the annual total in 1800.

Table 1.1 shows that annual marriage figures in Suffolk crept up from 964 in 1754 to 1,538 in 1800. It also indicates that male and female baptisms increased from 4,452 in 1750

[16] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, pp. 3 & 300. 17 returns for Suffolk were not received by the Privy Council.

[17] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, p. 300. The figures in the *Abstract* were collected for ten-year periods; for Table 1 samples were retrieved for every tenth year.

to 6,059 in 1800.[18] Because there is little evidence of significant migration into the area, increasing numbers of marriages and baptisms can probably be understood as evidence of an expanding population. However, this expansion may not entirely depend on marriage. Parish registers of Suffolk in the second half of the eighteenth century record many baptisms of 'baseborn' babies born to unmarried women, including Margaret Catchpole who was baptised in 1764 in Hoo Church.[19] Furthermore, the population expansion does not necessarily imply that women married younger in this period than in previous generations. It may alternatively indicate that more women in Suffolk decided to marry in this period, because marriage potentially offered more financial security than if they remained single in a period when work opportunities for women appeared to have been decreasing. Whichever circumstances led to an expanding population, Table 1 indicates that towards the end of the eighteenth century it would have made increasing demands on employment, food and other resources. This demand may have been further affected by the overall levelling off in Suffolk parish burials, despite exceptional peaks of deaths caused by the spread of contagious diseases between 1770 and 1790.[20]

The peak of 5,049 burials in 1780 noted in the *Abstract* may have been attributable to short term outbreaks of highly transmittable diseases, particularly in workhouses where large numbers of people lived in close confinement.[21] Disease featured prominently in the responses of workhouse governors in Suffolk to questions posed by Thomas Ruggles, on behalf of Arthur Young for the 1794 version of the *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk*.[22] The *General View* showed that a high number of burials at Stow workhouse (near Stowmarket, central Suffolk) between 1781 and 1784 were accounted for by the presence of 'a putrid fever' (typhus).[23] Bulcamp workhouse (near Southwold, east Suffolk) recorded that 'a putrid fever broke out in the neighbourhood' in 1781 and 130 residents died, in addition to a third of the inhabitants of neighbouring Blythburgh.[24] Furthermore, an increase in deaths in the Bosmere and Claydon workhouse at Barham (north

[18] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, p. 300.
[19] Suffolk Archives, FC108/D2/1: Margaret Catchpole, the natural daughter of Elizabeth Catchpole was baptised at Hoo Church, 14 March 1762.
[20] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, p. 300.
[21] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, p. 300.
[22] Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1794*, (London: C. Macrae, 1794); Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1813*, (Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers) Limited, 1969), pp. 234-251. Young was a high profile Suffolk landowner and farmer, and the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement.
[23] Young, *General View, 1813*, p. 250.
[24] Young, *General View, 1813*, p. 238.

of Ipswich) in 1790 and 1791 was caused by smallpox.[25] Here the governor's report claimed the poor, including people living in the village of Barham, were averse to inoculation. Consequently, when the two pest-houses were full and smallpox cases increased in the workhouse, the spread of disease could not be prevented from affecting the wider population. Deaths at the Barham workhouse increased from 32 in 1789 to 55 in 1790 and 72 in 1791.[26]

Deaths from contagious diseases in the last two decades of the eighteenth century had both short and long term consequences. Although there was an immediate reduction in the population in the short term, numbers of potential mothers were reduced in the long term. However, overall population trends in Suffolk indicate that the population continued to grow as baptisms increased and burials stabilized. After the early 1780s, total burials fell back to around 4,000 per annum, with 3,801 recorded in 1800.[27] In that year, 2,258 more baptisms than burials took place, which indicates that Suffolk's population was growing steadily and would continue to place greater demand on resources. This simultaneous rise in births and stability in burials suggests a long term trend which would lead to a growing and youthful society.[28] Later censuses compiled by John Rickman after the *Abstract* was published confirm that this increase continued.[29] The *Accounts of Population and Number of Houses according to Census, 1841* show that the population increased steadily from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Table 1.2 confirms this upward trend from 210,431 to 315,129 in the space of forty years between 1801 and 1841. This expanding population undoubtedly placed increasing demands on work, housing and food resources as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries progressed. Those on very limited incomes, including women who struggled to find work, would face the greatest challenges.

Table 1.2: Population of Suffolk, 1801-1841[30]

1801	210,431
1811	234,211
1821	270,542
1831	296,317
1841	315,129

[25] Young, *General View, 1813*, p. 245.
[26] Young, *General View, 1813*, p. 245.
[27] PP 1801, VII, *Abstract of Answers and Returns*, p. 300.
[28] David Dymond and Peter Northeast, *A History of Suffolk* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985), p. 89.
[29] PP 1841, II, *Accounts of Population and Number of Houses according to Census, 1841, of each County in Great Britain, Channel Islands and Isle of Man; Comparative Statement of Population and Houses, 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831 and 1841; Account of Population of each City and Burgh in Scotland*.
[30] PP 1841, II, *Accounts of Population and Number of Houses, 1841*, p. 5.

1.3 DEMAND, SHORTAGES AND HIGH PRICES FOR WHEAT AND BREAD

Roger Wells confirmed that England had become a net importer of grain by the late eighteenth century because it was unable to sustain itself in cereals to meet the increasing demands of its growing population.[31] This appears to be substantiated in Suffolk by John Savage, whose mill stood on Stoke Hill, Ipswich, overlooking the River Orwell.[32] Savage confirmed that two large shiploads of grain were imported by him into Harwich from Holland in 1775 and 1783.[33] Wells further argued that occurrences of famine in the 1790s resulted from shortages of food on top of the decline in workers' living standards from the 1750s, as wages failed to keep pace over time with the slow increase in food prices.[34] Wells described wheat as '*the* source of primary sustenance' and this basic foodstuff became exorbitantly expensive.[35] It rose in price from between 48s and 58s per quarter (2 stone) in the early 1790s to more than 90s in 1795 and 119s 6d in 1801.[36] Wells also affirmed that the real wages of building workers in England fell between 1799 and 1801 to one of the lowest values ever recorded.[37] He further confirmed that the famine conditions between 1799 and 1801 were even more severe than they had been in the previous period of food shortages between 1794 and 1796.[38]

Over the longer term, and from data retrieved by B. R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, Eric J. Evans calculated that yearly average wheat prices increased greatly between 1780 and 1819, before decreasing in every ten year period thereafter to 1869.[39] Evans noted peaks in some individual years, including 54s 3d in 1783, 78s 7d in 1796, 119s 6d in 1801 and 126s 6d in 1812.[40] These fluctuations appear to confirm a widespread and sustained period of turbulence in food prices. In Essex, Peter King confirmed that the doubling of wheat prices in the two periods of acute shortage highlighted by Wells (1794-1796 and 1800-1801) caused a

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[31] Roger Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801* (London: Breviary Stuff Publications, 2011), pp. 3-5.
[32] John Savage, *Memoirs of John Savage, Miller of St. Mary Stoke, Ipswich*, ed. by Walton Turner (Ipswich: S. & W. J. King, County Press, 1900), pp. 8-20.
[33] Savage, *Memoirs*, pp. 8-20.
[34] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 3.
[35] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 12.
[36] J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay, cited in Roger Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 4.
[37] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, pp. 3-5.
[38] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 3.
[39] Eric J. Evans, *Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783-c.1870,* 4th edn. (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 528; B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (1962), p. 488. Per imperial quarter, the average price of wheat rose from 46s 1d (1780-1789) to 57s 7d (1790-1799), then 84s 8d (1800-1809) and finally 91s 5d (1810-1819). In the following period (1820-1829) the average price fell back to 59s 10d.
[40] Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, p. 528.

great deal of hardship to labouring families.[41] King further confirmed that to alleviate this distress many Essex parishes offered 'relief or subsidized grain to a very sizeable proportion of the community'.[42] This amounted to 41% of households in the village of Ardleigh (north Essex), for example.[43]

The severity of this situation also affected Suffolk communities adversely. Evidence retrieved from several editions of the *Ipswich Journal* in 1795, and presented in Table 1.3, confirms that the price of wheat per bushel (60 lbs or 4 stone, 4 lbs) in Suffolk rose steadily over the few months between February and November 1795 and did not dip after the harvest of that year, as would ordinarily have been expected.[44] The *Ipswich Journal* reported on 4 July 1795 (before the harvest in that year) that a 'second subscription ha[d] been raised by the inhabitants of Woodbridge, towards relieving their poor at a reduced rate'.[45] The dire situation of the poor is likely to have been replicated throughout Suffolk and it is likely that other parishes offered relief directly to households or provided wheat at reduced rates.

The rising costs of wheat additionally led to a dramatic increase in the price of bread, which would have affected wealthier households who could afford to buy bread from local bakers. Mitchell and Deane confirmed that the price of a quartern loaf (4 lbs 5½ oz) of wheaten or household bread increased from 7.0d in 1794 to 7.6d in 1797 and then peaked at 15.3d in 1800 and 15.5d in 1801.[46] Walter Stern further confirmed that inflation in ten war year periods between 1800 and 1813 caused wheat prices to rise even higher than in the year 1795-1796.[47] However, Stern also argued that it was the escalating price of wheat that was of the greatest detriment to the poor because they still made their own bread.[48] Despite the difficulties sustained by the poor caused by escalating prices, a further comment in the *Ipswich Journal* of 4 July 1795 claimed that the problems of the 'ordinary classes' in England were 'comparatively enviable' against the 'actual famine' in France and Holland and the scarcities in all other countries apart from Prussia.[49]

Table 1.3: Wheat prices per bushel in Suffolk, February – November 1795[50]

[41] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 145-153.
[42] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 149.
[43] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 149.
[44] *Ipswich Journal*, various dates between 7 February and 7 November 1795.
[45] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 July 1795.
[46] Mitchell and Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, pp. 497-498.
[47] Walter M. Stern, 'The Bread Crisis in Britain, 1795-96', *Economica*, New Series, 31, 122 (1964), 168-187 (p. 168).
[48] Stern, 'The Bread Crisis', p. 168.
[49] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 July 1795.
[50] *Ipswich Journal*, dates between 7 February and 7 November 1795.

Date published in *Ipswich Journal*	Halesworth Market	Woodbridge Market
7 February	7s 6d	7s 8½d
14 February	7s 10½d	7s 8d
18 April	8s	7s 8½d
2 May	8s 2¼d	8s 5¼d
18 May	8s 2d	8s 6½d
6 June	8s 6d	8s 7d
4 July	9s 3¾d	8s 6½d
5 September	Not available	9s 9¼d
24 October	9s 5d	10s ¾d
7 November	10s 6½d	Not available

What lay behind acute escalations in the prices of wheat and bread in the last decades of the eighteenth century? G. E. Fussell confirmed that even before the start of war with France in 1793 wheat prices had fluctuated greatly in Suffolk.[51] But he also confirmed that the needs of the troops during the war were prioritised over local needs, which meant a reduction in the amount of wheat available to the local population.[52] Exceptional demand for wheat in Suffolk caused prices to increase, to the considerable detriment of the poor.[53] However, bad weather over several winters in the 1780s and 1790s contributed further to shortages of wheat and other foodstuffs and, thus, to higher prices.

1.4 THE IMPACT OF SEVERE WEATHER ON FOOD AND WORK

The ability of the poor to access basic foodstuffs in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was further affected by a series of bad winters followed by poor harvests. Although precise details of weather conditions and temperatures in Suffolk do not appear to have been routinely reported in local newspapers, it is likely the county experienced similar weather conditions to those in London, which were better documented. From historical Meteorological Office records for London, James Brazell identified several severe winters in the southeast of England over the course of the eighteenth century.[54] Eleven periods of prolonged and low winter temperatures between the winters of 1775-1776

[51] G. E. Fussell, 'Some Land and Produce Prices in Late 18th Century Suffolk', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, 16, 2 (1953), 137-143.
[52] Fussell, 'Land and Produce Prices' p. 140.
[53] Fussell, 'Land and Produce Prices' p. 140.
[54] J. H. Brazell, *London Weather* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968), p. 8; Website of Pascal Bonenfant, *British Weather from 1700-1849,* https://www.pascalbonenfant.com/18c/geography/weather.html [accessed 10 April 2024].

and 1819-1820 caused the Thames to freeze over for weeks at a time.[55] Between 25 November 1788 and mid-January 1789, severely cold temperatures meant the Thames froze hard enough for a frost fair between Putney Bridge and Rotherhithe.[56] While these icy conditions provided entertainment, they also caused long term, financial hardship to the many outdoor workers who depended on the Thames for their livelihoods.[57]

Similar hardship is likely to have been experienced in Suffolk in the same prolonged period of cold between November 1788 and January 1789. Despite the dearth of surviving Meteorological Office records for Suffolk from the end of the eighteenth century and the general underreporting of weather in local newspapers, a report in the *Bury & Norwich Post* confirmed severe conditions in northwest Suffolk in January 1789:

> 'The Brandon river is so very much frozen that foot and horse passengers pass over at Hockwold-Wilton Ferry, the same as upon a turnpike-road, although there is a great depth of water and usually a strong current.'[58]

Further severe conditions were experienced in the winter of 1794-1795, which was one of the harshest recorded in early Meteorological Office data for London. Brazell confirmed that penetrating cold settled in on Christmas Eve 1794, lasted until 7 February 1795 and was followed by serious flooding.[59] Again, similar conditions were experienced in Suffolk. The *Ipswich Journal* confirmed that the thaw in Suffolk had been followed by further severe frosts, which caused accidents on the ice.[60] On 14 February the *Journal* reported a fast thaw which led many bridges to be impassable because of high water and strong currents.[61] However, the severity of these conditions had a long lasting impact on the agricultural season. Not only were farmers and agricultural employees unable to sow wheat in the spring of 1795 but soil conditions were not met for the grain to germinate properly.

The 'Agricultural Report for November 1795', published in the *Ipswich Journal*, confirmed that incessant rains impeded the sowing of winter wheat for that year and prevented large areas being sown altogether.[62] The 'Report' also claimed that a long dry frost would have helped to remedy the problem and to eliminate the slugs and wireworm that had increased in the wet winters of the two previous years. It further confirmed that 'the accounts

[55] Brazell, *London Weather*, p. 153: 1775-76, 1779-80, 1783-84, 1784-85, 1788-89, 1794-95, 1796-97, 1798-99, 1810-11, 1813-14 and 1819-20.
[56] Brazell, *London Weather*, p. 14.
[57] Brazell, *London Weather*, p. 15.
[58] *Bury & Norwich Post*, 14 January 1789.
[59] Brazell, *London Weather*, pp. 149 & 153.
[60] *Ipswich Journal*, 7 February 1795.
[61] *Ipswich Journal*, 14 February 1795.
[62] *Ipswich Journal*, 6 December 1794.

of the produce of this year's crops [we]re daily more unfavourable'. Without favourable growing conditions, the quantity and quality of the wheat harvested in 1795 would have been low, contributing to the overall scarcity of cereals and highly inflated grain prices for the rest of that year and into 1796.

The prolonged and difficult weather conditions experienced in the severe winters at the end of the eighteenth century, including 1795-1796, had serious implications for the agricultural workforce. If men could not undertake regular winter agricultural work because of the weather and the poor condition of the soil, their ability to earn even a reduced winter wage would be severely restricted. These conditions, moreover, would also restrict women's agricultural work. K. D. M. Snell has speculated that women in the eastern counties (including Suffolk) were probably limited to spring work at this time.[63] Their inability to undertake agricultural work would prevent married women from earning a supplementary wage and single women from living by their own means.

1.5 CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE AND PATTERNS OF LABOUR

> 'The variations in the price of labour in the county, are not considerable: it may be stated generally (beer included) at 1s. 4d. in winter, 1s. 6d. in summer, and 2s. 10d. in harvest. Call winter twenty-nine weeks, harvest five, and summer eighteen; this will make the year's earnings 23*l.* 18s. A woman earns sixpence, and the wages of men servants rise from 5*l.* to 10*l.* […] These are prices by the day; but the great mass of work in this county is done by the *piece*, in which earnings are usually much higher.'[64]

David Dymond and Peter Northeast confirmed that agriculture in Suffolk had been 'advanced, experimental and increasingly specialised' since well before 1700 and that specialisation in crops and animal husbandry continued as the eighteenth century progressed.[65] Agriculture also responded to changing circumstances during periods of war with France, when farmers bought up land and took the opportunity to change from dairying to arable farming, particularly for the cultivation of wheat which was in short supply.[66] However, when high wheat prices fell around 1816-1817, Suffolk farmers were left with debts to tradesmen they could not pay and tenants who could no longer pay their rent. The impact

[63] K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 21-22.
[64] Young, *General View*, *1813*, p. 223.
[65] Dymond and Northeast, *History of Suffolk*, pp. 82-85.
[66] Dymond and Northeast, *History of Suffolk*, p. 90.

of this slump was that men's wages in agriculture fell by a third, there was a surplus of agricultural labour and a third of the working population of Suffolk became unemployed.[67] Dymond and Northeast have described this situation as 'the pauperisation of Suffolk'.[68] In the absence of alternative employment, this would have been experienced by many across the county, including women who worked in agriculture.[69]

In the observation above, Arthur Young appears to assert that women's employment in agriculture by the first years of the nineteenth century was limited to occasional daily work at a wage that was substantially lower than the male wage. This suggests that women would be unable to sustain themselves from agricultural work without additional income. The low rate of remuneration for women paid by agricultural employers appears to have been accepted practice to keep costs down. In a farm report on the costs involved in cattle and dairy production in Aspall (east Suffolk), Young acknowledged that the cost to the business of the dairy-maid was minimal because she could supplement her wages by spinning:

> 'In regard to the expences, the dairy-maid earns to the full amount of her wages, by spinning hemp or wool; and as she is fed pretty much from the dairy, the charge is very small.'[70]

The situation of women's employment in agriculture continued to worsen in the nineteenth century. The observations of union Relieving Officers in Suffolk in the *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture* confirm that changes in the seasonal distribution of agricultural work had become entrenched by 1843 and men routinely took priority over women when employment became available.[71] The Relieving Officer in Wickham Brook noted that women had a 'little employ in picking stones off the land and hoeing beans and wheat between March and July', but only 'gleaning in a forward harvest; no reaping – we have too many men for that'.[72] Any outdoor work that was offered to women was limited to the occasional hoeing of weeds, dropping and harvesting corn, gathering acorns, pulling up turnips and gleaning.[73] The impact of this sporadic and unreliable work may have left some female agricultural employees susceptible to committing theft and fraud.

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[67] Dymond and Northeast, *History of Suffolk*, pp. 90-91.
[68] Dymond and Northeast, *History of Suffolk*, p. 90.
[69] Dymond and Northeast, *History of Suffolk*, p. 90.
[70] Young, *General View*, *1813*, p. 201-202.
[71] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, Report of Mr Denison on the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincoln, pp. 220-239.
[72] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, p. 227.
[73] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, p. 227.

1.6 THE DECLINE OF THE DOMESTIC SPINNING INDUSTRY

Research by David Dymond into the centuries-old domestic weaving and finishing industry in southwest Suffolk verified that its decline began in the early eighteenth century.[74] By the end of the century it had almost disappeared because local craftsmen (mostly men) could not compete with the increasing use of machines and factories in the north of England.[75] However, the wool-combing and spinning of long staple worsted yarn for the weavers of Norwich and Norfolk continued to provide local domestic employment for women and children in many parts of Suffolk.[76] But this also fell into serious decline in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, giving rise to the unemployment of large numbers of women and children.[77]

Arthur Young confirmed in the *General View* that hand spinning in the county was strong in the 1780s but had seriously declined by 1813.[78] Citing an account of yarn manufacturing written in 1784 by James Oakes, a yarn maker from Bury St Edmunds, Young asserted that yarn spinning remained widespread in Suffolk in the mid-1780s.[79] Oakes at this point estimated that 36,000 spinners, mainly women and children, were paid roughly 3d per day for eleven months of the year, excluding the harvest period.[80] These wages were low (approximately half the amount paid to women for agricultural work when this was available), but were vital to family income. The impact on women's earning ability caused by the decline of domestic spinning undoubtedly led to poverty in Suffolk, particularly for women who were without family, poor relief or other support and when agricultural work was unavailable.

No accounts of the impact on individual women of the decline of spinning were found during the research for this study. However, a report in the *General View* from Bosmere and Claydon workhouse, where female inmates were expected to spin, confirmed that the profitability of spinning for the six months to Midsummer 1793 had slumped from an average yearly figure of around £200 to just over £72.[81] Henry Stuart's report for Suffolk in the 1834

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[74] David Dymond, *700 Years of Textile Making*, (Lavenham: Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, 2015), p. 14.
[75] Dymond, *700 Years of Textile Making*, p. 14.
[76] Dymond and Northeast, *A History of Suffolk*, p. 85.
[77] Jane Fiske, ed., 'Introduction', *The Oakes Diaries: Business, Politics and the Family in Bury St Edmunds, 1778-1827*, *Vol. I, James Oakes's Diaries, 1778-1800* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 1990), 1-200, pp. 15-54.
[78] Young, *General View, 1813*, pp. 231-233.
[79] Young, *General View, 1813*, pp. 231-233.
[80] James Oakes, 1784, cited in Young, *General* View*, 1813*, pp. 231-233.
[81] Young, *General View*, *1813*, p. 245.

Report […] *for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws*, cited the claim of Mr Crane, the last inspector of yarn for East Suffolk, that hand spinning had been entirely superseded by machinery by 1823.[82] Moreover, Denison's 1843 *Reports* […] *on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture* also reflected the serious inability of single and married women in Suffolk to support themselves or contribute to family income after hand spinning in the early nineteenth century was superseded by industrial manufacture in the north west:[83]

> 'Some years back, the labouring classes in Suffolk and Norfolk were much better off than they are now, owing to the very general employment of women and children in hand-spinning. That employment has been put an end to by machinery, and no other domestic manufacture has been found to supply its place.'[84]

Relieving Officers in the 1843 *Reports* […] *on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture* further confirmed that women could neither sustain themselves by local agriculture nor domestic industry in Suffolk by the middle of the nineteenth century. In the Lavenham area, the Relieving Officer reported that straw-plaiting was the only remaining domestic industry in the neighbourhood.[85] He lamented the fact that the wool processing industry in the town had been superseded by machines in other areas of the country and Suffolk had become far more reliant on agriculture for work:

> 'Formerly, all the women and children in the neighbouring villages, from 10-15 miles round, used to be employed spinning yarn, and the wife or children on average could earn nearly as much as the husband. 150 wool combers used to be employed in Lavenham, each of whom furnished work for 30 spinners. There are now only 16 wool-combers in this and all the adjoining parishes. Their employment is quite superseded by machinery; the population is now become almost purely agricultural, and much less well off than formerly.' [86]

When the domestic spinning industry went into decline in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, women's employment prospects in Suffolk declined significantly. Moreover, as the workforce in general became reliant on agriculture for employment, women's work in that sector became increasingly limited to a few poorly paid and occasional tasks and men were given priority. Lawful means of earning a living for women

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[82] PP 1834, XXX, *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiry into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws (Appendix B.1), Answers to Rural Queries, Part 1,* p. 343A; report by Henry Stuart on Suffolk.
[83] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, p. 220-239; Dymond and Northeast, *A History of Suffolk*, p. 89.
[84] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, pp. 220-239.
[85] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, p. 228.
[86] PP 1843, XXII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, p. 228.

appear to have been limited to work as servants in households, shops and other small businesses. This overall shortage of work may have led some women in Suffolk to commit property crimes in order to survive.

1.7 WAR AND FEAR OF INVASION, 1793-1815

The impact of the long and short term factors discussed above was most serious for the working population, whose lives may have been reduced to destitution by the loss of both employment and income when the prices of basic foodstuffs escalated. Further social and economic disruption in Suffolk resulted from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with France between 1793 and 1813, with a short period of peace between 1802 and 1803.[87] The war had direct socio-economic consequences for the population of Suffolk through the prioritisation of troops over the resident population in the distribution of wheat.[88] Furthermore, because of Suffolk's proximity to Europe and the Low Countries, which were occupied by the French, the war situation also prompted fear of invasion.[89] In response, existing coastal defences were strengthened and further new fortifications were constructed, including Martello towers and batteries.[90]

According to Margaret Thomas, Suffolk's perceived vulnerability also led to the formation and operation of the Loyal Suffolk Yeomanry Cavalry (a voluntary defence cavalry) after large armies of French citizens were conscripted in January 1793.[91] Thomas argued that the King and government were reluctant to recruit volunteers from the British lower classes, because they feared 'popular protest, unrest and rioting' by people who were already experiencing poor living and working conditions as a result of the social and economic upheaval associated with the industrial revolution.[92] Nonetheless, the government authorised the augmentation of local militias (civilian auxiliary forces to support regular forces) and fencible units (forces for home service only) organised at county level.[93] The county quarter sessions books also recorded the conscription of Suffolk men to the army and

[87] Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 3-4.
[88] Fussell, 'Land and Produce Prices' p. 140.
[89] Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 91-92; Margaret Thomas, ed., *Cornelius Collett and the Suffolk Yeomanry, 1794-1820: Defending Suffolk against the French* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 2020), p. xv.
[90] Peter Kent, 'Coastal Fortifications, 1500-1900', in *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk: Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond and Edward Martin (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), pp. 184-185.
[91] Thomas, *Cornelius Collett*, p. xv.
[92] Thomas, *Cornelius Collett*, p. xvi.
[93] Thomas, *Cornelius Collett*, p. xvii.

navy in the 1790s. A General Sessions in Ipswich in March 1795 confirmed the numbers of men required by the navy from each parish in the east of the county.[94] Single parishes were required to find one man; the large town of Lowestoft, four men.[95] In the absence of men who joined the army and navy, payments were made to wives and families via the quarter sessions courts.[96]

Men's absence from the workforce may have led to the redistribution of work to women for the duration of the war, to be given back to men on demobilization. Historians such as Peter King and Deirdre Palk have confirmed that women's property crimes increased during war and fell in peacetime.[97] Men's crimes decreased during war but increased again in peacetime.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed several long and short term factors that affected the lives of the population of Suffolk in the last decades of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries and may have led women to commit property crimes. Changes in agricultural practice and patterns of labour, and the decline of domestic spinning left the growing population vulnerable when severe weather impeded the production of wheat and prices soared exponentially in the 1780s and 1790s. The loss of spinning, which was largely carried out by women, left them unable to contribute to household income or to support themselves. These factors together appear to have led many members of the population into poverty, which Dymond and Northeast have described as the 'pauperisation of Suffolk'.[98]

In a study of women's agricultural day wages between 1740-1850 from farm accounts, Joyce Burnette observed sharp differences between wages in the industrialising north west and other parts of the country.[99] In the northwest, increasing demand from textile and cottage industries kept the female wage ratio high, but an overall decline in female employment in other places led to a general reduction in the female wage.[100] For women in Suffolk, the decline of both agricultural work and spinning (which was estimated to have

[94] B105/2/50, Quarter Sessions, 17 March 1795.
[95] B105/2/50, Quarter Sessions, 17 March 1795.
[96] B105/2/51, Bury St Edmunds, 16 July 1796. This entry documents payments in west Suffolk.
[97] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 153-161; Deirdre Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion, 1780-1830* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 43 and 73.
[98] Dymond and Northeast, *History of Suffolk*, p. 90.
[99] Joyce Burnette, 'The wages and employment of female day-labourers in English agriculture, 1740-1850', *Economic History Review*, 57, 4 (2004), 664-690 (pp. 684-686).
[100] Burnette, 'Wages and employment', pp. 684-686.

employed 36,000 spinners in 1784) led to a situation of fragility in which they could neither support themselves nor contribute to family income.[101] There were few other working opportunities left for women. Even if single women were employed, few could survive by themselves because of the inadequacy of their wages and this factor may have persuaded some women to marry.

The escalation of wheat prices in Suffolk at the end of the eighteenth century, when harsh winters caused harvests to fail or falter, led to serious difficulties for the poor because wages did not keep pace with fast rising prices. For men and women who were unemployed, the situation was more difficult. In the turbulence of this period, it is probable that some women may have stolen property to supply their own immediate needs, or to generate income. The next chapter explores these crimes and the goods that women were accused of stealing or obtaining by fraud.

[101] James Oakes, 1784, cited in Young, *General* View, *1813*, pp. 231-233.

CHAPTER 2: THEFTS AND FRAUDS BY WOMEN, 1770-1820

This chapter builds on previous gendered studies to develop an understanding of the nature and extent of women's property crime in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820, the latter fifty years of the long eighteenth century which Peter King has famously described as 'the golden age of discretionary justice'.[1] It comprehensively explores the crimes of women who were tried at the Suffolk quarter sessions and assizes, most of whom were accused of petty or grand larceny, though a few were tried for more serious felonies. The chapter also attempts to explore and identify the motivations behind women's crimes and additionally assesses whether the goods that women stole in Suffolk were similar to thefts highlighted in studies in other parts of the country.

Rhiannon Markless has confirmed that all eighteenth century thefts were felonies, 'defined according to the value of goods stolen and the location and manner of the theft'.[2] In Suffolk, as elsewhere, the capital offence of grand larceny (theft of goods over 1s or 12d) and the non-capital offence of petty larceny (theft of goods at or below this value) were tried at the quarter sessions and are recorded in the surviving sessions books for the county and the boroughs of Ipswich and Sudbury.[3] The crime of shoplifting involved the theft of goods valued over 5s but, crucially, needed to be unseen at the time of theft; likewise, pickpocketing needed to be carried out unnoticed by the victim.[4] Shoplifting and pickpocketing were both capital offences and were tried at the assizes but proving this kind of unseen crime was difficult.

The chapter draws on court records for quarter sessions and assizes courts in Suffolk for evidence of the goods women were accused of appropriating and the manner in which they were taken: theft, robbery, burglary, housebreaking, the receipt of stolen goods and obtaining goods under false pretences. Women were commonly prosecuted for stealing money, cloth, clothing, haberdashery and bedding, as well as corn and foodstuffs, household goods, fuel, livestock and poultry. The chapter questions whether poor women stole goods

[1] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 355.
[2] Rhiannon Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire, 1735-1775' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Roehampton, 2013), p. 245.
[3] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. viii-ix; J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1986), p. 140.
[4] Deirdre Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion, 1780-1830* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 40 and 69.

to meet their basic needs for food and clothing in an 'economy of makeshifts' or if the goods were stolen to make money as part of a commercial enterprise.[5]

The chapter further investigates how theft in Suffolk fitted into women's lifestyles. Were their actions opportunistic, acquisitive, regular or professional? Moreover, were some thefts by women in the rural county of Suffolk a response to increasing consumerism, as the new goods and fashions that became available more widely to the rich also became attractive to the poor, as Beverly Lemire has argued?[6] The chapter foregrounds a further small number of other thefts that do not readily fit into the above categories. For example, it explores the unusual but well-known capital case of horse theft by Margaret Catchpole in Ipswich in 1797. It also investigates a small number of fraudulent crimes that were tried at the quarter sessions and assize courts. These included coining and uttering, and obtaining money or goods under false pretences.

The previous chapter argued that criminal activity in this period took place against an unsettled background of changing socio-economic, political and meteorological conditions which challenged the lives and livelihoods of the labouring poor. Severe weather conditions and a series of poor harvests led to high wheat prices in the late 1790s, while population growth increased demand on basic food resources. At the peak wheat price of 119s 6d per quarter in 1801, and while real wage rates fell, large numbers of the population were vulnerable to famine.[7]

2.1 THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF GENDERED PROPERTY CRIME

Previous gendered studies of property crime in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which focused principally on quarter sessions and assize cases, have concluded that men and women worked in separate networks to steal and dispose of goods, and they targeted different items.[8] Garthine Walker's study of crime in early modern Cheshire

[5] O. H. Hufton, cited in Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760-1834*, (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical society in association with The Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 7-8.

[6] Beverly Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes', *Journal of British Studies*, 27, 1 (1988), 1-24 (pp. 1-3).

[7] Roger Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801* (London: Breviary Stuff Publications, 2011), pp. 3-5.

[8] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*; Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Lynn MacKay, 'Why They Stole: Women in the Old Bailey, 1779-1789', *Journal of Social History*, 32, 3 (1999), 623-639; Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire'; Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England'; Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of

extended this argument to show a 'more complex and instructive view of gendered experience of crime' than was previously acknowledged.[9] Significantly, and rather than reinforcing characteristics associated with gender, she foregrounded differences in the distinct, gendered spheres of daily economic activity and networks of exchange.[10] While women were prosecuted largely for stealing cloth, clothing and linen, money, household goods and food, men stole horses, large and small livestock, and money.[11] Walker further argued that women in this period were twice as likely to steal cloth, yarn and household items than men because of the 'differing cultural significance' these items had in their lives.[12] Women's property offences, including housebreaking and burglary, were likely to be carried out in the local communities where they spent their daily lives; furthermore, they disposed of the stolen goods in the same places.[13] Men were likely to steal horses and large and small livestock because they worked in 'public worlds' in which they were legitimately involved in the buying and selling of animals. Walker thus stressed that 'gendered patterns of theft' related to the contexts in which men and women separately operated; they did not relate to perceived differences between men and women.[14]

Lynn MacKay reached a similar conclusion based on her research into women's property crimes between 1779 and 1789 from Old Bailey records. MacKay argued that thefts of cloth and clothing reflected the domestic activities and local networks embedded in women's daily lives.[15] But she additionally found that clothing represented the greatest proportion of a household's income.[16] If rising prices meant that food placed stress on family budgets, women might be forced to obtain clothing by other means, including by theft.

Deirdre Palk's research into thefts committed by women in London and Middlesex between 1780 and 1830 foregrounded the instability of female occupations as an alternative

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Women in the 18th Century in the South West of England' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Plymouth, 2000); Anne-Marie Kilday, ''Criminally Poor?' Investigating the Link Between Crime and Poverty in Eighteenth Century England', *Cultural and Social History*, 11, 4 (2014), 507-526; John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[9] Garthine Walker, 'Women, theft and the world of stolen goods' in *Women, Crime and the Courts*, ed. by Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker, (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994) 81-105 (p. 99).

[10] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, pp. 169 & 273.

[11] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 162.

[12] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 163.

[13] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 273.

[14] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 273.

[15] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, pp. 169 & 273; MacKay, 'Why They Stole', p. 633.

[16] MacKay, 'Why They Stole', p. 626.

and plausible explanation for their crimes.[17] From an investigation of shoplifting, pickpocketing and counterfeiting bank notes, Palk argued that the vulnerability of women to property crime resulted from the insecurity of work available to them as 'mantua-makers, staymakers, potscourers, washerwomen, fruit and watercress-sellers, market traders and housemaids'.[18] She further argued that periods of war and peace, and fluctuations in prices of basic food products led to an increase in property crimes at certain times.[19] Moreover, higher numbers of thefts were carried out in times of financial hardship and prosecutions increased as anxieties about property rose among property owners.[20] For the capital crimes of shoplifting (from 1780 until 1823 when it ceased to be a capital offence) and pickpocketing (from 1780 until 1808 when it, too, ceased to be a capital crime), women in London were prosecuted in greater numbers than men.[21] However, they remained in the minority of defendants for currency prosecutions by the Bank of England throughout Great Britain and Ireland between 1802 and 1834.[22]

Rhiannon Markless has argued that London was unrepresentative of other English regions because its larger, shifting population experienced greater problems in employment, crime and policing.[23] Her research in Yorkshire found differences between the property crimes committed by men and women that echoed the observations not only of Walker in Cheshire but also MacKay in London.[24] Nevertheless, her two ten-year samples of thefts (between 1735 and 1745 and between 1765 and 1775), indicated that female prosecutions at the quarter sessions and assizes were lower than male prosecutions, and the goods stolen by men and women also differed.[25] The two samples appeared to show consistent differences between male and female prosecution and criminal activity across the long period between 1735 and 1775. Women generally appeared at the quarter sessions for thefts of low value clothing and household goods and at the assizes for thefts of money, silver and gold.[26] Conversely, men were often prosecuted at the quarter sessions for thefts of livestock, commercial goods and non-domestic items including horse tackle, iron and timber.'[27] At the

[17] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion,* pp. 39 & 85.
[18] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion*, p. 164.
[19] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion,* p. 14.
[20] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion*, p. 14.
[21] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion*, p. 160.
[22] Palk, *Gender, Crime, and Judicial Discretion*, p. 93.
[23] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 243.
[24] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 243.
[25] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 243-247.
[26] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 249.
[27] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 248.

assizes men were prosecuted for thefts of horses, livestock and grain.[28] These gendered differences appear to reflect and emphasise the different contexts in which men and women conducted their daily lives, as Walker found.[29]

Markless's work in Yorkshire and King's in Essex have both suggested a connection between influxes of working women in urban areas and increases in the committal of property crime by women.[30] Markless observed that women in mid-eighteenth century Yorkshire were involved in a 'growing market for stolen goods, particularly in the emerging urban environments'.[31] King tentatively linked the tendency of urban women in Essex to be accused of more property crimes than rural women to the different work opportunities and freedoms experienced by those who lived away from rural support networks.[32] Women were more vulnerable to prosecution for theft in towns with active borough courts than they were in provincial towns without this provision.[33] This explanation, however, does not explain female vulnerability to accusations of theft in rural situations.

Amy Williams research into women's thefts and prosecutions in the south-west between 1740 and 1784 measured their thefts against the 'economic factors of war and consumer prices'.[34] She did not measure women's crimes against men's.[35] Based on women's convictions at the Western Assize Circuit for Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Cornwall and at Dorset quarter sessions, she found that the numbers involved reflected fluctuations in the Schumpeter-Gilboy consumables price index.[36] But she also argued against the acceptance of a direct relationship between the price index and theft because it was possible that convictions reflected the 'priorities of law enforcers', even when theft was a response to food scarcity, unemployment or low income.[37] She urged further caution because women's indictments overall were low.

Notwithstanding this cautious approach, Williams found that women were most commonly tried for thefts of clothing, yarn and fabrics and that the numbers of cases

[28] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 248.
[29] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 273.
[30] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 244; King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 198.
[31] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 244.
[32] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion,* p. 198.
[33] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 198-199.
[34] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 87.
[35] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 87.
[36] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 94.
[37] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', pp. 94-95.

increased incrementally from one period to another.[38] 41% of the women convicted for property crime between 1740 and 1743, stole textile goods. This increased to 55% between 1755 and 1759, and to 56% between 1780-1784. Women were also prosecuted for stealing household goods, valuables and foodstuffs, but food thefts decreased in the same periods. This led Williams to a tentative suggestion that immediate consumption may not have been the main reason for theft, if other easily saleable goods were available.[39] She further confirmed that the burgeoning market for second-hand clothing made textile goods extremely saleable and thus attractive to thieves.[40]

This historiography of gendered property crime in different regions of England and Wales has confirmed that goods stolen by women tended to reflect the communities in which they carried out their daily lives. Most prosecutions of women involved thefts of textile goods, while foodstuffs, household goods and valuables were also common. The following investigation of prosecutions of men and women at the assizes and quarter sessions for all types of crimes allows thefts in Suffolk to be explored in detail.

2.2 COUNTY AND BOROUGH SESSIONS, AND ASSIZE RECORDS

The level of detail recorded in the Suffolk county quarter sessions books tends to be fragmentary and inconsistent: most cases are unsupported by indictments or other court documents. At their most complete, entries name defendants and prosecutors, identify the goods stolen, state the defendant's plea and the jury's verdict, and record the sentence handed down. The best preserved records are mainly for the period between 1781 to 1794.[41] Between the early 1790s and 1801, however, the detail is more limited.[42] Where defendants were named in documents for this period, victims' names were usually omitted. Moreover, descriptions of stolen goods were mostly replaced by the category of offence: petty larceny, grand larceny or misdemeanour. The result of these omissions is that it is not usually possible in the latter period to be certain if the victim was an employer or shop owner, for example, and what the stolen goods were. However, most verdicts and sentences were recorded across all the county sessions books.[43]

[38] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 97.
[39] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 97.
[40] Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 97.
[41] Suffolk Archives, Suffolk County Quarter Sessions Books: B105/2/47, 1781-1786; B105/2/48, 1786-1789; B105/2/49,1790-1794.
[42] B105/2/50, 1794-1798; B105/2/51.1, 1798-1801.
[43] B105/2/50; B105/2/51.1.

It was confirmed by *Browne's General Law List and Sessions Register for the year 1790* that 'occasional sessions' were held in the boroughs of Ipswich, Sudbury and Bury.[44] The sessions books for the Borough of Ipswich between 1776 and 1815 are well preserved and record names of defendants, prosecutors and witnesses, as well as verdicts and sentences.[45] In addition, indictments, recognizances, witness statements and examinations for trials after defendants entered 'not guilty' pleas, have usually survived in the Ipswich sessions rolls.[46] For the Borough of Sudbury, a few records of female prosecutions survive for property crimes committed in its three parishes.[47] But sessions books for the two parishes of the Borough of Bury St Edmunds have not survived and investigation of the sessions rolls produced little evidence of women's property crime. With the exception of two cases of theft that were prosecuted at the Borough of Bury St Edmunds sessions and have been identified from the *Indents from Early Fleet Ships*, it was decided not to pursue further enquiry into property crime in this borough.[48]

Browne's also stated that no sessions took place that year in the coastal boroughs of Aldeburgh, Dunwich and Orford, and Eye.[49] No evidence has been found of trials of women for property crime at these borough courts. Clive Paine found that because Eye Gaol in north Suffolk could only accommodate prisoners for three months, defendants in the 1830s from this small borough were sent to Ipswich Gaol to await trial at the county quarter sessions in Ipswich or at the assizes in Bury.[50] For the same reason it is possible that property crimes in the small boroughs of Aldeburgh, Dunwich and Orford were also tried at the Suffolk county sessions, and the borough courts dealt only with administrative matters. Details relating to quarter sessions cases throughout the county have been transcribed into a database and are summarised at Appendix 1.

In this thesis, evidence about the women who were tried for serious felonies between 1796 and 1807 at the assizes courts is derived from Suffolk Assize rolls (1796-1800) and

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[44] *Browne's General Law List and Sessions Register for the year 1790* (London: sold by T. Wheldon, 1790), pp. 274-276.
[45] SA, Borough of Ipswich Sessions Books, C/2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815.
[46] SA, Borough of Ipswich Sessions Rolls, C/2/9/1/1/1/138-144, 1790-1796; C/2/9/1/1/1/145-149, 1797-1801.
[47] SA, Borough of Sudbury Sessions Book, EE501/2/18, 1781-1836.
[48] SA, Borough of Bury Sessions Rolls: D8/1/3/1-11, 1735-1801; State Records Authority of New South Wales (SRA NSW): *Indents from Early Fleet Ships*, Convict Indents, 1786-1799, Nrs. 1150. The exceptions are the cases of Elizabeth Harvey and Elizabeth Edwards which are summarised in Appendix 3.
[49] *Browne's*, pp. 274-276.
[50] Clive Paine, *History of Eye* (Diss: Eye Press, 1993), p. 29.

surviving Assize Calendars (1801-1807).[51] The assizes sat in Lent and Summer in Bury St Edmunds, with separate hearings for the Liberty (the west of Suffolk) and the County (the east of Suffolk). The assize records for both regional assizes are rolled together at the National Archives. The surviving evidence may include depositions, indictments annotated with verdicts, and recognizances. In some instances, documents have become brittle, blackened with age and impossible to read. In other sittings of the assizes, no accounts of female prosecutions were found: this was the case in 1796.[52] The few Assize Calendars that survive for hearings between 1801 and 1807 usually provide defendants' ages and may also be annotated with other detail, probably by a magistrate on the trial jury. Evidence retrieved from the assize court records and calendars for the period between 1797 and 1807 has been transcribed into a second database and is summarised in Appendix 2.

The evidence uncovered in this study undoubtedly represents an unknown proportion of women's property crimes in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820. Peter King has urged caution over estimations of prosecutions for property theft because the 'dark figure' of unrecorded or unprosecuted crime was estimated to be extremely high.[53] This was partly due to the high cost to the victim of bringing a prosecution. Although some costs might be paid by the courts towards the cost of formal prosecution, this was by no means guaranteed. Furthermore, the time involved in travelling to court and waiting for the hearing to start may have ruled out prosecution, even for wealthier victims.[54] Informal sanctions against offenders in some communities may have been a cheaper alternative to a costly prosecution in court and are discussed in Chapter 6.

2.3 THE OVERALL SCALE AND NATURE OF CASES AT THE ASSIZES, 1797-1804

Before narrowing down to consider women's individual property crimes, it is expedient to consider the full picture of male and female criminality in Suffolk. For this purpose, the offences for which men and women were prosecuted at the assizes have been investigated from the Assize Rolls and Calendars of Prisoners between Lent 1797 and Summer 1804,

[51] The National Archives, Kew, Suffolk Assize Rolls: ASSI 94/1421, 1796, S - ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S; SA, Lackford Petty Sessions, Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1801 L; 1802 L; 1802 S; 1803 L.
[52] ASSI 94/1421, 1796, S.
[53] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 11.
[54] J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) pp. 45-48.

together with newspaper reports of prosecutions, convictions and acquittals.[55] Most calendars were annotated with verdicts and sentences, probably by a juror at the time of trial. Where this evidence was not recorded, or if calendars have not survived, the *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury and Norwich Press* were searched for reports of assize trials.

Tables 2.1 (Lent 1797 to Summer 1800) and 2.2 (Lent 1801 to Summer 1804) present the numbers of men and women convicted of all types of crime (including property crime) at the Bury assizes, as well as the numbers of cases 'not found'. The tables confirm around 212 convictions for all crimes of men and women at this court between 1797 and 1804: 185 men and 27 women (87% and 13% of the total, respectively).[56]

Male convictions of all crimes were concentrated most heavily between Lent 1800 and Lent 1801. Numbers ranged from 1 to 8 between Lent 1797 and Summer 1799; reached 23 in Lent 1800; dropped to 7 in Summer 1800; and then increased dramatically to 40 in Lent 1801, before falling to 15 in Summer 1801. Thereafter they remained at between 6 and 20 up to Summer 1804.

Female convictions of all crimes were lower overall than male convictions and peaked at the Lent and Summer assizes in 1800. Numbers ranged from 0 to 3 between Lent 1797 and Summer 1799; reached 5 in Lent 1800 and 7 in Summer 1800. From the Lent assizes of 1801 to Summer 1804 numbers dropped back to between 0 and 2. The Summer assizes of 1800 was the only time when male and female convictions at the assizes for all crimes were identical: male convictions fell to 7 (from the peak of 23 in Lent 1800) and female convictions peaked at 7.

Of the 212 convictions of men and women at the assizes for all crimes, 21 men and 2 women were convicted of the serious crimes of murder, manslaughter, sexual violence, 'unnatural behaviour' and riot. A further 11 men and 1 woman were convicted of 'other crimes', including perjury or escape from gaol. Thus, 32 men and 3 women were convicted of crimes that did not involve property. The remaining 177 male and female convictions were of property crimes, of which men accounted for 153, women for 24 (86% and 14% respectively).

[55] ASSI 94/1421, 1796, S - ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S; Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1801 L; 1802 L; 1802 S; 1803 L; Papers of the Late Stanley Frederick Lindlay, Assize Calendar, HD1295/3/1: 1798 L; *Ipswich Journal*, 1797-1804 & *Bury and Norwich Post,* 1801-1804, various editions.
[56] The figures are tentative because of missing evidence for Lent 1797 and Summer 1798.

Table 2.1: Convictions of men and women at the assizes: all crimes, 1797-1800[57]

	1797 L*	1797 S	1798 L**	1798 S	1799 L	1799 S	1800 L	1800 S	
Types of crime: nos. of male & female prisoners	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	Totals M:W
Violence against the person/ property or riot***		3:0	2:0				0:0	0:1	5:1
Burglary			0:1				1:0	4:0	5:1
House-breaking; theft from workshops/houses, inns	3:0	3:1	2:2		0:1		7:2	0:1	15:7
Highway robbery			1:0				1:0		2:0
Stealing from employers							3:1	0:1	3:2
Horse stealing		0:1					1:0		1:1
Sheep, cattle and pig stealing	5:0	1:0	2:0						8:0
Stealing fowl, rabbits, hay & foodstuffs inc. cereals		1:1	1:0			2:0	5:0	2:0	11:1
Stealing other goods						1:1	1:0		2:1
Stealing from shops or businesses							4:0	0:3	4:3
Pickpocketing/stealing from the person							0:2		0:2
Receiving stolen goods					1:0	3:0			4:0
Other crimes, inc. escape from gaol or unknown				1:0				1:1	2:1
TOTAL OF ALL CONVICTIONS, M:W	8:0	8:3	8:3	1:0	1:1	6:1	23:5	7:7	62:20
TOTAL PROSECUTIONS, M:W NOT FOUND****	0:0	7:3	9:0	1:1	1:1	3:2	11:2	17:6	49:15
OVERALL CASE NUMBERS	8:0	15:6	17:3	3:1	2:2	9:3	34:7	24:13	111: 35

* No verdicts recorded on calendar of prisoners for assizes Lent 1797. Male 'verdicts' for these assizes are the prosecutions listed on calendar. ASSI 94/1441, 1797 L & S shows that no women were convicted in Lent 1797: see Appendix 2.
**No calendar found for Summer 1798 assizes. *Ipswich Journal*, 21 July 1798, noted 3 prisoners on the trial calendar. *IJ,* 28 July 1798 noted 1 conviction for misdemeanour and 3 acquittals.
***Includes murder, manslaughter, assault, sexual violence or deviance and 'guilty but insane'.
**** 'Not found' cases include acquittals, discharges, failure of prosecutors to appear, jury found No True Bill (NTB), suspect admitted King's Evidence or remained out on bail.

[57] ASSI 94/1421, 1796, S - ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S; Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1797 L & 1800 S; Assize Calendar, HD1295/3/1: 1798, L; See Appendix 2; *Ipswich Journal*, 1797-1800, various editions.

Table 2.2: Convictions of men and women at the assizes: all crimes, 1801-1804[58]

	1801 L	1801 S	1802 L	1802 S	1803 L	1803 S	1804 L	1804 S	
Types of crime: nos. of male & female prisoners	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	M:W	Totals M:W
Violence against the person/property or riot	1:0	1:0		1:0	1:0	12:1			16:1
Burglary	2:0		2:0	2:0	1:1	2:0	1:0		10:1
House-breaking; theft from workshops/houses, inns	20:1	2:0	2:1	2:0			6:1	4:0	36:3
Highway robbery	2:0	1:0		1:0		2:0			6:0
Stealing from employers	1:0			1:0	2:0				4:0
Horse stealing	2:0		1:0		1:0	2:0	1:0		7:0
Sheep, cattle and pig stealing	1:0	4:0			1:0			2:0	8:0
Stealing fowl, rabbits, hay & foodstuffs inc. cereals	6:0	1:0	8:0	1:0			3:0		19:0
Stealing other goods		1:0					1:0		2:0
Stealing from shops or businesses					1:0			0:1	1:1
Pickpocketing/stealing from the person		1:0							1:0
Receiving stolen goods	3:0		0:1	1:0					4:1
Other crimes, inc. escape from gaol or unknown	2:0	4:0				2:0	1:0		9:0
TOTAL CONVICTIONS M:W	40:1	15:0	13:2	9:0	7:1	20:1	13:1	6:1	123:7
TOTAL PROSECUTIONS, M:W NOT FOUND	20:6	5:0	19:2	5:1	3:2	0:0	14:1	4:0	70:12
OVERALL CASE NUMBERS	60:7	20:0	32.4	14:1	10:3	20:1	27:2	10:1	193: 19

The property crimes prosecuted at the assizes and outlined in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 may reflect the gendered situations of men and women's daily interactions, as Markless found in early modern Cheshire.[59] Most female thefts appear to have been carried out in familiar local places such as houses, shops, workshops and inns. Men also committed property crimes in these places but additionally stole in a wider range of settings, including fields and barns.

[58] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1801 L, 1802 L, 1802 S, 1803 L; *Ipswich Journal*, 1800-1804 & *Bury and Norwich Post,* 1801-1804, various editions; see Appendix 2.
[59] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 162.

Many property crimes were violent capital offences and 77 men and 11 women were convicted at the assizes of the violent crimes of burglary, house-breaking (or thefts from workshops, workhouses and inns) and highway robbery. A further 6 men and 4 women were convicted of thefts from shops; 6 men and 3 woman were convicted of stealing from their employers; 8 men and 1 woman received stolen goods; and 1 further man and 2 women were convicted of pickpocketing. All 43 convictions for thefts of farm animals (including sheep, cattle and pigs), fowl and rabbits, hay and foodstuffs were of men. But the 9 convictions of the capital offence of horse stealing also involved 1 woman. These figures overall indicate that women in Suffolk were unlikely to be convicted at the assizes of farm animal and horse thefts and less likely than men to be convicted of burglary and housebreaking. They were more likely to be convicted of thefts from shops or their employers, and of pickpocketing, although their total convictions at the assizes were low. Furthermore, female prosecutions at the assizes indicate similar preferences to those found by Markless, Walker and Amy Williams: around 20 cases involved clothing, linen and cloth, 8 involved money or jewellery, and 4 concerned the receipt of stolen goods.[60]

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 additionally foreground significant numbers of cases 'not found' at the assizes between Lent 1797 and Summer 1804.[61] When convictions of all crimes were at their highest at Lent and Summer 1800 and Lent 1801, numbers of 'not found' male and female verdicts peaked. Thus, alongside 23 male convictions in Lent 1800, 10 cases were not found; and alongside the 5 women who were convicted at the same assizes, 2 cases were not found. However, at the Summer assizes in 1800 (when 7 men and 7 women were convicted of all crimes), the cases of 17 men and 6 women were not found. In Lent 1801, male convictions peaked at 40 while 20 male cases were not found. The 1 female conviction in Lent 1801, was exceeded by 6 female cases not found. After 1801, male cases not found fluctuated between 5 and 19; the rate for women remained around 1. These findings in Suffolk echo King's findings in Essex that 'not found' verdicts peaked around 1800.[62] It is significant that corn prices were exceptionally high in this period and of great concern for the poor.[63] These circumstances may have led victims, jurors and judges to apply discretion towards offenders.

[60] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p.56; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 249; Amy Williams, 'The Criminality of Women', p. 97.
[61] Not found includes acquittals, discharges, failure of prosecutors to appear, jury found No True Bill (NTB), suspect admitted King's Evidence or remained out on bail.
[62] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 1 & 355.
[63] Roger Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801* (London: Breviary Stuff Publications, 2011), pp. 3-5.

2.4 THE OVERALL SCALE AND NATURE OF CASES AT COUNTY AND BOROUGH QS, 1800-1801

To try to establish if high wheat prices may have prompted an increase in prosecutions for theft at the county and borough quarter sessions, this section specifically foregrounds the two year crisis period between 1800 and 1801. It first investigates all male and female convictions by type of crime.[64] Table 2.3 shows that 91 men were convicted of all crimes (76%), women for 28 (24%). 39 men and 7 women were convicted of non-property crimes, including vagrancy, deserting families, refusal to provide sureties for maintaining bastard children and violent crimes. The remaining 73 convictions at these courts involved property crime: men accounted for 52 (71% of property crimes), women for 21 (29%).

Table 2.3: Prosecutions of men and women at all Suffolk QS: all crimes, 1800-1801[65]

Type of offence: nos. of male and female prisoners	Convictions M:W	Cases not found M:W	Total cases M:W
Vagrancy	7:2	10:3	17:5
Offences against family: family desertion; affiliation	14:0	36:0	40:0
Assault, breach of peace, unlawful assembly, riot, damage/threats to property	18:5	12:2	30:7
GL/PL, theft, receiving stolen goods, felony, goods under false pretences	52:21	48:19	100:40
QS Totals, Men and Women	91:28	106:24	197:52
Cases referred to next QS	5:0		
Cases referred to Assizes	9:0		

Table 2.3 indicates that cases not found were high at these courts between 1800 and 1801. 106 men and 24 women were acquitted, discharged, prosecutors failed to appear, or the case was NTB. Not found cases also included the discharge of men previously sentenced to three months' imprisonment in affiliation cases, which were high in this period. Jointly, these 130 not found cases exceeded the total number of 119 convictions of men and women of all crimes at Suffolk quarter sessions. This again suggests that magistrates may have exercised discretion and leniency in this crisis.

[64] B105/2/50; B105/2/51.1.
[65] B105/2/50; B105/2/51.1.

The dearth of detail recorded in the Suffolk quarter sessions book hinders identification of the goods stolen between 1800 and 1801. However, detail retrieved from the county and quarter sessions between 1781 and 1798 and the borough sessions between 1781 and 1809 indicates that around 40 women were prosecuted for thefts of clothes, shoes and linen, while 20 were prosecuted for stealing cloth, yarn and related items.[66] There were also approximately 35 thefts of foodstuffs and 9 thefts of fuel. Thus, in this period before the critical wheat crisis years of 1800 and 1801, cloth, clothing, food, fuel appear to have been the most common thefts by women.

Table 2.4 indicates that 45 female convictions can tentatively be attributed to house-breaking or house theft since the items stolen appear to have been taken from domestic situations. 7 can be attributed to shops, work-houses and workshops and 9 to outside areas, such as fields and barns. Fraudulent crime and the receipt of stolen goods accounted for 10 convictions. A further 41 from the late 1790s were designated only by 'GL' or 'PL', while 6 were sent to their parish of settlement or referred to the assizes.

Table 2.4: Convictions of women at Suffolk & Borough QS for property crimes: 1776-1809[67]

Theft by house-breaking or from within house	Theft from work-house	Theft from shop, workshop or business	Theft from other places inc. fields	Uttering/ tendering counterfeit coin/other fraudulent crime	Receipt of stolen goods	GL or PL but no further details	To parish of settlement; or sent to Assizes
45	3	4	9	6	4	41	6

Despite the incomplete nature of some assize and quarter sessions records, data discussed in this and the last section enables tentative observations to be made on female patterns of crime prosecuted at each court, and comparisons to be drawn. Overall, female convictions of all crimes and property crimes at the assizes, quarter sessions and borough sessions were considerably lower than male convictions. Prosecutions at the assizes between 1797 and 1807 tended to be for thefts of large quantities of valuable goods, including clothing, linen and cloth, as well as sizeable sums of money. There were few prosecutions for stealing foodstuffs but single (separate) prosecutions for stealing a horse, a sheep, jewellery

[66] B105/2/48, 1786-1789; B105/2/49, 1790-1794; B105/2/50, 1794-1798; B105/2/51, 1798-1801; B/105/2/52.1, 1801-1803. Ipswich Borough Sessions Books, C/2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815; Ipswich Borough Sessions Rolls, C/2/9/1/1/1/138-144, 1790-1796; C/2/9/1/1/1/145-149, 1797-1801. Sudbury Borough Sessions Books, EE501/2/18, 1781-1836; List of Prisoners in Beccles Gaol, A1122/3, 1799-1803. See Appendix 1.

[67] See Appendix 1.

and miscellaneous items. At the quarter sessions, women were mostly prosecuted for low value thefts of clothing, linen and clothing, as well as foodstuffs and fuel. This leads into more detailed observations of the commodities stolen by women in Suffolk.

2.5 CLOTH, CLOTHING AND THE LURE OF DRAPERIES

John Styles has argued that the dress of ordinary people was the 'most blatant manifestation of the material transformation of plebian life'.[68] While new cloth, haberdashery and clothing were highly prized items, second-hand goods would have been easier to pass off as a working woman's own used clothing. However, the extent to which the poor could legitimately take part in the growing consumerism of cloth and clothing was limited by their income.[69] Beverly Lemire has argued that low income families attracted by new fashions could draw on a buoyant second-hand market, whereas new fashions were limited to the better-off.[70] Second-hand was cheaper than new clothing but the drawback with old, used clothes was that they wore out more quickly.[71] In an example used by Styles, items stolen by Mary Little for her own use from an old washerwoman in London in 1811 lasted less than six months.[72] The stolen goods would then need to be replaced, which probably explains why thefts of second-hand clothing were among the most frequently prosecuted offences in eighteenth century England.[73]

To assess the attire of poor men and women in the 1780s, Styles' drew on three sources: descriptions of clothing from criminal trials in London and Yorkshire; descriptions of clothing in newspaper advertisements to identify runaways; and comprehensive lists of the contents of houses destroyed by a fire in Brandon, Suffolk in 1789.[74] He found that petticoats, gowns and undergarments (shifts) were the items most commonly stolen from plebian women; waistcoats, coats and breeches from plebian men.[75] He also noted that indictments showed a bias towards more valuable items, while ordinary, stuff (woven cloth) items were rarely stolen.[76]

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[68] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 40-41.
[69] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 3-4.
[70] Lemire, 'Consumerism', pp. 2-3.
[71] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 40-41.
[72] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, 82-83.
[73] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 327.
[74] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 31-55; SA, Brandon Parish, FL/536/1/2, Brandon Fire, 1789.
[75] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 40-41.
[76] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 40-41. Stuff is a coarse woven cloth, often made from wool.

This thesis shows that women in Suffolk were also attracted to cloth and haberdashery sold by draperies. Shoplifting became a capital offence in 1699 and attracted the death sentence until 1823.[77] Though shoplifting itself was difficult to prove because it needed to be 'unseen' and 'undetected' at the time, thefts of goods from draperies became a particular problem during the late eighteenth century, including in Suffolk.[78] This was partly considered to be the fault of draperies themselves. Sir Archibald Macdonald's statement in the 'Minutes of Evidence' of the 1819 *Report from the Select Committee on Criminal Laws relating to Capital Punishment in Felonies*, suggested the judiciary work to avoid a capital outcome because the displays of goods in drapery shops invited theft, particularly by poor women:

> '[…] circumstances are laid hold of to avoid a capital conviction [because] in Holborn […] the linen drapers hang their linen and things in the door-way, and outside of the door-way, and they are flying in the face of every miserable women who is going past, and they are often snatched.'[79]

Beverly Lemire also argued that 'the lower orders' in Britain, with annual incomes below £50, were 'touched by the commercial and social environment in which they lived, in which a progressive flood of information and new merchandise was apparent to all but the most determined.'[80] Thus, the poor (and some wealthier defendants) would see and covet new fashions and fabrics even if they could not afford to buy them.[81] Deirdre Palk found that most textile thefts in London, were of goods in their unmade-up state or small made-up items, such as gloves and stockings.[82]

What happened to these goods after they were stolen may explain the motivations of the perpetrators. Textiles such as new pieces of cotton, muslin, linen and calico, or trimmings such as ribbon and lace, could have been sold on at prices that undercut drapery prices.[83] Alternatively, they could have been made up into new finished items for onward sale. Women who stole regularly from retailers may have run small businesses based entirely on stolen goods. Ready-made haberdashery items such as stockings and handkerchiefs, on the other hand, could have been used or sold on with little further endeavour.

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[77] Will. III, c. 23 (1699): *An Act for the better apprehending, prosecuting and punishing of Felons that commit Burglary, Housebreaking or Robbery in Shops, Warehouses, Coach-houses or Stables, or that Steal* Horses; Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 39.
[78] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 40.
[79] PP 1819, VIII, *Report from the Select Committee on Criminal Laws relating to Capital Punishment in Felonies*, p. 50: Macdonald was the circuit judge who presided over both of Margaret Catchpole's trials.
[80] Lemire, 'Consumerism', pp. 2-3.
[81] Lemire, 'Consumerism', pp. 2-3.
[82] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 57.
[83] A piece was the length of fabric required to make up a garment.

From an investigation of Old Bailey trial reports of thefts from shops in London between 1743 and 1807, Shelley Tickell has suggested that female-staffed retailers were more liable to theft than other retailers.[84] This vulnerability may also have been seen in Ipswich, the county town of Suffolk. According to *Bailey's British Directory* for 1784, there were seven linen or woollen draperies along Tavern Street and in the Butter Market.[85] William Notcutt's shop in the Butter Market was restocked with 'new and elegant' goods from London following his mother's death.[86] Notcutt advertised his intention to be at the forefront of fashion in 'linen drapery, mercery, millinery and hosiery' in the *Bury and Norwich Post* of 1786.[87] But the shop with its attractive new styles sustained several thefts of fabric and haberdashery and Notcutt prosecuted a sequence of offenders, some of whom may have made a living from onward sale of stolen goods. The drapery seems to have been run by Notcutt's wife Susannah, with the assistance of a female apprentice, Eliza Crabb. Susannah Notcutt was directly involved in the prosecution of several women who were accused of stealing goods from the shop, apparently acting by themselves.

Between 1784 and 1801, 6 women were prosecuted at Ipswich Borough and Suffolk quarter sessions for stealing textiles from drapery shops; a further 4 were prosecuted at the assizes. In 1784, Patience Ward was prosecuted at Ipswich Borough Sessions for stealing a linen handkerchief from Susannah Notcutt.[88] Ward was also prosecuted at Woodbridge in 1784 for stealing two cotton handkerchiefs from widow Sarah Barthorpe from Easton.[89] A subtle difference between these two thefts is that the linen item taken from Notcutt's drapery would have been new, while the two cotton handkerchiefs stolen from Barthorpe appear to have been second-hand.[90] This would not necessarily have impacted on their value, however. Styles has argued that cotton was more highly valued than linen and would easily have been saleable because handkerchiefs were an essential item of women's clothing.[91] The demand for handkerchiefs was confirmed in lists of losses sustained in the fire in 1789 by residents of a row of houses and shops in Brandon.[92] The lists show that even the poorest

[84] Shelley Tickell, 'Shoplifting in eighteenth-century London: a source for female retailing?' *History of Retailing and Consumption*, 1, 3 (2015), 172-185 (pp. 177-179).
[85] J. Andrews, *Bailey's British Directory or Merchant's and Trader's Usefull Companion*, vol. 4 (London: William Bailey, 1784).
[86] *Bailey's British Directory* (pp. 833-834).
[87] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 22 February 1786.
[88] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough Sessions, ? May 1784.
[89] B/104/2/47, Woodbridge, 25 April 1785.
[90] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 32. Handkerchiefs were large squares of fabric worn by men and women, mainly round the neck, though a few were worn in a pocket.
[91] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 43-44.
[92] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 337.

servant lost one spare handkerchief, in addition to the one she was wearing on the day of the fire.[93]

Thefts of cloth from draperies almost certainly targeted new material, which was of higher value than used fabric. The Notcutts prosecuted Susannah Hunt, a married woman and mantua-maker, at Ipswich Borough Sessions in 1789 for stealing eight yards of muslin from the shop, valued at 30s.[94] This high value suggests a good quality fabric which Hunt would have probably intended to turn into a gown for onward sale. Susannah Durrant was also convicted at Woodbridge in 1796 of stealing goods from William Notcutt's shop and on suspicion of, 'a practice of stealing goods from the different shops in this place and selling them in villages away from the town at half their value, under the pretence of the goods being smuggled'.[95] Durrant's practice replicated the business of a travelling chapman, except that her goods, though stolen and cut-price, were new. Durrant appears to have run a regular and professional enterprise based on thefts of readily marketable new goods.

A further prosecution by William Notcutt suggests how the crime of shoplifting worked, even though it could not be proved in this particular instance because the offence was witnessed by an employee. Mary Lord, wife of John, of St Lawrence's Ipswich was prosecuted at Ipswich borough sessions in 1799 for taking lengths of black ribbon, brown Scotch cloth and four checked handkerchiefs.[96] The sessions documents include a witness statement from Eliza Crabb, William Notcutt's apprentice, which stated that Lord entered the shop to buy a piece of blue linen, put her hand under a pile of muslins and then took two pieces of black ribbon from a drawer. [97] Crabb took Lord's basket from her and removed a further piece of cheesecloth. Susannah Notcutt then found '4 Scotch handkerchiefs' in Lord's pockets. Crabb's statement suggests that Lord's request to purchase the blue linen was a distraction while she took the cheesecloth, ribbons and Scotch handkerchiefs without being seen. The documents suggest that Crabb and Notcutt were suspicious: Lord may have been searched because she had previously been suspected of theft from this shop. But the total value of the theft at a mere 10d indicates that values of these goods were kept low (below 1s) to avoid a capital charge of grand larceny. The style of Lord's actions, however, suggests that she might have been a practised repeat offender.[98]

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[93] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 337.
[94] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 17 March 1789.
[95] B105/2/50, Woodbridge, 5 October 1796; *Ipswich Journal*, 6 August 1796.
[96] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 24 June 1799.
[97] C2/9/1/1/8/11; C2/9/1/1/1/148, Ipswich Borough, ? June 1799.
[98] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 24 June 1799.

Other women acting alone were convicted of textile thefts from other retailers in Ipswich. Sarah Clubbe was convicted at Ipswich Borough sessions of stealing lace from Miss Harwood, a milliner, in March 1779.[99] Jemima, wife of John Newman, was found guilty at Ipswich Borough sessions in March 1788 of stealing a piece of printed calico from Samuel King.[100] But women also stole cloth in small groups, which appears to have been a factor in the elevation of their prosecution to the assize courts. At the Summer assizes of 1800, Elizabeth Fuller aged 30, Alice Sutton aged 19 and Elizabeth Sutton aged 25 were jointly charged with stealing a quantity of linen cloth from the shop of William James Mingay of Wattisfield.[101] At the Lent Assizes of 1801, Susan Howlett aged 37 and John Howlett aged 40 were also prosecuted for taking a muslin apron, two pairs of cotton stockings and 'various other things' from John Golden, a linen draper from Bury St Edmunds.[102] It appears that the Howletts passed these goods on to Elizabeth Risbocke, who was prosecuted for receiving stolen goods but turned King's evidence.[103]

2.6 QS CASES: THEFTS OF CLOTH AND CLOTHING FROM HOUSEHOLDS

Quarter sessions and assize records for Suffolk in the 1780s confirm that thefts of cloth and clothing by women from private households were more likely to involve everyday clothing than more valuable items.[104] Approximately 20 prosecutions for thefts of cloth and clothing from households took place at the quarter sessions courts between 1781 and 1795. Women were prosecuted for stealing undergarments (women's shifts and men's shirts), gowns, aprons, caps and handkerchiefs. They also stole stockings (stocks) and handkerchiefs, which are difficult to identify as definitively male or female attire. Thefts of these everyday goods may have enabled women to profit from onward sale, or to benefit from as items of spare clothing.

Fabrics used in the manufacture of stolen garments indicate not only the increasing availability of new materials, but a gradual decline in the use of Suffolk-made linen for outer garments. Styles found that linen continued to be used for plebian men's shirts and women's

[99] C/2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, ? March 1779.
[100] C/2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 17 March 1788.
[101] ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S.
[102] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1801 L.
[103] 966/7/1: 1801 L.
[104] B105/2/47, 1781-1786 - B105/2/51.1, 1798-1801; C/2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815; C/2/9/1/1/1/138-144, 1790-1796; C/2/9/1/1/1/145-149, 1797-1801; EE501/2/18, 1781-1836; ASSI 94/1421, 1796 S - ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S; Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: various between 1801 L and 1807 L .

shifts (undergarments) in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the late eighteenth century.[105] For the same period in Suffolk, linen also remained in use for undergarments. The quarter sessions records show that some stolen male and female undergarments were identified as linen, though in other cases the fabric was not identified.

In 1783, Letitia Cue was convicted at Ipswich of stealing a hemp shirt.[106] Later the same year Elizabeth Boon pleaded guilty at Woodbridge to stealing shifts, stocks and a handkerchief of unknown fabric from Mary Welham of Tunstall.[107] Sarah and Daniel Bretton were also jointly prosecuted at Bury St Edmunds in 1783 for stealing a shirt and a shift from Joseph Goodwyn and Susan Newton.[108] Susannah Lark and Mary Westgate were jointly prosecuted at Beccles in 1787 for stealing two hemp shirts from Samuel Nicholls.[109] These basic undergarments all appear to have been stolen from private households. However, as linen manufacture was widely carried out in north Suffolk at this time, this was likely to have been the fabric used.[110]

Style's evidence suggests that cotton undergarments do not appear to have been stolen in Yorkshire before 1821.[111] Evidence in late eighteenth century quarter sessions records for Suffolk suggests that cotton was not widely available here either. Reliance on, and the continued use of linen may be explained by its local production from hemp grown along the Waveney and Little Ouse valleys in north and northeast Suffolk and south Norfolk, as Nesta Evans has shown.[112] Local linen was coarser but cheaper (both new and second-hand) than the superior Irish linen. Moreover, as plain undergarments, shifts and shirts remained largely unnoticed beneath outer garments, theft of linen items may have taken place out of need and without regard to changing fashions.

Three quarters of the gowns (outer garments) stolen in Yorkshire in the 1780s were made from printed and colourful linen or cotton, cotton being greatly valued for its finish and ability to be washed.[113] Evidence of thefts from private households in Suffolk suggests that cotton was becoming popular for gowns and accessories, while linen was still worn

[105] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 42.
[106] B105/2/47, Ipswich, 18 July 1783.
[107] B105/2/47, Woodbridge, 8 October 1783.
[108] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 13 October 1783.
[109] B105/2/48, Beccles, 1 October 1787.
[110] Nesta Evans, 'The Linen Industry', in '*An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Revised and Enlarged Edition*', 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond & Edward Martin, (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), 142-143.
[111] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 347.
[112] Evans, 'The Linen Industry', pp. 142-143.
[113] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 41.

regularly.[114] Prudence Baldrey was convicted at Ipswich Borough sessions in 1778 of stealing a linen gown from Mary Blaseby.[115] But in 1784 Hannah Bailey was accused at Beccles of stealing a cotton frock from Mary Lenney of Rendham.[116] Furthermore, Elizabeth Willett admitted stealing two pairs of cotton stockings in 1785 from John Mayden at Woodbridge.[117]

Several other quarter sessions cases suggest that women were also drawn towards newer fashions and finer fabrics. The black satin cloak belonging to widow Sarah Segger, alleged to have been stolen by Mary Gentry at Sudbury Borough Sessions in 1781 was an item that would not normally have been worn for everyday use.[118] Bridget Mills was prosecuted at Bury St Edmunds in 1786 for stealing a pair of stuff (woven cloth) women's shoes from Robert Isaacson.[119] At this time, the combination of a worsted stuff upper and leather sole was more fashionable and less practical than plain leather shoes.[120] Fine cotton muslin also became popular and liable to theft.[121] Elizabeth Drake was convicted at Bury St Edmunds in 1792 of stealing a muslin shawl from Samuel Bacon.[122] Ffrances Rolfe was tried at Sudbury in 1795 for stealing a muslin apron from Ruth Moulton.[123] Because items made of finer fabrics were conspicuous, they were likely to have been sold on quickly.

The surviving records for Suffolk suggest that some offenders were recidivists. Sarah Barker was prosecuted at the quarter sessions at least three times. In 1786, she was convicted at Beccles of stealing a red shift, a striped cotton bedgown and a pair of worsted stockings.[124] According to Styles, red was a colour associated with country clothing and Barker's purpose may have been to meet her own needs, since this red garment may have had little appeal to potential buyers.[125] In addition, worsted stockings were probably considered functional rather than fashionable. Styles also found that bedgowns appeared in single figures in lists of stolen goods in London and Yorkshire in the 1780s so the striped bedgown may have been unusual both to wear and steal in Suffolk in 1786.[126] However, the bedgown became popular because it required less material than a long gown and was

[114] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 91.
[115] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 7 January 1778.
[116] B105/2/47, Woodbridge, 11 October 1784.
[117] B105/2/47, Woodbridge, 5 October 1785.
[118] EE501/2/18, Sudbury Borough, 9 January 1781.
[119] B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 9 October 1786.
[120] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 44.
[121] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 91.
[122] B 105/2/49, Bury St Edmunds, 16 January 1792.
[123] EE501/2/18, Sudbury Borough, 4 June 1795.
[124] B105/2/47, Beccles, 9 January 1786.
[125] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 42.
[126] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 90.

therefore cheaper.[127] Overall, Barker's theft appears to reflect need and practicality as well as nodding towards novelty.[128]

Barker's case is complex, however. This conviction, which appears to be her first at the quarter sessions, marked the start of a recidivist career that escalated from minor theft to house-breaking, as she moved from one area to another. Barker was next convicted of petty larceny at the county sessions in Ipswich in 1791; no further details appear to have survived.[129] She was again convicted of petty larceny at Beccles in 1797.[130] In this instance the *Ipswich Journal* reported that she was sentenced to three months' solitary confinement, though, again, no details of the stolen goods survive.[131] In her final appearance at Beccles in 1798, Barker was accused of felony and robbery after breaking into the cottage of labourer John Curtis in Benhall during the day, stealing drapery goods and assaulting his daughter, Elizabeth Curtis.[132] These goods comprised women's clothing, stays and shoes to the value of £1 3s and appear to have been functional 'workaday' necessities stolen by Barker to meet her basic clothing needs:

> 'one worsted petticoat of the value of four shillings [4s], one pair of bone stays [5s]; two linnen shifts 4s]; one blue white checked apron [3s]; one short cotton gown [4s 6d] and one pair of worsted stockings [1s].'[133]

Probably because of the violence involved, Barker's case was referred up to the Lent assizes in 1798, where she was capitally convicted, reprieved but sentenced to seven years' transportation.[134] Sarah Barker was one of the two other women who were transported to Botany Bay on the *Nile* with the horse thief Margaret Catchpole in 1801.[135]

The county sessions heard various other cases of cloth-related thefts from private households. At Beccles in 1784, Mary Calver was indicted for stealing a 'housewife' (sewing box), pieces of printed cotton, lace and old ribbon, as well as women's ruffles, silk gloves, a handkerchief and cotton stockings from Alexander Woods.[136] At Woodbridge in 1787, Mary Buckingham was prosecuted for stealing half a piece of white ribbon from Benjamin

[127] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 90.
[128] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 90.
[129] B105/2/49, Ipswich, 3 June 1791.
[130] B105/2/49, Beccles, 24 April 1797.
[131] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 April 1797.
[132] B105/2/50, 1794-1798, 8.1.1798; *Ipswich Journal*, 31.3.1798.
[133] ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L; Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 43.
[134] ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L.
[135] State Records Authority of New South Wales: Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799, Nrs. 1150.
[136] B105/2/47, Beccles, 12 January 1784.

Brewer.[137] Catherine Smith's theft of seven pieces of muslin and one piece of cotton from Joseph Kitson was on a higher scale because muslin and cotton were newer, more desirable fabrics; yet, he did not turn up to prosecute her at Bury St Edmunds.[138] Sarah Coleman was convicted at Beccles of stealing a piece of black silk lace from Richard Mosely Westhro (possibly Westhorpe in central north Suffolk).[139] Accessories, ribbon and lace would have enabled poor women to mend or modernise old clothes, but the danger of recognition suggests they were intended to be sold on away from the place where they were stolen. Equally, new pieces of muslin and cotton were valuable and may also have been intended for onward sale.

2.7 ASSIZE CASES: TEXTILE THEFTS FROM HOUSEHOLDS AND EMPLOYERS

Differences between crimes involving household theft that were tried at the quarter sessions and assizes are evident in the value, quantity and quality of the goods stolen, as well as the manner in which the offence was carried out. Threats against victims and households involving violent conduct elevated a non-capital larceny to a capital felony. Breaking into and stealing from a house during the day constituted housebreaking; the same actions at night in the hours of darkness constituted burglary. 5 women were tried for these two crimes at the Suffolk Assizes.

Diana Parker of Ixworth in West Suffolk was first indicted for felony in October 1796, for 'stealing, taking and carrying away a black satin cloak and sundry other articles' belonging to Susan Howes, a widow who also lived in Ixworth.[140] The fact that she was not charged with housebreaking or burglary suggests that Parker may have been employed by Howes. She appears to have been at liberty to commit another offence in December 1796. For a second felony of 'entering the dwelling house of Charles Mason labourer of Mellis in the day, no person being therein' Parker was prosecuted at the Lent assizes of 1797.[141] On this occasion she stood accused of stealing a cotton gown, a 'callimanco' (glazed fine worsted) petticoat, and other more everyday items, valued in total at 19s 6d.[142]

Elizabeth Lacey (or Leacy) of Herringfleet in northeast Suffolk appeared at the Lent assizes in 1798, charged with burgling the house of Ann Ellis, a widow also of Herringfleet, at

[137] B105/2/48, Woodbridge, 3 October 1787.
[138] B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 7 April 1789.
[139] B105/2/49, Beccles, 2 May 1791.
[140] ASSI 94/1441, L & S, 1797.
[141] *Ipswich Journal*, 17 December 1796.
[142] ASSI 94/1441, L & S, 1797; *Ipswich Journal*, 17 December 1796.

approximately 2 o'clock at night.[143] Lacey was prosecuted for taking several quantities of cloth, including lengths of camlet, wolsey, hemp, flannel and woollen stuff, as well as notions, including worsted binding, skeins of thread and linen tape, all of which were hardwearing and of practical use for men and women's clothing. Lacey also took cotton stockings, woollen buskins (heavy boots), cotton handkerchiefs, cheese and soap. The goods totalled £1 2s 2d.

At the Lent assizes in 1799, 14 year old Phoebe Syret of Beccles in northeast Suffolk was prosecuted for stealing a large quantity of cloth and clothing goods valued at £4 19s 4d from the properties of Thomas Cavanagh and Eliz. Slight 'with force and arms'.[144] Goods stolen from Cavanagh included cotton, muslin and silk clothing, as well as household linens, lengths of fabric and trimmings; goods taken from Slight included cotton and silk handkerchiefs, cotton gowns, linen shifts and table linen. Syret's mother Kezia, the wife of William, was prosecuted for receiving the stolen goods, though it remains unclear if Kezia controlled her daughter's actions.

Barbara Lambgerre of Southwold (on the east Suffolk coast) was also prosecuted at the Lent Assizes of 1800 for the theft 'with force and arms' of items of clothing valued at £4 15s from the dwelling house of Jane Birkett and more than six guineas in coins.[145] The list of clothing included gowns, petticoats, a cloak and shawls made from high quality materials, such as silk, linen and cotton.[146] The scale of Lambgerre's alleged crime suggests that she may have stolen these goods for onward dispersal. Their quality suggests that she may have intended to sell them on to a chapman or other dealer.

Parker, Lacey, the Syrets and Lambgerre all faced capital charges for thefts of cloth and clothing from private households. The quantity and quality of items taken in each case suggests these women were motivated to steal beyond their own immediate needs, with a view to onward dispersal for profit. In a further and more serious case, Hannah Williams and Richard Brown were charged at the Lent assizes of 1803 in Bury St Edmunds, with stealing textile goods (pieces of cambric, cottons, nankeen, laces and other goods) with a total value upwards of £100.[147] This large and valuable theft was further aggravated by the fact that it involved the burglary of Thomas Jolly's house in Wickhambrook in West Suffolk.[148]

[143] ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L.
[144] ASSI 94/1488, 1801 L; *Ipswich Journal*, 26 January 1799.
[145] ASSI 94/1512, 1800 L.
[146] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 March 1800.
[147] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1803, L.
[148] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 30 March 1803.

Relationships between the accused and the victims in cases of cloth-related thefts from householders are unknown in the above cases: no evidence has been found to suggest that defendants were employed by the victims, although they may have been known to each other in other ways. For example, Elizabeth Lacey and the victim of her crime, Ann Ellis, both lived in the small village of Herringfleet.

In a number of other serious cloth and clothing felonies, 2 women appeared at the assizes accused of stealing from their current employer and household. Garthine Walker described the household in the early modern period as a 'collective' comprising family, property, servants and the 'economy that formed its basic unit of consumption and production'.[149] The security of this collective depended on the maintenance of shared values and trust, which was at its most compromised when an employee stole goods from the household. In a case where she appears to have acted alone, Susannah Carter, aged 21, was convicted at the Lent Assizes in March 1807 of stealing handkerchiefs, muslins, laces and calicoes, as well as 'other articles of considerable value', totalling £29 4s 6d, from her employer, William Parsonson, a hatter of Sudbury in West Suffolk.[150] This high total value and the breach of trust between employee and employer, undoubtedly ensured the severity of this charge against the defendant.

In the most serious and violent theft of clothing and accessories investigated in this study, Sarah Lloyd was charged with Joseph Clarke at the Lent Assizes of 1800 with burgling the house in Hadleigh (in southwest Suffolk) of Lloyd's employer, Sarah Syer, and her companion, Elizabeth Hoborough in the early hours of 4 October 1799.[151] The case is not straightforward because Lloyd opened the door to Clarke after Syer and Hoborough had secured the house and gone to bed. This meant the charge of burglary did not stand. However, Lloyd and Clarke were both accused of stealing items of clothing and haberdashery valued at more than 40s, as well as setting fire to Syer's house. The theft involved gowns, petticoats, caps, several handkerchiefs and a black silk cloak lined with lace (worth 30s), as well as a sewing case. Lloyd was also charged with stealing Sarah Syer's pockets, which contained a watch and between 10 and 11 guineas from underneath her bolster.[152] The circumstances of the case suggest that Lloyd was coerced into this crime by Clarke, although

[149] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order,* pp. 9-10.
[150] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1807, L.
[151] ASSI 94/1512, 1800 L; SA, 3171/1, Copies of letters concerning Sarah Lloyd; SA, E/1/20/6/1, Lloyd's Case Correspondence – copies of letters; Anon, *Trial of Joseph Clarke, the younger, and Sarah* Lloyd; V. A. C. Gattrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 339-353.
[152] *Trial of Clarke and Lloyd.*

the charge against him was dropped. As a live-in servant, Lloyd shared Syer's bedroom and knew where valuables were kept but she had clearly broken the values and trust demanded of a member of Syer's household. Lloyd did not try to sell the goods but ran away from Syer's house and left the goods in her mother's shed in Naughton, a few miles away from Hadleigh, where they were later retrieved.[153]

2.8 THEFTS AGAINST THE WORKHOUSE AND THE POOR LAW

In 8 cases, women were indicted for running away from the workhouse wearing clothing provided for them by the parish or taking other goods or money for their own use or profit. In most cases, the thefts were of low value. The women accused of offending against the workhouse tended to be repeat offenders who may have been sent there because they lacked homes, family support and employment. These female defendants were tried at both the quarter sessions and assize courts.

The case of Ann Baker suggests that breaking out of the workhouse marked the start of a recidivist life that probably resulted from poverty and lack of family support. At Suffolk quarter sessions in Bury St Edmunds in 1783 she was convicted of running away from Cosford House of Industry in Semer (southwest Suffolk) without permission and embezzling the goods of the Directors and Guardians.[154] This implies that she left wearing clothes provided by the workhouse. For a similar offence in January 1785, she found herself back in Lavenham Bridewell, from where she was again taken to the quarter sessions in Bury and tried for being 'an incorrigible rogue'.[155] This suggests that she was now regarded as a vagrant. In October 1785 she was once more committed to Lavenham Bridewell for running away from the workhouse; she was again judged at the Bury quarter sessions to be an incorrigible rogue and sentenced to seven years' transportation.[156] Baker was approximately 17 years of age at this point and probably escaped from the workhouse on each occasion wearing the functional, utilitarian clothing provided by the guardians of the poor.[157]

Mary Moyse was first prosecuted in April 1783 at the quarter sessions in Beccles (northeast Suffolk) for stealing woollen blankets, hemp shirts and a hemp mantle from the

[153] *Trial of Clarke and Lloyd.*
[154] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 21 July 1783.
[155] B105/2/47, 17 January 1785. Baker was not accused of property crime at this time.
[156] B105/2/47, 10 October 1785. Again, Baker was not accused of property time.
[157] Anna Forrest, 'Lavenham: Prisoners and Paupers, The Guildhall of Corpus Christi in the 17th and 18th centuries', *Art, Buildings, Collections Bulletin* (The National Trust: Autumn 2014).

Guardians of Blything.[158] Whether she broke in to steal these goods or took them as she ran away from the workhouse without permission is unclear. However, in 1784 she stole linen aprons, a woollen apron, a linen cap and other sundries from William Eastaugh of Wenhaston and again appeared before the sessions in Beccles.[159] Her final recorded offence in October 1784 was for the theft of 'one old linen cap' from Mary Lidiman of Linstead Parva; for this she once again appeared at Beccles quarter sessions.[160] These items of women's clothing were probably second-hand, well used, workaday items that Moyse may have taken for her own use; the hemp shirts (men's items) were more likely to be intended for onward sale. The woollen blankets would have provided her with warmth though they equally would have had saleable value.

In some cases, the nature of items stolen meant they were rather more difficult to conceal or use. At the Lent assizes in 1799, and in a serious transgression against the workhouse, Frances Bull and Susan Osborne of St Mary's, Bury were accused of stealing 730 copper halfpence (amounting to £2 6s 5d) from the Poor of the Burgh of Bury St Edmunds.[161] As in the case of Mary Moyse, it is unclear if Bull and Osborne were both resident in the workhouse when this money was stolen or if they broke in to commit this offence.

In a further example of collaboration between women in the committal of crime against the workhouse, Hannah Root was convicted at the Lent assizes of 1802 of stealing a coverlet, a sheet, flocks, feathers and bed-ticking from Hawkedon parish workhouse.[162] At the same time Sarah Pain was convicted of receiving these stolen goods from Root.[163] Pain's actions suggest that a small network for the dispersal of stolen goods may have been in place before the felony took place, as Walker found in Cheshire.[164] Mary Buckle (Buckley or Olley) was also accused of crimes against the workhouse and parish Bardwell in north Suffolk between 1801 and 1807.[165]

[158] B105/2/47, Beccles, 28 April 1783.
[159] B105/2/47, Beccles, 18 April 1784.
[160] B105/2/47, Beccles, 4 October 1784.
[161] ASSI 94/1488, 1799, L.
[162] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1802 L.
[163] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1802 L.
[164] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 165.
[165] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1803 L; *Bury & Norfolk Post*, 31 March 1803.

2.9 THEFTS OF CASH AND PICKPOCKETING

Rhiannon Markless's research in Yorkshire established that thefts of money and precious metals (including silver and gold) were frequently referred to the assizes because a higher value was attached to them than other goods.[166] Thefts of money by women in Suffolk were generally higher in value than the goods surveyed in other cases in this study. Several thefts involved high denomination bank notes which were easily hidden and transportable. The point of vulnerability for offenders came when working women attempted to pass bank notes off as their own property in exchange for goods. 9 cases involved thefts of money from other households.

In the first case it appears the defendant knew the movements of the family she stole from and planned her actions accordingly. Mary Syret was found guilty at the Lent assizes in 1798 of stealing more than £50 in notes and a bank draft from Owen Holmes of Beccles (northeast Suffolk); her mother, Kezia Syret (previously prosecuted alongside Phoebe Syret) was accused of inciting and harbouring Mary.[167] The manner of Mary Syret's theft was serious. According to the *Ipswich Journal*, she broke into Holmes' house while the family were at church and went on to Yarmouth where she spent between £11 and £12.[168] After her arrest 'on suspicion' she confessed to the crime and the amount of 4 guineas 7s was found hidden under a brick in her mother's cellar.[169] Her sister Phoebe was already in gaol at this point for stealing a large quantity of textiles. The criminal activities of Kezia and her two daughters suggest that some families may have attempted to live on the proceeds of crime. In a second case, Hannah Bulbrook was accused at the Summer assizes of 1798 of stealing coins to the value of £1 15s 6d from Samuel Pryor of Chevington (northwest Suffolk), though it is uncertain if he was her employer.[170]

On two other occasions, thefts of money were carried out in private households by employees who may have known where cash was hidden for safekeeping. In a high value theft, eighteen year old Elizabeth Killett was convicted at the summer assizes in 1800 of stealing bank notes to the value of £164 from the home of her employer, John Crow of Bradwell (northeast Suffolk).[171] The possession of these notes would almost certainly arouse suspicion if a poorly paid female servant tried to use them to pay for goods. In a somewhat

[166] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 256.
[167] ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L.
[168] *Ipswich Journal*, 12 August 1797.
[169] *Ipswich Journal*, 12 August 1797.
[170] ASSI 94/1464, 1798, L.
[171] ASSI 94/1513, 1800, S.

less serious offence, Mary Lockwood was convicted at Ipswich Borough Sessions in January 1778 of stealing 3½d from her employer, Walter Bacon.[172]

Money also appears to have been the main target in the two cases of pickpocketing, or the act of 'stealing privily from the person', found in this study.[173] The fact that this was a capital offence until 1808 may have deterred some victims from prosecution but, as Deirdre Palk has argued, it was also difficult to prove because the goods needed to be taken without the victim's knowledge.[174] Only the person who removed the goods could be found guilty and proving their identity could be difficult when several people were involved in the crime.[175] Palk also found that judgments for pickpocketing in London tended to favour female defendants and to penalise the behaviour of some plebian men who drank heavily and resorted to prostitutes.[176]

At the Lent assizes of 1800, China Talbot and Mary Webber, single women from St Mary's, Bury St Edmunds, were prosecuted jointly for pickpocketing: 'taking, stealing privily, secretly and without knowledge' from Thomas Tricker.[177] They were found not guilty of the capital charge but were convicted on a lesser charge of stealing leather gloves, a purse, money and notes valued at £100 6d.[178] It is possible that Tricker had been picked up by Talbot and Webber after drinking heavily in Bury St Edmunds and then relieved of his possessions. Palk observed that this was a common scenario in pickpocketing prosecutions in London.[179]

In a similar case, the Calendar for the Lent assizes in 1801 shows that Elizabeth Pettit (alias Brown) aged 25 was accused of 'feloniously and privately stealing from [the] person' a canvas bag containing £13 3s in notes and coins from Joseph Peachey of Burwell.[180] This crime took place in the evening of 8 February in the yard of the Fox and Goose in St Mary's, Newmarket so was probably committed under cover of darkness at this time of year. The Calendar is marked 'No Bill' because Peachey did not attend the court to prosecute Pettit. As Palk found in London, his non-attendance suggests that pursuit of this prosecution might have been personally embarrassing to him.[181] The theft of money in excess of £13 in this

[172] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 17 January 1778.
[173] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 68.
[174] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 69.
[175] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 69.
[176] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 70.
[177] ASSI 94/1512, 1800, L.
[178] ASSI 94/1512, 1800, L.
[179] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, pp. 70-71.
[180] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1803 L.
[181] Palk, *Gender, Crime and Judicial Discretion*, p. 71.

second prosecution for pickpocketing is not insignificant, although it is far below the amount stolen from Tricker.

2.10 THEFTS OF LIVESTOCK, POULTRY, CROPS AND FOOD

Peter King's research into crime in Essex between 1740 and 1804 found that women's indictments for stealing large animals were extremely rare.[182] The evidence in Suffolk between 1796 and 1807 confirms that only 2 women in the sample appeared at the assizes accused of stealing live animals. In the first, Susan Burton was accused of taking a ewe belonging to Thomas Danbury of Risby from a field in Bury St Edmunds in 1802.[183] In the second case, Margaret Catchpole was arrested in London in May 1797, charged with feloniously stealing a coach horse from a meadow that belonged to her former employer, John Cobbold, and riding it from Ipswich to Whitechapel where she attempted to sell it.[184]

Rhiannon Markless has suggested that women who stole a goose or hen in eighteenth century Yorkshire did so to provide a family meal at feast-times.[185] But this does not seem to have been the case in the last decades of the century in Suffolk, where 7 women stole larger numbers of ducks and geese and 2 were prosecuted for receiving stolen property. For these offences, they were usually tried at the quarter sessions and, occasionally, at the assizes. The birds were probably alive when they were stolen and thefts may have involved more than one person.

Esther Lowder appeared at Beccles in 1785 for receiving three geese, knowing them to have been stolen.[186] Elizabeth and William Shepherd were prosecuted by John Finborough at Ipswich county quarter sessions in 1788 for stealing 12 ducks.[187] Elizabeth Aldred, Mary Clarke, and Sarah Clarke were jointly prosecuted for stealing 12 ducks at Beccles in 1794.[188] Elizabeth Bruce and Susan Plumb were prosecuted at Bury St Edmunds in 1800 for the theft of 5 ducks; their accomplice, Susan Secret, was charged with receiving the ducks, knowing them to have been stolen.[189] In the case of Elizabeth Fisher and Nathan Butcher of

[182] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 196.
[183] ASSI 94/1441, 1797, L & S; 966/7/1, Assize Calendars: 1802 L.
[184] ASSI 94/1441 1797, S.
[185] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 262.
[186] B105/2/47, Beccles, 3 October 1785.
[187] B105/2/48, Ipswich, 18 August 1788.
[188] B105/2/50, Beccles, 6 October 1794.
[189] B105/2/50, Bury St Edmunds, 21 July 1800.

Rendlesham, the theft of 10 geese valued at 10s from John Gross was elevated to the assize courts in 1797.[190]

Prosecutions for these poultry thefts took place between July and October. This was the period when turkeys and geese were either 'walked' to market in London from Norfolk via Suffolk, or carried in purpose-made, tiered, horse-drawn carriages.[191] Defoe reported in the early eighteenth century that very large droves of between 300 and 1,000 'walking' birds were allowed to feed in the stubble fields at various points along the journey (including in Suffolk) before being moved on to London at the end of October.[192] It is highly plausible that the ducks and geese stolen in Suffolk in the last two decades of the eighteenth century came from flocks in transit that were being temporarily rested and fed.[193] Because the overall sizes of these flocks were large, the removal of a dozen birds might have been relatively easy, but keeping them hidden and quiet after they were stolen and before they were killed would have been more difficult and may have contributed to detection and prosecution.

Peter King has argued that the decline of agricultural employment for women and in the domestic spinning industry in Suffolk in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seriously reduced their ability to contribute to household incomes.[194] Gleaning, the gathering of remaining ears after a cereal crop was harvested and taken away, became increasingly important for them at this time.[195] But this centuries-old perquisite was increasingly disputed: it was permitted by some landowners and not others. A series of prosecutions and counter-prosecutions were evident in the 1780s, following disagreements over gleaning between farm lessees and tenants over the practice in 1785 in the small village of Timworth.[196] Ultimately the right to glean was removed by the Court of Common Pleas in the

[190] ASSI 94/1441 1797 L&S.
[191] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, (originally published 1724-1726; this version abridged and ed. by Pat Rogers, London: Penguin Classics, 1971), pp. 83-84.
[192] Defoe, *A Tour*, pp. 83-84.
[193] William Savage, Pen and Pension, blog https://penandpension.com/2018/12/12/turkeys-in-boots/ [accessed 27 February 2024].
[194] Peter King, 'Customary Rights and Women's Earnings: The Importance of Gleaning to the Rural Labouring Poor, 1750-1850', *The Economic History Review*, 44, 3 (1991), 461-476 (p. 462).
[195] King, 'Customary Rights', p. 462.
[196] King, Peter, *Crime and Law in England 1750-1840: Remaking Justice from the Margins*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 281-338: These disputes began with the blacksmith Benjamin Manning against the wealthy farmer John Worlledge. Timworth was owned almost entirely by Earl Cornwallis of Culford.

case of *Steel* v *Houghton* in June 1788 and prosecutions for crop theft around this time can be understood in the same febrile atmosphere of dispute.[197]

The quarter sessions books do not make clear exactly how the women who were prosecuted in Suffolk for pilfering wheat or barley 'in the straw' had committed their crimes. However, King's definitions of related crimes help to distinguish what was legal at different stages in the process of harvesting. The act of stealing grain could be tried summarily if the crop remained standing and unharvested, but it became 'an indictable larceny if it had been cut and gathered but not yet carted away'.[198] Gleaning remained a legal act until 1788 if the crop had been fully carted away; after this time it was at the discretion of farmers, though gleaners continued to consider it theirs by right.[199]

Were women in Suffolk prosecuted for taking wheat from a standing crop or did they steal sheaves that had been left standing outside and unthrashed in the field? In prosecutions for taking wheat in Botesdale and Exning, King's explanations suggest the corn had been cut and gathered but was not yet taken away. Elizabeth Garrod, wife of Richard, and Mary Cornish were convicted at the Ipswich county quarter sessions in July 1783 (five years before the 1788 judgment) of stealing 'a certain amount of wheat in the straw' belonging to Thomas Slapp, an Attorney at Law and farmer from Botesdale.[200] Slapp appears to have been unconcerned about reprisals from the local community which King observed in Essex.[201] His actions might be understood as 'reinforcing or legitimizing the rule of the elite' against defendants of a lower class.[202]

In October 1784, four women from Mildenhall appeared at Bury quarter sessions for 'stealing a certain quantity of barley in the straw' from three different property owners in Exning.[203] Alice Short, wife of Thomas and Martha Bennett, wife of John were convicted of stealing from William Haxall.[204] Mary Livitt, wife of John, was also convicted of stealing barley in the straw from Robert Bones.[205] Finally, Elizabeth Bridgeman was convicted of stealing the

[197] King, *Crime and Law*, p. 288; Court of Common Pleas, June 1788, *Steel* v *Houghton*, English Reports, cxxvi, Common Pleas, iv, pp. 32-29.
[198] King, *Crime and Law*, p, 7; Peter King, Gleaners, Farmers and the Failure of Legal Sanctions in England 1750-1850, *Past and Present*, 125 (1989), pp. 116-150.
[199] King, 'Gleaners, Farmers', p. 118-120.
[200] B105/2/47, Ipswich, 2 July 1783.
[201] King, *Crime Justice, and Discretion*, pp.31-32.
[202] King, *Crime Justice, and Discretion*, p. 4.
[203] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 11 October 1784.
[204] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 11 October 1784.
[205] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 11 October 1784.

same from Robert Houghton.[206] The Exning cases suggest that the prosecution of these women for a similar offence at the same court session was intended to make a strong deterrent statement to the community. The right to glean, however, seems to have remained contested in Exning for some years and in 1796 (eight years after the 1788 judgment) an Exning farmer faced a riot when he attempted to postpone gleaning until the harvest had been completed.[207]

The case of grand larceny against Elizabeth Fuller and Mary Fulcher appears to be more clear cut. They were accused at Bury St Edmunds in October 1796 of taking 18 and 27 wheat sheaves respectively from David Walton, a farmer in Market Weston, on 'Thursday night, the 18th ult. at moonlight'.[208] Theft in October suggests the sheaves were stolen from a barn or haystack where they had been stored. The large numbers of sheaves taken by Fuller and Fulcher may have been a desperate response to relentless poor harvests and food shortages in the 1790s, as expenditure on bread and flour took an increasing proportion of household food outlay.[209] G. E. Fussell argued that 'scarcity bordering on famine' in Suffolk in 1794 was compounded by the fact that the harvest was patchy. In addition, less wheat was on the market because supplies were first taken out for the troops.[210] The harvest was late in 1795, a year of serious shortages, and this undoubtedly had consequences for the population until the harvest of 1796 began to filter through to local markets. Thefts in these circumstances might be understood as examples of 'social crime' wherein, for example, wood-theft and poaching were known to be illegal but were sanctioned by local communities.[211] Conditions in Suffolk at this time suggest that Fuller and Fulcher's crimes may have been a community response to shortages and basic need, in a highly erratic market and steeply increasing corn prices.

On a number of occasions in the 1780s women were prosecuted for stealing quantities of other basic foodstuffs. In April 1782, Elizabeth Everett was found not guilty at Sudbury Borough sessions of stealing 7lbs of flour and a ¼ peck of barley meal from James Groom, a baker.[212] Ann Walker was prosecuted for stealing a 2d loaf from Wm. Jones at Bury St

[206] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 11 October 1784.
[207] King, *Crime and Law*, p. 305.
[208] B105/2/50, Bury St Edmunds, 10 October 1796.
[209] John Burnett, *Plenty & Want: A Social History of Food in England from 1815 to the Present Day*, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 22.
[210] G. E. Fussell, 'Some Land and Produce Prices in Late 18th Century Suffolk', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, 16, 2 (1953), 137-143 (p. 140).
[211] Carl J. Griffin, *Protest, Politics and Work in Rural England, 1700-1850* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2014).
[212] EE501/2/28, Sudbury Borough, 10 April 1782.

Edmunds in 1784.[213] Also at Bury St Edmunds, Mary and Sam'l Cornwall were accused by John Wiffen of Haverill of stealing a 1lb loaf and 1lb of cheese in April 1787.[214] In 1788, Susan Blackshall was found guilty of stealing bread, pork and beef at Ipswich Borough sessions.[215] Sarah Porter was accused of stealing a mantle and pork at Bury St Edmunds in July 1789.[216] But in April 1800 baker Gro[o]m failed to appear at Sudbury borough sessions to prosecute Mary Hibble for stealing flour and she was discharged by proclamation.[217] The nature of most of these basic foods is such that they would need to be consumed quickly to avoid spoiling. It seems likely that they were taken out of necessity.

2.11 THEFTS OF FUEL, HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND INDUSTRIAL ITEMS

Few examples of coal theft appear in the quarter sessions records. However, Elizabeth Lloyd was convicted in January 1790 at Ipswich for taking a peck of coals from Mr R. Rout of Stowmarket.[218] In April 1787, Deborah West, wife of Jonas, Sarah Blandon and Elizabeth Fidgett were acquitted after stealing a bushel of coal from John Sarjant of Cockfield.[219] It is likely that Sarjant did not turn up to prosecute them at Bury quarter sessions because the loss of a day's earnings against the value of a bushel of coal meant it was not worth his while.

Women were also indicted for stealing faggots from the hedgerows. Timothy Shakesheff has stated that gathering fallen wood from lanes and roads was regarded as legitimate but trespassing on private property to find wood or pulling it from roadside hedges was not.[220] In April 1787, Elizabeth Butcher, Elizabeth Carver and Ann Carver were jointly prosecuted at Ipswich for stealing nine bush faggots from John Garrod, a farmer of Laxfield.[221] It is likely they ripped the wood from Garrod's hedgerows. Sarah Sadler's theft of hay from Wm. Rose of Badwell Ash may also have been a case of social crime, but she was found guilty at Bury St Edmunds in July 1787.[222] In these cases, there was clearly no local informal agreement which permitted women to gather wood or hay from the areas of farmland where it was taken.

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[213] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 19 July 1784.
[214] B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 23 April 1787.
[215] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 17 March 1788.
[216] B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 20 July 1787
[217] EE501/2/28, Sudbury Borough, 25 April, 1800.
[218] B105/2/49, Ipswich, 15 January 1790.
[219] B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 23 April 1878.
[220] Timothy Shakesheff, *Rural Conflict, Crime and Protest, Herefordshire, 1800-1860* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), p. 121.
[221] B105/2/48, Ipswich, 20 April 1787.
[222] B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 16 July 1787.

Women in Suffolk were accused of stealing a wide variety of other items, some of which were probably chance finds, while others may have been targeted because they were of regular use to the defendant. In 1782, Mary Eighteen was found guilty at Bury St Edmunds of stealing a pail from Wm. Chaplin of Hadleigh, while in 1783 Mary Wesh was charged at Bury St Edmunds with stealing a mop and mopstick from Henry Somersett.[223] Wesh was ordered to be discharged. Martha Killick was aged 40, a widow and the housekeeper of Samuel Mure of Herringswell (northeast Suffolk), when she stole 'household stores and other things' from him and was consequently tried for theft at the Lent assizes in 1807.[224] Her offence seems to have been another example of broken trust between employer and servant.

Not all the items stolen by women can be reconciled to daily domestic duties and it is unclear how women carried away and disposed of large, unwieldy items. Rachel Reeve, for example, was accused in 1786 at Beccles of stealing two wooden doors and two wooden shutters.[225] It is possible that Reeve and other women who were prosecuted for these kinds of theft 'stood in' for male accomplices because they expected to receive lesser sentences. Mary Clarke was prosecuted at Beccles in April 1792 for taking two pieces of iron, while Elizabeth White was prosecuted at Bury St Edmunds the same year for stealing a paper bag and 6lbs of nails.[226] Elizabeth Atkin was accused of stealing a 'waggon til[l]' from Mr Hearn of Stowupland at Ipswich in January 1793.[227] Reeve, Clarke, White and Atkin were all acquitted but Margaret Wells was convicted at Woodbridge in 1786 of receiving two pieces of packing cloth from Francis Kerridge who had stolen them.[228] The sessions books do not provide evidence of how these items were dispersed.

2.12 COINING, UTTERING AND OBTAINING GOODS UNDER FALSE PRETENCES

J. M. Beattie omitted the capital offences of forgery and coining from his discussion of property offences in Surrey and Sussex because they were often without specific victims and were too complex to investigate.[229] Catherine E. Horler-Underwood's research into female criminality in Wales using the records of the Court of Great Sessions, 1730-1830, led her to describe monetary crimes as 'sly, underhand offences which were intended to trick and

[223] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 21 July 1783.
[224] 966/7/1, Assize Calendars: 1807 L.
[225] B105/2/48, Beccles, 10 July 1783.
[226] B105/2/49, Beccles, 16 April 1792; Bury St Edmunds, 8 October 1792.
[227] B105/2/49, Ipswich, 8 October 1792; *Ipswich Journal*, 26 January 1793.
[228] B105/2/48, Woodbridge, 12 July 1786.
[229] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England,* pp. 191-192.

mislead others.[230] The criminal activity involved in this trickery had two distinct stages. First, counterfeit notes or coins were forged, often in the home. Second, an attempt was made to use them as legitimate currency by uttering. Based on examination of Old Bailey records, Robert Shoemaker and Saanika-Jeet Dhillon have argued that working women were more likely than men to be accused of crimes that took place in the home because of their domestic responsibilities.[231] Prosecutions for the counterfeiting of coins showed a significant increase in the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although cases in Suffolk were rare.[232] In this study only one example has been found.

Because of the impossibility of discovering who forged the false coins tendered by Susan Everitt, aged 30, in the shop of Edward Mine, a grocer of Bury St Edmunds, the focus here is limited to Everitt's attempts to use counterfeit coins in exchange for goods.[233] She was accused in 1806 of 'uttering and tendering in payment' a 'piece of base coin resembling a 6d' in Mine's shop. In other words, she tried to place a base coin into general circulation in attempting to use it to pay for goods. Three days later she tendered a similar base coin at the same shop and was found to have several other counterfeit coins in her possession.[234] This suggests that Everitt may have been the forger or participated in the act of forgery. A genuine 6d coin in this period was silver; the forged 6d coins Everitt attempted to utter undoubtedly looked and felt inferior.[235]

In a related case, a Mrs Billiers (or Belliers), who had previously been arrested in Suffolk, was convicted at the Old Bailey of issuing forged bank notes and sentenced to seven years' transportation.[236] This information comes from a letter sent back to England by Susan Wyatt in New South Wales and printed in the *Suffolk Chronicle* of 16 May 1812. Wyatt was transported at the same time as Billiers for stealing three £1 notes from the house of John Garrod of Leiston in 1810.[237] Annotations added by the editor of the *Chronicle* state that '[Mrs

[230] Catherine E. Horler-Underwood, 'Aspects of Female Criminality in Wales, c.1730-1830: Evidence from the Court of Great Sessions' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cardiff, 2014), p. 183.
[231] Robert Shoemaker and Saanika-Jeet Dhillon, 'Gender in the Proceedings', *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/gender#reading [accessed 22 April 2024] & https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/crimes#coining [accessed 12 June 2024].
[232] Shoemaker and Dhillon, 'Monetary Crime', *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/coinage#monetarycrime [accessed 12 June2024].
[233] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 1806, L; *Bury and Norfolk Post*, 12 March 1806.
[234] Assize Calendars: 966/7/1: 1806 L.
[235] https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/coinage#monetarycrime [accessed 12 June 2024].
[236] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812, Letter from Susan Wyatt.
[237] *Ipswich Journal*, 18.8.1810; *Bury and Norfolk Post*, 22.8.1810; *Ipswich Journal*, 23.2.1811; *Suffolk Chronicle* 23.2.1811; 16.5.1812. This appears to be the same farmer in Laxfield who prosecuted Elizabeth Butcher, Elizabeth Carver and Ann Carver for stealing bush faggots in 1787. He may also

Belliers] was once apprehended at Ipswich upon a similar offence, and detained in the Borough Gaol, but discharged for want of sufficient evidence.'[238] This appears to be 'Millisent Belliars, alias Betts, alias Miller' who is recorded in the list of prisoners held in the 'Com[mon gaol] in Ipswich on 16 September 1807.[239]

A different kind of fraud occurred when women obtained money or goods from shops under false pretences, a crime that was sometimes recorded as a misdemeanour. Horler-Underwood found that a number of Welsh women were prosecuted for this crime.[240] To obtain credit and fraudulently obtain goods and money, they falsified a connection to a local and reputable employer, or pretended to be servants.[241] The problem for defendants came when an unwitting victim went to the same shop for their own legitimate purposes and was presented with an outstanding bill. Women accused of obtaining goods under false pretences in Wales were usually single and aged between 18 and 24, the age at which they might have been in service.[242]

Women who committed this kind of fraud were probably aware of the practice by which some employers allowed servants to purchase goods on their accounts, paying the sum back to the employer over time. John Styles' investigation into the accounts of Robert Heaton in Yorkshire found that his two female live-in servants made purchases in this way with his approval.[243] Heaton, like most employers of live-in servants, paid a low annual wage at the end of the hiring in addition to bed and board and occasional tips during their contract.[244]

The borough courts of Ipswich and Sudbury tried several women for obtaining money or goods under false pretences at the end of the eighteenth century. The goods they acquired in this manner consisted mainly of haberdashery and lengths of fabric and probably reflected the growth of haberdashery and drapery shops in towns in this period. Sarah Green was found guilty at Sudbury in April 1782 of obtaining two cotton and one calico shawl handkerchiefs from Mary, the milliner wife of Samuel Elliston.[245] Mary Parker pleaded not

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have prosecuted Elizabeth Harvey in 1784 at the Ipswich Borough Sessions for the misdemeanour of obtaining goods by false pretences: see below.

[238] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.

[239] C/2/9/1/2/5/1, Register of prisoners under confinement in the [Ipswich] Town and Borough Gaol, 1800-1824.

[240] Horler-Underwood, 'Aspects of Female Criminality in Wales', p. 218.

[241] Horler-Underwood, 'Aspects of Female Criminality in Wales', p. 220.

[242] Horler-Underwood, 'Aspects of Female Criminality in Wales', p. 220.

[243] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', pp. 277-286.

[244] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 279.

[245] EE501/2/28, Sudbury Borough, 10 April 1782.

guilty at Ipswich in 1784 to obtaining seven yards of printed cotton from Mary Folkard.[246] The same year Elizabeth Harvey pleaded guilty at Ipswich to obtaining goods (no details given) from James Garrod.[247] Lydia Simper was found guilty at Ipswich in December 1799 of obtaining cloth and leather under false pretences from John Miller.[248] Choyce West was found guilty in March 1791 of misdemeanour but was ordered to be discharged because the prosecutor did not appear.[249] Eleanor Askew was similarly discharged because the prosecutor failed to appear. [250]

The ages of these women are unknown but defendants in Suffolk do not necessarily match the age and status profile identified by Horler-Underwood in Wales. Jane Mitchell, a married woman, was found guilty of the misdemeanour of obtaining money by false pretences at Ipswich Borough Sessions in March 1799; no further details survive.[251] Mary Buckle (Buckley or Olley) was 33 when she was found guilty at the Lent assizes in 1807 of fraudulently obtaining three sums of 5s from the parish of Bardwell.[252] This money was intended for the relief of Robert and Ann Lucas who lived in Stanton and was the third recorded crime for which Buckle was prosecuted. She first appeared at the Lent assizes in 1801 accused of selling and exchanging wearing apparel provided by the parish of Stanton but was acquitted. She was then charged at Bury St Edmunds quarter sessions in March 1803, on suspicion of stealing a 'cheque [sic] apron' valued at 12d from Elizabeth Carver of Stanton.[253]

2.13 EVIDENCE OF AN EMBRYONIC CONSUMER SOCIETY?

While the very poor stole basic foodstuffs out of necessity, John Burnett has argued that 'social imitation' across all classes led to increasing demand for more sophisticated foodstuffs in areas of urban growth.[254] He cited white bread and tea as examples of the development in taste and expectation.[255] Styles maintained, to the contrary, that the low wages of the poor and increasing food prices at the end of the eighteenth century prohibited expenditure on

[246] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 19 September 1781.
[247] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, April 1784; *Derby Mercury*, 8 April 1784.
[248] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 10 April 1782.
[249] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, ? March 1791.
[250] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, date unknown.
[251] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 15 March 1799.
[252] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1: 18 March, 1807, L.
[253] *Bury & Norfolk Post*, 31 March 1803.
[254] Burnett, *Plenty & Want*, p. 4.
[255] Burnett, *Plenty & Want*, p. 4.

tobacco, sugar and tea, even though prices were slowly falling.[256] However, using evidence of criminal trials at the Old Bailey in the second half of the eighteenth century, Amanda Vickery has suggested that new culinary practices, such as the ritual of preparing tea, were spreading among women at all social levels.[257] Evidence in Suffolk quarter sessions records appears to suggest that working women were only just beginning to respond to this innovation. In 1783, Amy Soer was convicted at the county sessions in Ipswich of stealing Bohea (black Chinese) tea from Elizabeth Shulver.[258] But Soer's crime is the only theft of tea or similar foodstuffs that has been identified in this study.

Nevertheless, a small number of thefts of wares associated with tea making and other 'domestic ceremonies' that demanded good presentation suggest that the practices of the wealthy were attractive to the poor.[259] Innovative items of quality tableware possessed by the wealthy appear to have sometimes been the target for opportunistic crimes. In 1781, for example, Elizabeth Woolfe was prosecuted at Ipswich Borough sessions for stealing a silver table spoon that belonged to Samuel Ribbans.[260] Mary Ablett took her traverse (appealed) in 1781 at Ipswich Borough sessions against accusations from four different women of stealing a silver teaspoon and other linen and muslin items.[261] In 1783, Mary Liffen was accused at Beccles of taking a brass kettle and looking glass that belonged to John Crilton.[262] In 1787 at Woodbridge, Ann Scarlet was prosecuted for stealing a brass candlestick from James Turtill of Trimley St Mary.[263] Finally, Jane Bezance pleaded guilty at Beccles in 1788 to stealing a silver teaspoon valued at 10d from Cammant Money Esq.[264] The circumstances of these crimes are unclear and it is not known if these women stole goods from their employers. Tea itself was kept under lock and key because of its high price, but the odd silver teaspoon may have been easy to purloin from larger sets of cutlery to which servants had easy access.

[256] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 5.
[257] Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 273.
[258] B105/2/47, Ipswich, 17 July 1783.
[259] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 273.
[260] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 14 March 1781.
[261] C2/9/1/1/8/11, Ipswich Borough, 14 March 1781; ? 1783.
[262] B105/2/47, Beccles, 28 April 1783.
[263] B105/2/48, Woodbridge, 18 April 1787.
[264] B105/2/48, Beccles, 18 April 1787.

2.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the broad range of property crimes committed by women in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 which led them to be prosecuted at the quarter sessions and assizes. To ascertain the extent of women's property crime and locate it within the overall patterns of male and female offending at these courts, the chapter first analysed a sample of annotated assize Calendars of Prisoners in Suffolk between 1797 and 1804. It was established that women accounted for 13% of convictions of all crimes at the assizes, while men accounted for 87%. Of convictions for property crimes alone, women accounted for 14%, men for 86%. Convictions of men and women of all crimes at the assizes reached their highest in the two year period between 1800 and 1801, when wheat prices reached a high peak. The evidence that 'not found' verdicts reached a peak over this same period (53 for men, 14 for women) suggests that prosecutors and juries may have been reluctant to pursue cases against men and women in difficult circumstances.

A second enquiry into male and female patterns of offending at the four county quarter sessions in the peak period between 1800 and 1801, showed that women were convicted of 24% of all crimes at these courts, men for 76%. Of property crime convictions at these sessions, women accounted for 29%, men for 71%. Thus, at the quarter sessions in this period, women were more likely to be convicted of property crimes than at the assizes. However, the numbers of acquittals and discharges in property cases at the sessions (48 for men; 19 for women) almost equalled property convictions (52 against men: 21 against women) in this period. These figures suggest that judicial discretion was applied to men and women by magistrates and prosecutors who took their underlying difficulties into account at this time.

The surviving records of the quarter sessions and assize courts show that thefts of cloth, clothing and household linens, foodstuffs and money were common to many prosecutions. The predominance of cloth and clothing accords with patterns of property crime that emerged in studies of other regions in other periods, including the work of Walker, MacKay and Amy Williams.[265] Other less frequent thefts involved industrial or building materials, livestock and poultry, and household items and a further few cases were concerned with goods or money obtained by false pretences. Most thefts were of low value and were tried at the quarter sessions, while the assizes prosecuted several women for stealing high sums

[265] Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*; MacKay, 'Why They Stole'; Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women'.

of money or large quantities of goods in crimes that may have involved violence. Several individual histories of property crime have emerged, although the lack of detail surviving in the quarter sessions books precluded detailed statistical analysis.

Gregory Durston's survey of female property crime in provincial England concluded with the broad statement that 'property crime is usually motivated by need or greed'.[266] The crimes discussed in this chapter propose that the situation in Suffolk is rather more complex than this quotation implies. The worsening social and economic situation experienced by the working population at the end of the eighteenth century, on top of extreme winter weather, stretched and tested the meagre family incomes earned by male breadwinners as female work and income faltered or dried up altogether.[267] Severe want may have provoked women to steal in many instances but theft may have been one of several strategies by which they and their families survived.

Many women may have lived by an 'economy of makeshifts', which meant they brought together a range of possible sources of income, including parish relief, charitable donations, wages and the proceeds of crime.[268] Evidence of income from other sources is limited; however, the collection of money raised in Woodbridge to support the poor during a sharp increase in wheat prices in 1795 and the use of this money to reduce prices paid by the poor, is one such strategy provided within the parish.[269] Single or widowed women who were not entitled to parish relief and depended on their own resourcefulness may have struggled to find work. For some women, thefts of basic food and clothing may have been the only means by which they could support themselves, unless they turned to prostitution.

The chapter has suggested that hardship was probably seen most clearly in small thefts of food. Because perishable foodstuffs such as bread and meat could not be kept for more than a few days, thefts indicate that defendants probably stole to meet their own immediate need for sustenance. The 2d loaf stolen by Ann Walker, and the 1lb loaf and 1lb of cheese stolen by Mary and Sam'l Cornwall suggest a focused but opportunistic attempt to meet this

[266] Gregory J. Durston, *Wicked Ladies: Provincial Women, Crime and the Eighteenth-Century English Justice System* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2013), p. 217.
[267] K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 138-227; Lilian J. Redstone, *Ipswich through the Ages* (Ipswich: East Anglian Magazine Ltd, 1948), pp. 118-119; Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1813* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers) Limited, 1969), pp. 304-313; King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 145-153.
[268] Lucy E. Huggins, 'Crime and Economies of Makeshift: Experiences of Poverty in the Old Bailey, 1750-1799' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 2018), pp. 24-25.
[269] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 July 1795; survival strategies are discussed further in Chapter 4.

most basic kind of need.[270] Larger quantities of milled flour and unthrashed wheat or barley 'in the straw' differed, however, and may have been carried out to provide families against high food prices in the winter months when there was little employment.[271] These thefts might also be understood as examples of regular social crime and of resistance against changing agricultural practices.

Basic need was not only expressed in 'hand to mouth' thefts of food, however. Amy Williams concluded that thefts of cloth-related goods in southwest England became an increasingly important currency for poor women because they would generate a profit that was more valuable than the benefit of stolen food.[272] Thus, the proceeds of crime in many of the cases of stolen cloth, clothing and household linen discussed in this chapter may have enabled incomes derived from parish relief, charity and meagre wages to be stretched further.

The frequency of textile-related thefts by women in Suffolk appears to confirm that most women took responsibility for the provision of clothing and cloth-related needs within households. The chapter has suggested that textile goods stolen were not only intended to replace worn out articles in circumstances of extreme dearth, but also for onward sale to the second-hand market. Lemire and Markless have both acknowledged a growing market in second-hand clothing in urban situations.[273] Thus, the high quality gowns, petticoats, cloak and shawls (made from silk, linen and cotton) stolen by Barbara Lambgerre from Jane Birkett's house in the small coastal town of Southwold suggest that Lambgerre may have been connected to a network for quick dispersal away from the local area, possibly by sea.[274] Goods may have been sold on to a chapman. As Lemire found in pre-industrial London, second-hand clothing thefts in Suffolk would have contributed to the 'second tier of demand' from the poor who could not afford new garments.[275]

Thefts of new textiles from draperies also provide evidence that some women deliberately targeted cloth and haberdashery to supply their own small enterprises whereby they either made up and sold new clothes or sold the cloth on for the buyer to make up. This professional intent was suggested particularly in the prosecution of Suzanne Durrant who

[270] B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 19 July 1784; B105/2/48, Bury St Edmunds, 23 April 1787.
[271] EE501/2/28, Sudbury Borough, 10 April 1782; B105/2/47, Bury St Edmunds, 11 October 1784; B105/2/50, Bury St Edmunds, 10 October 1796.
[272] Amy Williams, 'Criminality of Women', pp. 75-77, 97.
[273] Lemire, 'Consumerism', pp. 2-3; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 244.
[274] ASSI 94/1512, 1800 L; *Ipswich Journal*, 29 March 1800.
[275] Lemire, 'Consumerism', pp. 2-4.

was suspected of stealing goods from various textile retailers in Ipswich and selling them in villages away from the town.[276] Durrant's thefts appear to have been a regular occurrence.

Thefts by servants from their employers do not fall into this category, however. The defendant's employment status is rarely given in the quarter sessions and assizes books and rolls unless they were in service and had stolen from their employer. Service, though poorly paid, provided regular employment for single, young women between the ages of 16 and 24.[277] But the nature of their work gave domestic servants knowledge of the whereabouts of valuables and money. This juxtaposition of deprivation and privilege, as Frank McLynn argued, may have prompted servants to steal from their employers.[278] However, the extent and high value of goods and money that were taken in some cases is surprising. The large sum of £164 stolen by Elizabeth Killett from John Crow suggests that she knew and had access to the places where he kept money.[279] Sarah Lloyd confessed to having prior knowledge of Sarah Syer's house when she stole clothes, a sewing case and 40s from Syer's pockets under the bolster.[280] In both cases, the breaking of trust between servant and employer and the value of their thefts lifted their cases to the assize courts. Their motivations appear to have differed, however. Elizabeth Killett's crime may have resulted from envy at Crow's wealth in comparison with her own low wage and the money she stole may have offered the ability to escape a lowly job. Sarah Lloyd, according to her statement, was encouraged to steal by a known male accomplice and, possibly, a sexual partner to whom she opened the front door.

Evidence also suggests that consumer goods were gradually coming into the domain of the working poor as Styles and Vickery separately affirmed.[281] Thefts of Bohea tea by Ann Soer and a silver teaspoon by Jane Bezance suggest the increasing participation of the poorer classes in the new social practices of the wealthy.[282] In a few other non-textile cases, the items taken indicate that women may have stolen items such as doors and shutters for the benefit of someone else within their social circle.[283] Alternatively, women may have admitted to crimes because a male defendant was likely to face a harsher sentence.[284]

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[276] B105/2/50; *Ipswich Journal*, 6 August 1796.
[277] Horler-Underwood, 'Aspects of Female Criminality in Wales', p. 220.
[278] Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 124.
[279] ASSI 94/1513, 1800, S.
[280] Anon, *Trial of Joseph Clarke, the younger, and Sarah* Lloyd.
[281] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 5; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 273.
[282] B105/2/47, Ipswich, 17 July 1783; B105/2/48, Beccles, 18 April 1787; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 273.
[283] B105/2/48, Beccles, 10 July 1783.
[284] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 278-279.

This leads to the conundrum of Margaret Catchpole's participation in the theft of John Cobbold's valuable coach horse in Ipswich in 1797.[285] Thefts of horses by women were rare and King found only one woman accused of this crime in Essex between 1740 and 1804.[286] In her statement, Catchpole confessed to being present when John Cook stole the horse and claimed that he threatened to murder her if she did not ride it away. Despite the contradiction between its large size (16 hands 2") and her height (just over 5'), she was arrested when she rode the horse to a livery stables in London where she tried to sell it.[287] Whether she or an accomplice rode the horse the seventy miles from Ipswich, the audacity of this theft for which Catchpole was prosecuted appears to defy the conclusions about women's thefts in other gendered studies. The case of Catchpole's theft may be an example of what Kilday has called an individual decision to steal based on individual circumstances.[288]

[285] ASSI 94/1441 1797 L & S.
[286] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 196.
[287] HO77: Home Office: Newgate Prison Calendar, 1782-1853; National Library of Australia, MS 4211/4-7
[288] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', pp. 520-521.

CHAPTER 3: THEFT IN EAST ANGLIA'S WEAVING AND SPINNING INDUSTRIES

The last chapter demonstrated that women in late eighteenth century Suffolk stole, or obtained under false pretences, a wide variety of goods which led them to be prosecuted at the quarter sessions and assize courts. This chapter turns specifically to thefts and embezzlements of wool and yarn between 1770 and 1800 in East Anglia's two discrete cloth-making industries. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the distinct areas of Norwich (in Norfolk) and several small towns in southwest Suffolk and northwest Essex (SWS-NWE) formed two of the four principal cloth-producing regions of England, though both were in decline by the end of the eighteenth century.[1] The chapter first investigates thefts and embezzlements across Suffolk by spinners who supplied yarn to the weavers in Norwich and then examines a limited number of thefts of yarn or cloth by weavers in Sudbury (SWS-NWE).

The worsted weaving industry in Norwich operated in a 'vertically-disintegrated' system which separated the production of yarn from the weaving of cloth. To meet the high demand of the Norwich weavers, spinners in villages and towns in Suffolk, Norfolk and neighbouring counties were employed by wool-combers and yarn-makers in those counties to supply spun yarn.[2] Long staple wool suitable for worsted yarn was brought into Suffolk from Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire by the yarn-makers, while short staple wool from Suffolk was sent to Yorkshire for the production of woollen yarn and cloth.[3] Worsted spinning was carried out as piece work under the putting-out system. Suffolk spinners received oiled and combed wool from wool-combers and yarn-makers in various towns, including the main wool distribution centre of Bury St Edmunds.[4] This system of production meant that spinners' work was controlled by the yarn-makers. However, shortcomings in the quality and quantity of yarn were passed on when the yarn-makers sold sub-standard yarn to the Norwich weavers, who required fine yarn for the development of high quality fabrics.

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[1] John Styles, 'Spinners and the Law: Regulating Yarn Standards in the English Worsted Industries, 1550–1800', *Textile History*, 44, 2 (2013), 145–170 (p. 154). The two other main cloth-producing regions were Devon (and part of Somerset) and the West Riding of Yorkshire (with part of Lancashire).

[2] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 154.

[3] Jane Fiske, ed., 'Introduction', *The Oakes Diaries: Business, Politics and the Family in Bury St Edmunds, 1778-1827*, *Vol. I, James Oakes' Diaries, 1778-1800* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 1990), 1-200 (p. 18).

[4] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 154.

This chapter establishes that large numbers of women and men across Suffolk were convicted of fraudulent reeling between 1784 (when the *Worsted Act for Suffolk* was passed) and 1792, just before the French declared war on England.[5] Over this period, and in a process driven by the 1784 Act, the chapter investigates the embezzlement of wool by hand spinners in numerous Suffolk homes and villages, the consequent reeling of false worsted yarn and its onward sale to the weavers. Its primary focus is to examine the scale and distribution of convictions across Suffolk by inspectors appointed by the Manufacturers Committee in Bury St Edmunds. It also investigates a small number of similar convictions in northeast Suffolk by inspectors appointed by the Norfolk Committee of Yarn-makers, as Norfolk spinning expanded southwards across the border between the two neighbouring counties.[6]

The chapter additionally examines a small number of thefts committed by men and women in the Suffolk part of the dwindling SWS-NWE domestic weaving region who were tried at the quarter sessions in Sudbury. The weavers in SWS-NWE operated differently from the Norwich cloth manufacturers because production was organised in a 'vertically-integrated' system.[7] In practice, worsted manufacturers in the weaving towns of Colchester, Bocking, Braintree, Coggeshall and Halstead (all NWE), together with the weaving town of Sudbury (SWS), employed and regulated workers at all stages of production, from preparation of raw wool to completion of cloth.[8] The prosecutions considered may indicate the impact of decline on weaving families in Sudbury.

3.1 DECLINE OF THE NORWICH WEAVING INDUSTRY AND ITS IMPACT ON SPINNING

The vertically-disintegrated organisation of the Norfolk weaving industry meant that the livelihoods of Suffolk spinners relied on demand from the Norwich weavers for worsted yarn. But the yarn does not appear to have been spun to order. Rather, it was taken to Norwich by the yarn-makers for sale to the weavers. When demand from the weavers fell because the market was shrinking in Norfolk, Suffolk yarn-makers were left with unsold stock that was surplus to requirements. Spinners' work and wages were thus adversely impacted.

Keith Sugden surmised that the decline of weaving in Norwich may have started as early as the first half of the eighteenth century and became more significant after 1774 when all-cotton cloth production was legalised in England and the ban on calico printing was

[5] 24 Geo. iii, St. 2, c. 3 (1784), *The Worsted Act (Woollen Manufactures Acts) for Suffolk*.
[6] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 286.
[7] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p.155.
[8] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 155.

removed.[9] From this point, worsted manufacture in Norwich faced growing competition from cotton produced and printed in the northwest of England.[10] The convictions of fraudulent reeling between 1784 and 1792 discussed in this chapter broadly coincide with the decline of worsted weaving in Norwich identified by Sugden.[11]

The contemporaneous stagnation of worsted production in Norwich and expansion of weaving in the northwest are supported by evidence of population and occupational change in the two regions.[12] Sugden's comparison of overall population figures and male occupations in the weaving industries of Norwich, and Manchester and Leeds, indicated that population and production slowed down in Norwich between 1750 and 1801 but increased in the northwest.[13] Worsted production in Norwich was further hindered by the collapse of the export market after France's declaration of war against Britain and the Netherlands in February 1793.[14]

Despite the contraction of worsted weaving, it remained important to the local economy of Norwich after 1780, particularly in the production of high quality cloths which mixed fine worsted with other yarns, including linen, cotton and silk.[15] Specialisation by P. J. Knights of Norwich in high quality shawls, for example, attracted royal attention at a London exhibition in June 1793 and his later advertisements asserted that he was a 'Shawl Manufacturer to the Queen and Royal Family'.[16] But Knight's success at the high end of the market contrasted with the slowing down of local worsted manufacture and its impact on employees in the Norfolk and Suffolk domestic spinning industries.

Local efforts were made in Norfolk and Suffolk to prevent distress to the families involved. An article in the *Norfolk Chronicle* of November 1793 suggested the wealthy should dress in clothes made by local weavers in that winter and subscribe to a fund for clothes for the poor.[17] In the next edition, the *Chronicle* reported that ladies in Bury had 'determined to wear the Norwich manufacturers and to promote the use of it in their families, as the means of increasing both the quantity and price of spinning' to relieve the 'industrious poor in the

[9] Keith Sugden, 'Clapham revisited: the decline of the Norwich worsted industry (c. 1700-1820)', *Continuity and Change* 33 (2018), 203-222 (p. 218).
[10] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', pp. 217-218. The gradual increase in thefts of cotton goods as cotton became more generally available was discussed in Chapter 2.
[11] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 216); Fiske, 'Introduction', p. 52.
[12] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 215-216.
[13] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 215-216.
[14] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 218.
[15] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 215.
[16] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 8 June 1793; 24 August 1793.
[17] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 16 November 1793.

neighbourhood'.[18] These sentiments acknowledge the financial impact of decline on the weavers and spinners employed in the two counties. The gradual decline of weaving in Norfolk provides the context in which spinning crimes were committed in Suffolk up until 1792.

3.2 THE EMBEZZLEMENT OF YARN IN THE WORSTED SPINNING INDUSTRY: 1770-1800

Convictions of Suffolk spinners at the petty sessions for the fraudulent reeling of worsted yarn in the last three decades of the eighteenth century show not only the widespread nature of embezzlement but also indicate the distribution of domestic spinning in the county.[19] The names and home villages or towns of fraudulent spinners are recorded in Appendix 3. The system of production in this industry was vulnerable to abuse because unsupervised spinners could easily withhold small amounts of wool or spun yarn for their own purposes.[20] When they pilfered handfuls of wool, they defrauded the system in one of two ways. 'False reeling' caused the finished yarn to be 'deficient in the number of threads, [despite being] reeled on a reel of the standard size' and less fine than it should have been.[21] 'Short reeling' meant that a lesser amount of yarn was produced because it was spun on a reel of below standard circumference.[22] The net result of these two procedures was the same: the worsted yarn returned to the yarn-makers was of a lesser quality and quantity than expected by the weavers in Norwich, whose reputation for variety depended on the quality of their fabric manufacture.[23] Furthermore, the 'vertically-disintegrated' and cumbersome system of yarn and cloth production meant the weavers had no direct regulatory oversight of the quality of spinners' work.[24] The scale of the operation meant that the yarn-makers and wool-combers who employed the spinners were also unable to supervise their work satisfactorily, while the packmen and putters-out who were involved in the distribution of wool and collection of yarn do not appear to have taken on this responsibility.

The process by which domestic spinners received wool for spinning and were later recompensed for the yarn returned may have facilitated embezzlement at various stages. Oiled and combed wool was distributed by packmen (employees of the yarn-makers) to

[18] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 23 November 1793.
[19] See Maps 3.1 to 3.8 below.
[20] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 150.
[21] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 150.
[22] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 150.
[23] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 158; Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 36.
[24] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 155.

putters-out (local publicans or shopkeepers).[25] The finished yarn was returned to the putters-out for collection by the packmen, who delivered it back to the yarn-makers. Payments to spinners were usually made by the packmen and were probably left with the putters-out for distribution.[26] However, spinners' wages were unstable and were also liable to reduction at different points. Wages were impacted by the strength of the market and liable to reduction by the Manufacturers Committee when trade was poor. In these times, putters-out were also liable to cut spinners' wages arbitrarily.[27] The pilfering of handfuls of wool may have been an attempt by spinners to redress the problem of their lowering wages, particularly as the worsted industry continued to shrink.

Putters-out who accepted back false yarn could themselves be prosecuted for refusing to identify the spinner responsible or to satisfactorily explain how they came to have false yarn in their possession. This deficient yarn should also have been apparent to the yarn-makers and wool-combers who received short measures back via the putters-out and packmen.[28] However, they appear to have been prepared to overlook the problem and, in turn, sold this yarn on to the Norwich weavers where it was found to be substandard. This identifies a problematic point in the vertically-distributed method of yarn production in this region, where poorly paid fraudulent spinners convicted of a seemingly minor offence faced a fine or imprisonment, while wool-combers and yarn-makers who employed them continued to sell it on without sanction.

Richard J. Soderlund asserted that embezzlement of wool in Yorkshire was a form of 'everyday resistance' by the spinners and the means by which wool could be used to supplement their meagre wages.[29] This is challenged by newspaper evidence in Suffolk in the 1770, which suggests that fraudulent spinning that resulted from pilfering may have been the spinners' response to increased deductions from their pay, rather than a passive gesture against their employers. A notice (dated 21 April 1773) from 'A. B.' in the *Ipswich Journal* claimed the long-standing practice among yarn-makers of deducting 1d or 2d from every shilling of the spinner's earnings had increased to 3d.[30] This would have reduced spinners'

[25] J. K. Edwards, 'The Economic Development of Norwich 1750-1850 with special reference to the Worsted Cloth Industry' (1963), cited in Fiske, *The Oakes* Diaries, p. 33-35.
[26] Edwards, 'The Economic Development of Norwich 1750-1850', cited in Fiske, *The Oakes* Diaries, p. 33.
[27] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 41.
[28] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 149.
[29] Richard J. Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins: The Yorkshire Worsted Spinners, Policing, and the Transformation of Work in the Early Industrial Revolution', 51, *IRSH* (2006), 217–242 (p. 226).
[30] *Ipswich Journal*, 5 May 1773.

gross earnings by a quarter. 'A. B.' further claimed the spinner would lose his [sic] job if he did not agree to the deduction.[31] In practice, the pilfering of small amounts of wool by the spinner from the tod delivered to the putter-out for distribution may be interpreted as the means by which the impact of wage deductions might be lessened.[32]

Even without deductions, wages for spinning were low. Craig Muldrew has argued the cost of labour in all parts of the country varied according to the fineness of yarn produced, the spinner's ability and experience, and the number of hours worked.[33] Nonetheless, female wages for spinning were low in comparison with the male labourer's wage, which had serious implications for single or widowed spinners who lived by their own endeavours. Arthur Young estimated the weekly rate for spinning worsted yarn in Sudbury in 1770 to be 2s 9d.[34] For a family headed by a labourer who annually earned £19 4s (1s 4d per day for 48 weeks of the year) and whose wife and children all undertook spinning, Styles estimated the contribution of spinning to family income in 1776 to be in the order of 42% of male income.[35] This would have been optimistic in East Anglia in the last thirty years of the eighteenth century, however. Fiske found that good spinners could be paid 5d per day, whereas less competent spinners and children could receive as little as one or two pence.[36]

Domestic spinning provided an auxiliary income for working families and an occupation for inhabitants of the incorporated workhouses in central and eastern areas of Suffolk and the smaller poor houses in the west.[37] Among a predominantly female, rural workforce for whom little other work was available at the end of the eighteenth century, pilfering may have been acceptable practice within spinning networks. However, even if the amounts retained individually were small, spinners' collective actions had a direct impact on the quality of textiles produced by the weavers because they, in turn, were sold substandard yarn. At the same time, the vertically-disintegrated system of organisation meant that neither spinners

[31] *Ipswich Journal*, 5 May 1773.
[32] Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins', p. 227.
[33] Craig Muldrew, ''Th'ancient Distaff' and 'Whirling Spindle': Measuring the Contribution of Spinning to Household Earnings and the National Economy in England, 1550-1770', *Economic History Review*, 65, 2 (2012), 498-526 (p. 507).
[34] Arthur Young, *The farmer's tour through the east of England,* 4 vols. (1771), cited in Muldrew, 'Th'ancient Distaff', in M. Berg and E. Eger, eds., *Luxury in the eighteenth century : debates, desires and delectable goods*, (Basingstoke: 2003), pp. 510.
[35] John Styles, 'Custom or consumption? Plebian fashion in eighteenth-century England', cited in Muldrew, 'Th'ancient Distaff', in Berg and Eger, eds. *Luxury,* pp. 510.
[36] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 40.
[37] Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1813*, (Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers) Limited, 1969), pp. 232-250.

nor wool-combers and yarn-makers in Bury St Edmunds and other Suffolk places faced the consequences of sub-standard work.

3.3 THE SCALE OF THE WORSTED SPINNING INDUSTRY IN SUFFOLK

The demand for worsted yarn from Norwich in the 1780s was such that domestic spinners in Suffolk were recruited in the main distribution and collection centre of Bury St Edmunds as well as from its wider catchment area in villages and towns some distance away, including in hundred houses of industry.[38] Fiske's examination of James Oakes's business activities found that he and three other large yarn-makers from Bury had additional depots in Woodbridge from the mid-1760s, while Oakes also serviced the work of spinners in the union workhouses of Woodbridge, Onehouse and Barham.[39] Domestic worsted spinning thus provided an income for large numbers of women (and some men) in many parts of Suffolk until the 1790s.

James Oakes's diaries and other writings have enabled the scale and importance of domestic spinning to be charted within the wide catchment area of the Bury St Edmunds industry.[40] In 1784, Oakes estimated that 1,200 wool-combers were employed by 120 yarn-makers of 'all degrees'; furthermore, each wool-comber employed 30 spinners, giving the approximate figure of 36,000 spinners across the county, in addition to 300 other workers involved in the sorting and production of the finished yarn.[41] The domestic spinning industry was, therefore, a significant employer of women across Suffolk at a time of population growth. The census of 1801 showed the population had risen to over 210,000 as baptisms exceeded burials. This figure suggests that domestic spinning in the county in the last two decades of the eighteenth century may have employed around a fifth of the Suffolk population, most of whom were women.[42] Nevertheless, the size and dispersal of the industry meant that supervision of spinners' work across the county was difficult.

In recent work, Benjamin Schneider similarly found that hand spinning across the country in 1770 (including cotton and linen spinning) probably employed one in six women

[38] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 33.
[39] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 34.
[40] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 33.
[41] Young, *General View*, pp. 232-233.
[42] Table 1.1; PP 1841, II, *Accounts of Population and Number of Houses according to Census, 1841, of each County in Great Britain, Channel Islands and Isle of Man; Comparative Statement of Population and Houses, 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831 and 1841; Account of Population of each City and Burgh in Scotland*.

and children per household prior to its decline, equating to more than 8% of the population.[43] He also argued that new practices and machinery developed for yarn production ultimately led to the 'technological unemployment' of hand spinners from the 1770s.[44] However, other kinds of replacement employment were still lacking in the 1830s, with the exception of occasional agricultural work.[45] Schneider's findings suggest that poverty caused by the decline of domestic hand spinning from 1770 was endemic where no other employment existed. This study suggests from the evidence of fraudulent spinning in Suffolk that serious decline into poverty may have been staved off until the early 1790s, when convictions appear to have slowed down.[46]

3.4 THE RESPONSE OF THE NORWICH WEAVERS TO FRAUDULENT REELING

The response of seventeenth century Norwich weavers to the long standing problem of fraudulent spinning was to take issue with wool-combers and yarn-makers over the quantity and quality of worsted yarn supplied to them.[47] Complaints in 1768 about the yarn produced in East Anglia led manufacturers' associations to set up inspectorates by subscription, four years after similar action in Yorkshire.[48] This measure appears to have had limited success. In October 1779 the woollen manufacturers in Norwich gave notice in the *Ipswich Journal* to 'yarn-makers or factors' that their yarn from 1 January 1780 must be of 'warranted full weight, length and tale'.[49] After this date, deficient yarn would be 'cut and returned to the person that sold it'. Another announcement in the *Ipswich Journal* in November 1779 stated that John Merrills had been appointed 'inspector of the length and tale of yarns' for 'several […] spinning houses in Cambridgeshire and that part of Suffolk adjoining' on behalf of Ray Oakes & Co and three other companies.[50] Furthermore, the yarn-makers newly elected to the Bury St Edmunds Committee of Manufacturers petitioned parliament in 1783 for an act to allow the appointment of inspectors in Suffolk to oversee and regulate the spinners' work, following the model set up by the *Worsted Woollen Manufactures Act for Yorkshire,*

[43] Benjamin Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment in the British Industrial Revolution: The Destruction of Hand Spinning', *Past & Present*, 270, 1 (2026), 106-149 (p. 108).
[44] Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment', p. 109.
[45] Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment', p. 109.
[46] See Maps 3.1-3.8 and 3.9 below.
[47] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', pp. 156-158. These counties included Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.
[48] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 160.
[49] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 October 1779. 'Tale' means amount.
[50] *Ipswich Journal*, 27 November 1779.

Lancashire and Cheshire of 1777.[51] The yarn-makers' intolerance of spinning fraud was further underlined in a notice published in the *Ipswich Journal* in June 1783: returned yarn would not be accepted if it was found to be deficient in the length of the reel or the number of threads.[52] The *Worsted (Woollen Manufactures*) *Act for Suffolk* was passed in July 1784, though the *Worsted Act (Woollen Manufactures Acts*) *for Norfolk* was not passed until 1791.[53]

To meet the costs of prosecuting spinners for spinning fraud in Suffolk, a drawback of 4d per shilling was mandated on the duty on soap used in the industry.[54] Thereafter, the Committee of Yarn Manufacturers announced the appointment in October 1784 of Thomas Rand, Wm. Prentice, Benjamin Downs and Wm. Towler as Inspectors of Worsted Yarn in Suffolk, licensed by Justices of the Peace in Bury St Edmunds.[55] These four men were mandated to 'use all possible diligence in the detection of false and short-reel'd yarn' in their own respective districts.[56]

The methods used by Suffolk inspectors to detect fraudulent reeling have not come to light. In Yorkshire, however, Soderlund found that inspectors stopped at the premises of the agents (wool-combers and yarn-makers) where they disassembled, inspected and re-reeled the yarn returned by the spinners to determine its quality and length.[57] They additionally went from one village and house to the next, to scrutinise the individual spinner's work for false and short reeling.[58] Where yarn was found to be fraudulent, 'embezzlement prosecutions' took place at the petty sessions and a fine of 5s was handed down for a first offence.[59] The precise geographical limits of the Suffolk inspectors' regions are unclear but two districts, Framlingham and Lavenham, are occasionally distinguished in editions of the *Ipswich Journal* between 1784 and 1792, alongside the names of convicted spinners.[60] Named spinners, their village or town, their crime and punishment are collated in Appendix 3. In some editions of the *Ipswich Journal*, crimes are distinguished between false and short reeling; in others false reeling appears to be used as a generic term to cover both offences.

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[51] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, pp. 37 & 230; 17 Geo. III, c.11 (1777), *The Worsted Act for Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire.*
[52] *Ipswich Journal*, 21 June 1783.
[53] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law': p. 160; 24 Geo. iii, St. 2, c. 3 (1784), *The Worsted Act (Woollen Manufactures Acts)* for Suffolk: 31 Geo. III, c.56 (1791), *The Worsted Act for Norfolk and Norwich,*.
[54] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 37.
[55] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 October 1784.
[56] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 October 1784.
[57] Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins', p. 234.
[58] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 146.
[59] Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins', p. 235.
[60] Framlingham and Lavenham, where identified in newspaper reports, are shown in Appendix 3.

3.5 CONVICTIONS OF FRAUDULENT REELING IN SUFFOLK, 1770-1783

Petty sessions records of the prosecution and conviction of Suffolk women and men for fraudulent reeling between 1770 and 1799 have not survived. Reports of spinning convictions published by local newspapers provide an alternative source of evidence, before and after the *Worsted Act for Suffolk* of 1784.[61] This investigation explores reports in the *Ipswich Journal*, a weekly newspaper established in 1720, which was usually printed in the four page format of other eighteenth century newspapers.[62] In most editions, the *Journal* retained one or two columns in the central pages for brief items of local interest, including ecclesiastical appointments and society births, marriages and deaths. This home news column frequently named men and women committed for trial at the quarter sessions and assize courts, verdicts from their trials and the sentences handed down. The column also published occasional details of petty sessions cases and, from October 1784, reported petty sessions convictions of fraudulent reeling. It named the convicted spinners, putters-out and others associated with this offence, their home villages or towns and the sentences received. This enquiry also investigates the *Bury Post and Universal Advertiser* and its successors.[63] The weekly *Bury Post* was set up in 1782 in the usual four page format, with brief items of home news in the middle pages and reports of convictions of fraudulent spinning from 1784. The *Ipswich Journal* and the *Bury Post* usually printed convictions within their own areas of circulation: east and west Suffolk, respectively.

The first part of this investigation aims to ascertain the scale, regularity and nature of convictions prior to the *Worsted Act* of 1784 from reports in the local columns of the *Ipswich Journal.*[64] The *Journal* was scanned in three twelve-month periods: 1 January to 31 December in 1770, 1775 and 1780.[65] Evidence in these three separate years suggests that convictions of fraudulent spinning before the 1784 Act were not routinely published by the *Ipswich Journal*. A small number of convictions in 1770, however, indicate the types of spinning crime that were prosecuted at this time.

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[61] 24 Geo. III, St. 2, c. 3 (1784).
[62] Jeremy Black, *The English Press, 1621-1861* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2001), pp. 50-51.
[63] The *Bury Post and Universal Advertiser* was published from July 1782, becoming the *Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser* between March and December 1785, and *Bury and Norwich Post* from January 1786. The *Journal* alone was searched in 1795 as the *Bury and Norwich Post* is not available for this year.
[64] The *Bury Post* did not yet exist.
[65] 24 Geo. III, St. 2, c. 3 (1784); The *Bury Post and Universal Advertiser* was not published until July 1782.

In the first, it was merely reported that two unnamed women were committed to Mildenhall bridewell in February 1770 'for fraudulent practices in reeling of yarn'.[66] In a second case in May 1770, Rose Gordon was committed for a month to the House of Correction (probably in Ipswich) for taking in wool to spin for a manufacturer, before raw wool received from a different manufacturer had been spun and returned to the putter-out.[67] The unlawful acceptance of wool from a second manufacturer implies that competition for spinners was high in 1770 and that spinning was then thriving in Suffolk. Gordon's crime may also suggest that no other work was available for women. In the third case, Mary Fill, the wife of Henry, was committed at Bury for 14 days with hard labour for reeling short yarn and ordered to be publicly whipped once.[68] Fraudulent practices in the reeling of yarn are repeated many times in the convictions of spinners across Suffolk after the 1784 act, although taking in wool to spin for a second manufacturer only appears to have been prosecuted by the Norfolk inspectors in the northeast part of the county. Punishments handed down in most cases were less harsh than imprisonment and whipping.

In a fourth case related to the spinning industry in 1770, Elizabeth Jermyn of Stanton was committed to Bury Gaol for the embezzlement of 21 lbs of wool from Mr Umfreville, a Bury St Edmunds yarn-maker.[69] This scale of theft suggests Jermyn stole raw wool direct from Umfreville's stores. Her crime is of interest because Umfreville was one of several large yarn-makers in Bury who were elected to the Committee of Manufacturers in 1783 and petitioned for the 1784 Act. This committee ultimately oversaw the work of the regional spinning inspectors against fraudulent reeling.[70] No further reports of prosecutions for embezzlement and fraudulent spinning were found in 1775 or 1780 and it is only after the 1784 Act came into effect that large numbers of convictions were reported on a regular basis.

3.6 CONVICTIONS OF FRAUDULENT REELING IN SUFFOLK AFTER THE 1784 ACT

The *Ipswich Journal* and the *Bury Post* (and successors) were comprehensively searched for reports of fraudulent reeling between July 1784 (when the *Worsted Act for Suffolk* was passed) and the end of December 1800.[71] Between the appointment of inspectors by the Bury St Edmunds Manufacturers Committee in October 1784 and

[66] *Ipswich Journal*, 24 February 1770.
[67] *Ipswich Journal*, 5 May 1770.
[68] *Ipswich Journal*, 8 September 1770.
[69] *Ipswich Journal*, 1 September 1770.
[70] *Ipswich Journal*, 5 August 1786; Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 37.
[71] *Ipswich Journal*, 1770-1800; The *Bury and Norwich Post* was not available between 1794 and 1801.

December 1792, these newspapers reported over 1,900 convictions of men and women across the county. This high number confirms Styles' observation that prosecutions against hand spinners surged after the *Worsted Acts* became law.[72] However, prosecutions fell as weaving itself declined and no lists of spinning convictions in Suffolk were printed in the *Ipswich Journal* between January 1793 and December 1800, or the *Bury and Norwich Post* in 1793.[73]

Although precise details of the Suffolk inspectors' methods have not survived, the large number of 87 convictions in the period between October and December 1784 implies that investigations and prosecutions began straight away with a strong sense of purpose.[74] Publication of the first convictions in the *Ipswich Journal* stated that on 'Monday last' (25 October 1784) Mary Frost, Eliz. Keary, Phoebe Clarke, Eliz. Gosling and Ann Garrod of Ipswich were convicted of reeling short and false yarn before Wm. Truelove and Cha. Stisted (bailiffs of the corporation of Ipswich) and fined 5s.[75] No information was given to explain how their crimes were detected or who these women were: whether they lived in the same or different parishes of the town; or if they came from houses of industry. They were convicted by two justices of the peace as required by the new law, but this practice appears to have been re-interpreted quickly to allow trial by one justice acting alone. The same edition recorded that Ruth Pender of Bury St Edmunds was convicted of fraudulent spinning 'on Wednesday last' (27 October 1784) before Alderman Mathew and that Sarah Dutton of Nowton was similarly convicted before Sir Charles Kent.[76] Thereafter, names of the justices involved, whether singly or in pairs, do not appear in press notices.

The details of spinning crimes recorded in newspaper reports are limited to the spinner's given name and surname, their crime, place of settlement and the punishment handed down by magistrates at the petty sessions hearing. All convictions retrieved are recorded in Appendix 3 and further analysed in Table 3.1. This table confirms that women across the county accounted for at least 1,746 spinning and related crimes over this nine year period, over 90% of the total number. 78 convictions can be attributed to men, while a further 76 were recorded by initial and surname and cannot be attributed to men or women. Spinners were usually fined 5s for a first offence or sent to the bridewell for a

[72] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 145-146. The *Worsted Act for Suffolk* (24 Geo. iii, St. 2, c. 3 (1784)) was passed seven years after the *Worsted Act for Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire* (17 Geo. III, c.11 (1777)).
[73] *B&NP* was unavailable between 1794 and 1801.
[74] *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury Post*, October – December 1784.
[75] *Ipswich Journal*, 30 October 1784.
[76] *Ipswich Journal*, 30 October 1784; *Bury Post & Universal Advertiser*, 4 November 1784.

month if they had insufficient funds to pay. Searches for repetitions and variations of surnames of convicted spinners and putters-out suggest the 5s fine deterred most individuals from reoffending. In the most straightforward cases, newspaper reports indicate the fine was paid at the time of the spinner's conviction. Others were later committed to the bridewell for non-payment and because they had no goods to distrain.

Table 3.1: Male and female convictions for fraudulent reeling (Suffolk inspectors), 1784-1792: spinners; putters-out; associated offenders

Year investigated	All male, female & gender-unknown spinning & related offences	All female-only spinning & related offences	All male-only spinning & related offences	Spinners by initial/surname (gender unknown)
10.1784-12.1785	592	561	25	6
1.1786-12.1786	377	356	19	2
1.1787-12.1787	345	306	15	24
1.1788-12.1788	168	133	4	31
1.1789-12.1789	126	121	4	1
1.1790-12.1790	56	53	3	0
1.1791-12.1791	137	129	6	2
1.1792-12.1792	99	87	2	10
TOTAL	1,900	1,746	78	76

Table 3.1 suggests the fall in convictions after the initial surge between October 1784 and December 1785 may reflect the slowing down of spinning as the weaving industry declined. However, actual numbers of convictions in all years may have been higher. The convictions recorded depend on the survival of local newspapers and the assiduity of editors to print information received from the petty sessions. It is unclear if all convictions were forwarded and if editors printed all lists received. In this investigation, some editions had missing pages, while entries in other editions were illegible.

There was a large and unexplained decrease in convictions between 1789 and 1791. Convictions reached 126 in 1789, dropped to 56 in 1790 and rose again in 1791 to 137. It is unclear if the drop in 1790 reflected the impact of the inspectors' work, prosecutions did not

take place or convictions were accidentally or deliberately omitted from the newspapers. Notwithstanding this caveat, the number and distribution of convictions of fraudulent reeling across the county confirm that domestic worsted spinning was an important economic activity across the county between 1784 and 1792, particularly for women.

3.7 THE DISTRIBUTION OF CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING

Maps 3.1 to 3.8 enable the statistical evidence of spinning crime in Table 3.1 to be presented geographically across the county and show that fraudulent reeling was widespread in Suffolk in the mid-1780s. This suggests, in turn, that the embezzlement of wool may have been condoned by many who relied financially on spinning. The scale of convictions in the early years after the 1784 Act, however, is surprising. Convictions of fraudulent reeling recorded in Appendix 3 shows Jane Fiske's finding of over 500 cases in Suffolk between October 1784 and December 1785 to be conservative.[77] A deeper investigation shows around 600 convictions for fraudulent reeling in this 15 month period, including the 87 in the few weeks between the announcement of the appointment of the inspectors in the *Ipswich Journal* of 23 October 1784 and the end of that year. These high figures indicate that the spinning industry was still vibrant at this point, and had not yet slipped into the technological unemployment observed by Schneider.[78]

The villages and towns where one or more spinners were convicted annually between 1784 and 1792 are indicated by shading on Maps 3.1 to 3.8. The distribution of convictions across Suffolk, from Exning in the west to Walberswick in the east, reflects the geographical extent of yarn examinations by the four inspectors employed by the Manufacturers Committee based in Bury St Edmunds. Unshaded places, where no convictions by these inspectors were found, indicate that inspections did not happen in all places every year. Unshaded places may alternatively suggest that no evidence of fraudulent reeling was found or that prosecutions were unsuccessful in some periods. Very few convictions are recorded on Maps 3.1 to 3.8 in the northeast region of Suffolk. This, as Fiske proposed, was probably because Norfolk wool-combers increasingly targeted spinners in this area.[79] Prosecutions in this part of Suffolk by a small number of Norfolk inspectors are discussed in section 3.8 below.

[77] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 38.
[78] Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment', p. 109.
[79] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 43.

Over the fifteen month period between October 1784 and December 1785, the largest towns accounted for the highest number of convictions, though not all convictions were recorded in the same sitting of the petty sessions court. The county town of Ipswich saw 37 convictions over 15 sessions, while the number of convictions per session did not exceed five.[80] Bury St Edmunds, the centre of the Suffolk spinning industry and the Manufacturers Committee, accounted for 12 convictions spread over four sessions.[81] Framlingham accounted for ten convictions over three sessions.[82] A further 12 convictions were recorded in the remote village of Lakenheath over two sessions.[83] The village of Lawshall recorded ten over three sessions and Hintlesham also recorded nine over three sessions.[84] Most other convictions were of single spinners or of groups between two and six spinners.[85]

Maps 3.1 to 3.8 show that several clusters of towns and surrounding villages, which had been involved in the old woollen cloth industry, recorded annual convictions for fraudulent reeling through most of the period between 1784 and 1792.[86] These included areas surrounding Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury, Lavenham, Hadleigh and Needham (Market). In January 1787, the *Ipswich Journal* reported the conviction for 'false or short yarn' of more than thirty women in several rural villages in the Lavenham district, south of Bury St Edmunds.[87] All were fined 5s. Six women were convicted in both Glemsford and Wickhambrook and, exceptionally, 13 were convicted in Hundon.[88] Only one or two women were convicted in the other Lavenham district villages at this time.[89] The high numbers of female convictions in 1787 suggest that embezzlement of wool may have been a regular part of life in impoverished communities where no other work was available for women. Work in

[80] *Ipswich Journal*, 30 October 1784 (5 convictions); 5 February 1785 (5); 12 February 1785 (2); 26 February 1785 (4); 9 April 1785 (2); 23 April 1785 (2); 14 May 1785 (2); 18 June 1785 (3); 25 June 1785 (2);16 July 1785 (1); 3 September 1785 (2); 17 September 1785 (1); 15 October (1); 26 November 1785 (2); 31 December 1785 (3).
[81] *Bury Post & Universal Advertiser*, 4 November 1784 (1); *Ipswich Journal*, 11 December 1784 (5); *Bury Post*, 31 March 1785 91); 1 June 1785 (5).
[82] *Ipswich Journal*, 24 December 1784 (5): 2 April 1785 (3); 1 June 1785 2).
[83] *Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser*, 15 June 1785 (8); 27 July 1785 (4).
[84] Lawshall: *Bury Post*, 6 April 1785 (2); 7 September 1785 (6); 9 November 1785 (2). Hintlesham: *Ipswich Journal*, 13 November 1784 (4); 16 July 1785 (1); 3 September 1785 (4).
[85] Further detail on the number of convictions in each place can be provided on request.
[86] David Dymond, 'The Woollen Cloth Industry', in *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk: Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond and Edward Martin (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), 140-141.
[87] *Ipswich Journal*, 20 January 1787.
[88] *Ipswich Journal*, 20 January 1787.
[89] Polstead, Stanstead, Hargrave, Kettlebaston, Stansfield, Hawkedon, Catling (Cambridgeshire), Thurlow Magna, Barnardiston and Hartest.

these villages previously offered by the weaving industry of (SWS-NWE) may also have disappeared by this period. Fraudulent reeling was probably the means by which families survived in a period when births increased over burials and agricultural work was in increasingly short supply. In Hundon itself, Young recorded 455 births and 335 burials between 1776 and 1795, indicating growing pressure on low income families in this area.[90]

From the limited detail provided in contemporaneous news articles, it is difficult to establish how inspectors worked to identify fraudulent spinners. The shaded areas on Map 3.1 (October 1784 – December 1785) illustrate the places where at least one spinner was convicted of fraudulent reeling. Clusters of villages and towns where no spinners were convicted (the unshaded areas) suggest the inspectors may not have visited these places in the first long year. The south Suffolk villages of Groton, Newton, Great Cornard, Little Cornard, Bures St Mary, Assington, Wissington, Boxford, Polstead and Layham were unshaded in 1785. In 1786, convictions were recorded for all of these villages on Map 3.2, apart from Great Cornard and Bures St Mary. The progress of inspectors between remote villages in this part of Suffolk, may have been laborious, particularly in the harsh winters of the 1780s. However, the lists of convictions in Appendix 3 indicate that inspectors blitzed Suffolk villages in geographical clusters to test the spinners' finished yarn for its 'weight, length and tale'.[91]

Despite their approach towards fraudulent spinning, the inspectors faced occasional opposition. Sarah Lambert of Stonham was committed to Ipswich bridewell in January 1785 'for refusing to pay the penalty and having no goods to distrain'.[92] A small number of putters-out between 1784 and 1792 were convicted for refusing to identify spinners who received returned false yarn. In September 1785 Hannah Butcher of the market town of Clare, a putter-out of wool, was found guilty of 'having false yarn in her possession that she could not swear to'.[93] Butcher's refusal to identify fraudulent spinners in Clare may have prevented prosecutions during this round of inspections, beyond her own conviction and that of Sarah Goodell. In similar circumstances in November 1785, Martha Clarke of Somersham was found guilty because she 'could not swear to the reeler of 1lb of false yarn found in her custody'.[94] Hers appears to have been the only conviction in Somersham in this year. For this offence

[90] Young, *General View*, p. 308.
[91] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 October 1779.
[92] *Ipswich Journal*, 15 January 1785.
[93] *Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser*, 7 September 1785.
[94] *Ipswich Journal*, 26 November 1785.

putters-out were usually fined 5s or 10s. However, Harry Hagreen, a putter-out of Chevington received the high fine of £5 in February 1787 for refusing the inspector entrance.[95]

In January 1787, the *Ipswich Journal* reported that 'Precely Candler of Hartest was fined 10s as a putter-out of yarn 'for refusing to give evidence of 2lb of false yarn'.[96] A fine of 5s was usual for refusing to give evidence of a token 1lb of yarn.[97] Precely was the wife of Samuel Candler, a grocer and draper in Hartest.[98] This shop was probably the place where supplies of prepared worsted wool were delivered for collection by spinners in this group of villages and to which they returned the spun yarn. The fact that more putters-out were not convicted suggests they were generally compliant with inspectors' requests for access to their premises and that responsibility for fraudulent reeling was considered to be the spinners' alone.

A further small number of spinning related convictions were peculiar to men. Male overseers or governors of institutions distributed wool for spinning to paupers and inmates in their institutions and, therefore, took responsibility for their spinning offences. Ambrose Wright, the governor of the workhouse in Assington and Sam. Hamblin, the governor of Ipswich Bridewell, were convicted of unspecified crimes.[99] Other male convictions involved three fathers and a grandfather who answered for their female progeny and paid their fines. [?] Luckock of Hollesley was fined 5s for his daughter Elizabeth in 1785.[100] The same year, Wm. Bartlet of Bramford was 'fined 10s for his daughters, they being old offenders'.[101] Mary and Elizabeth Bartlet (aged 17 and 19) had been separately convicted of reeling false yarn and fined 5s.[102] In 1786, John Denington was fined 5s for his unnamed granddaughter.[103] A few employers also answered for their servants. James Marlinger and Mary Gooch of Great Thornham answered for an unnamed servant's offence of false reeling in 1784.[104] Martha Hagar, Servant to Mr Wright of Akenham was convicted of reeling false yarn and it appears that he paid the fine.[105] Abraham Kersey of Akenham also

[95] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 14 February 1787.
[96] *Ipswich Journal*, 20 January, 1787.
[97] *Ipswich Journal,* 13 May 1786; 17 February 1787; 16 November 1786.
[98] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 18 March 1788.
[99] *Ipswich Journal*, 21 April 1787 & 4 October 1788.
[100] *Ipswich Journal*, 26 March 1785.
[101] *Ipswich Journal*, 18 February 1786. The term 'old offender' here probably means previous or repeat, rather than an aged offender.
[102] *Ipswich Journal*, 16 July 1785 & 20 August 1785.
[103] *Ipswich Journal*, 28 January 1786.
[104] *Ipswich Journal*, 27 November 1784.
[105] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 December 1784.

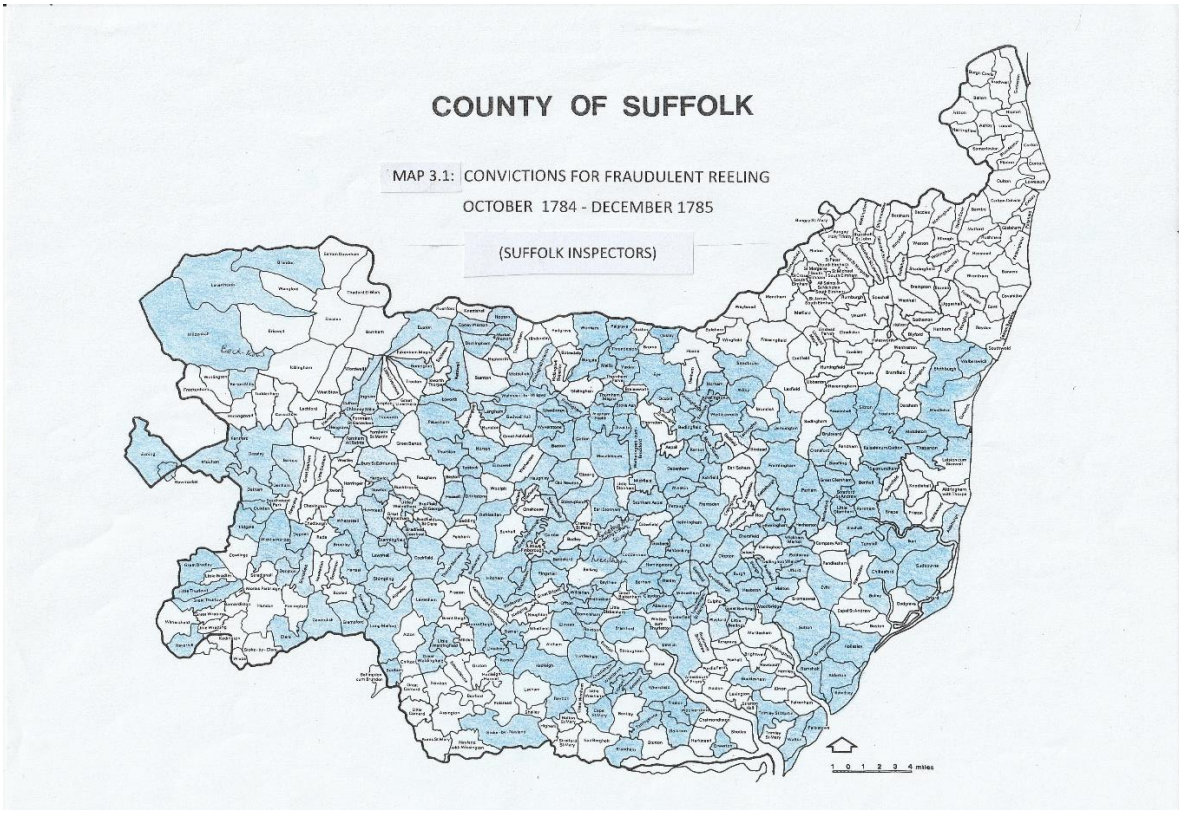
answered 'for his servant' on separate occasions in 1785 and 1786.[106] Table 3.1 shows that this group of associated convictions formed a small percentage of the overall figures. By 1792, men were responsible for only two the 78 spinning and related crimes in that year.

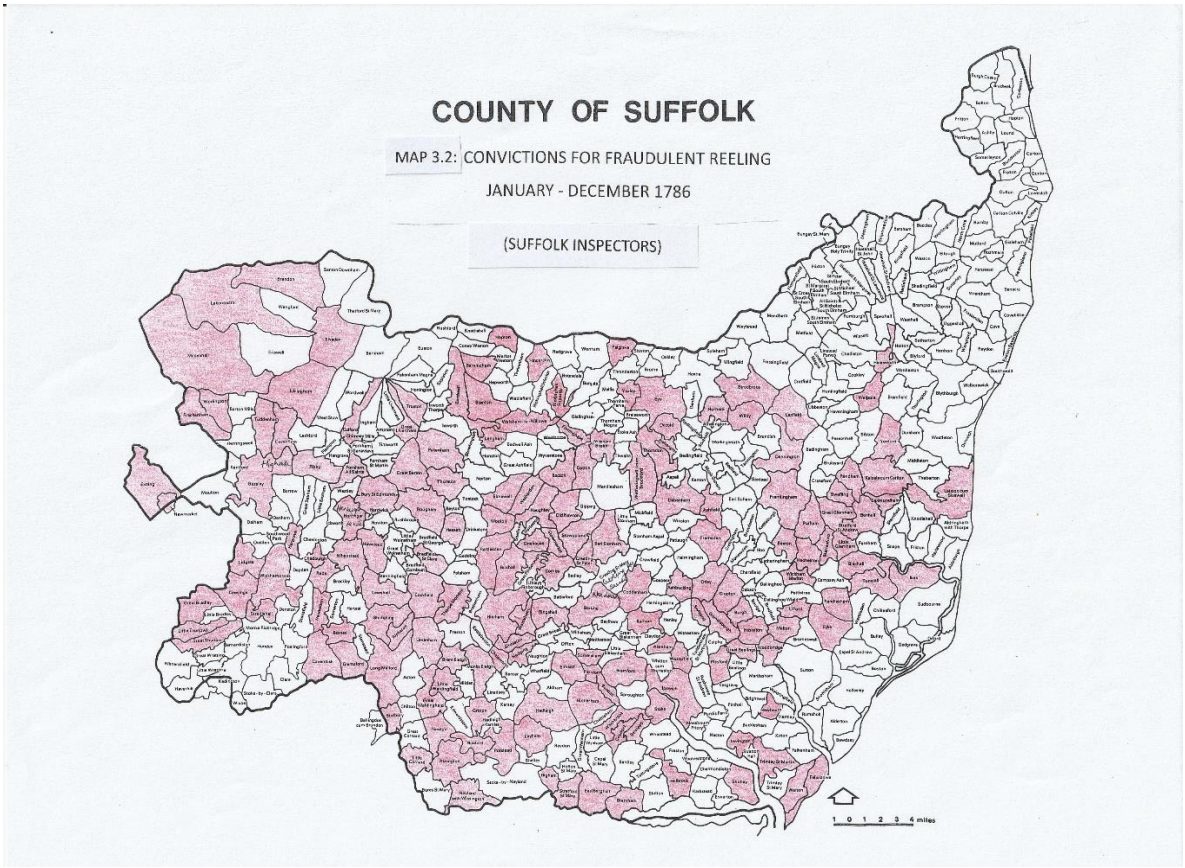
Few spinners were convicted more than once but a small number convicted of second offences were fined 10s or sent to the bridewell. Sarah Mullinger (or Murlinger) of Kenton was first fined 5s in December 1784 and sent to the bridewell for a second offence in April 1785.[107] Mary Everton (or Everson) of Occold was first convicted in December 1784 and sent to the bridewell for a second offence in 1785.[108] For a second offence, Sarah Fairweather of Ipswich was fined 40s in 1785, rather than the usual 10s.[109] This was also the fine received by Elizabeth East of Lavenham in 1786 for her second offence, the first being in 1785.[110] The punishment received by Elizabeth Harte of Ipswich for a third conviction was even harsher. Fined 5s for a first offence in 1785, she was committed to the bridewell for a month because she had no goods to distrain.[111] She was convicted for the second time in 1786 and committed straight to the bridewell 'for being an old offender'.[112] For a third offence in 1787, she was committed to the bridewell for a month and additionally ordered to be whipped.[113] Chapter 6 argues that the sentencing of women to whipping at the quarter sessions was dying out in the 1780s; the handing down of this sentence by the petty sessions was unexpected.[114] Be that as it may, Elizabeth Harte's recidivism for fraudulent reeling was unusual.

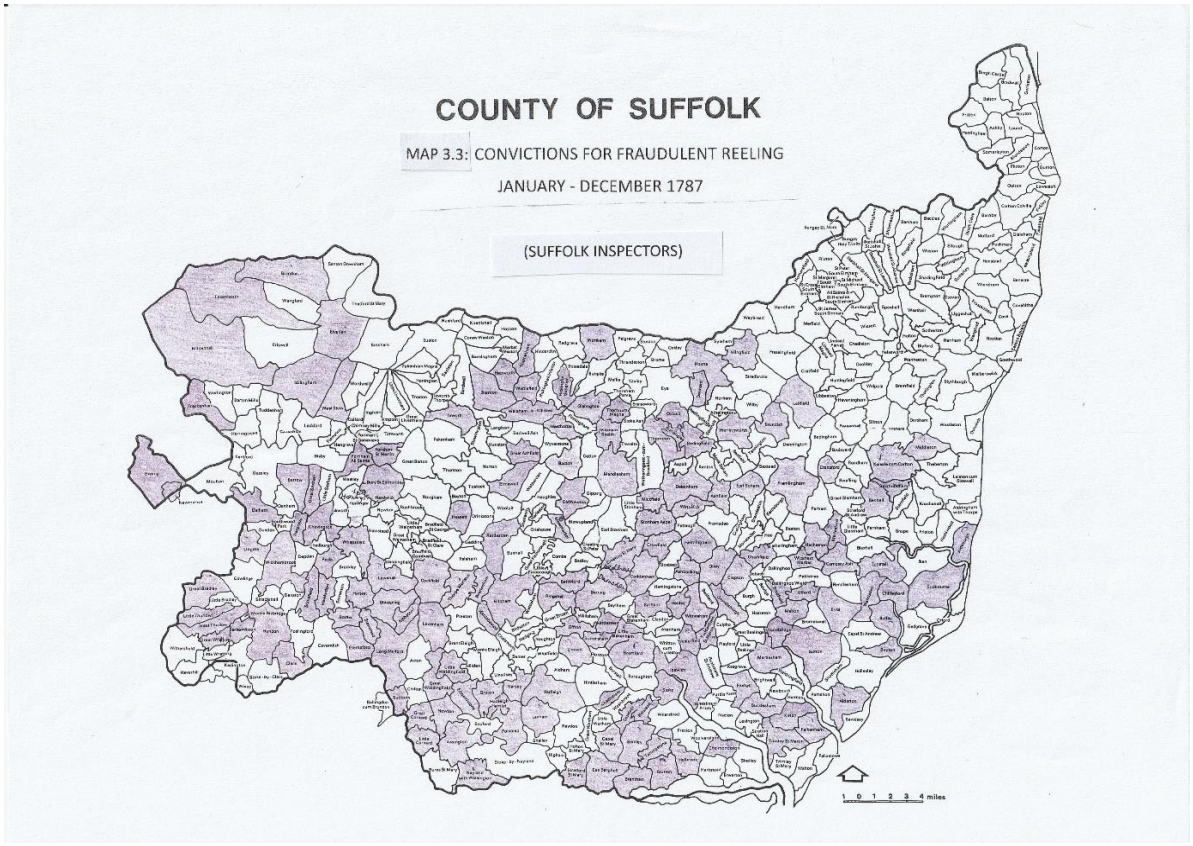
Although the vast majority of spinners after 1784 were not convicted more than once, their punishment under the *Worsted Act* did not necessarily deter other spinners in the same place. In some places, the pattern of offending and conviction was repeated in subsequent years. Of the 32 convictions in Hadleigh in 1784-1785, 1786, 1787, 1789 and 1790, for example, only Ann Kestrich (or Kestrick) was convicted twice: in March and August in 1786.[115] The other spinners convicted in Hadleigh all seem to have been first time offenders.

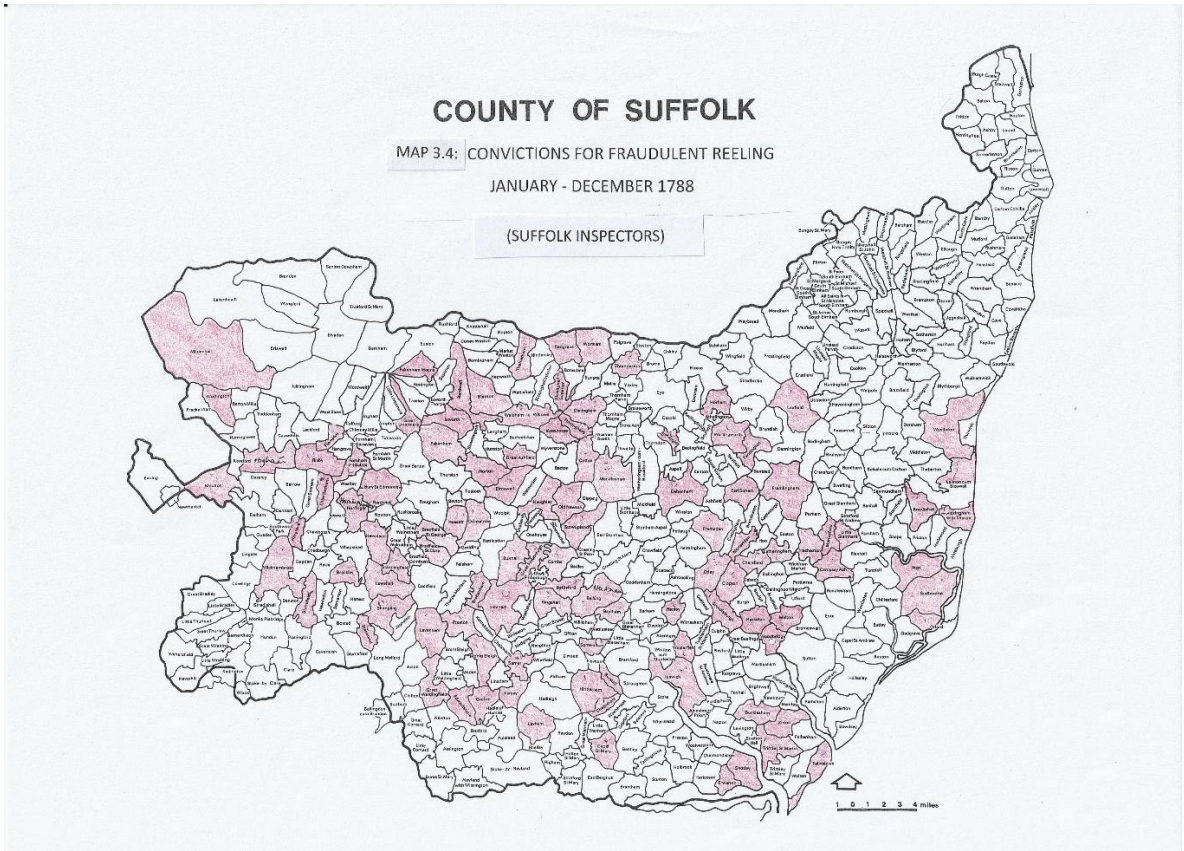
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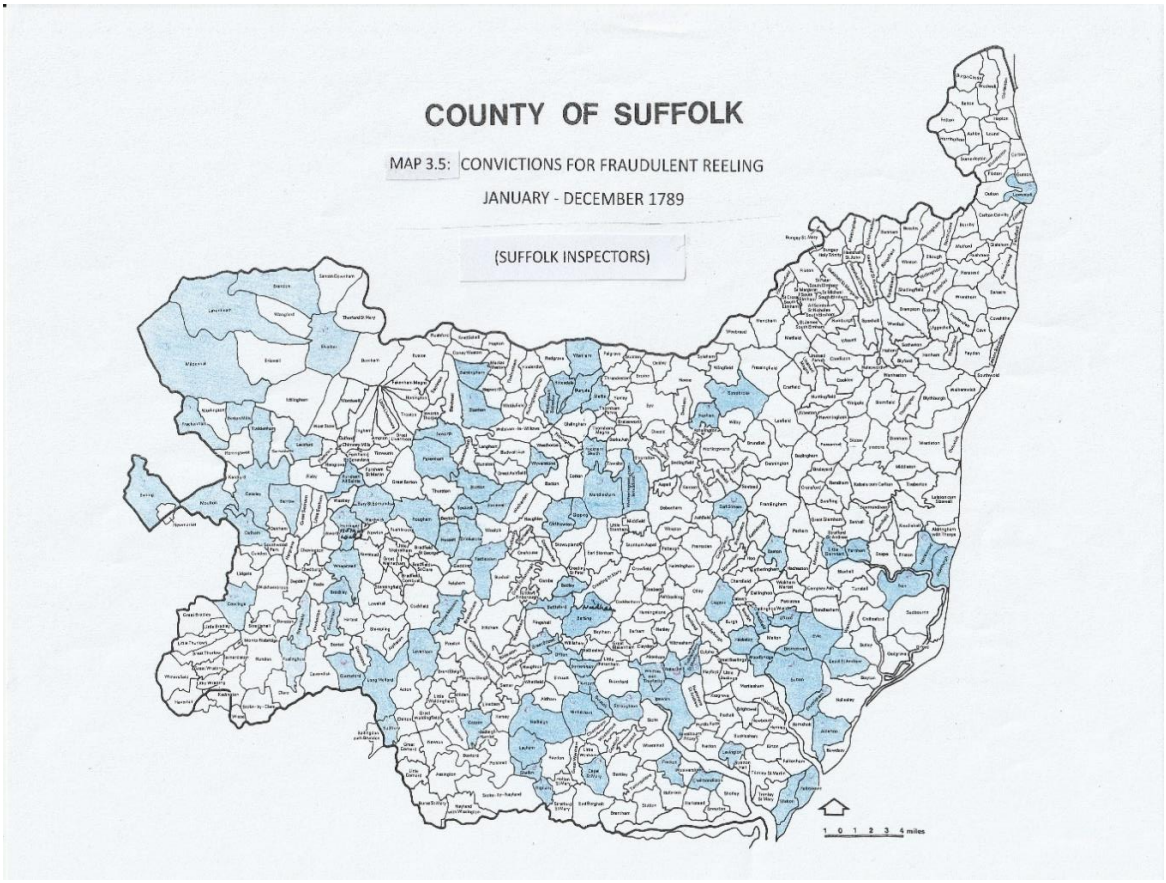
[106] *Ipswich Journal*, 26 November 1785 & 11 November 1786.
[107] *Ipswich Journal*, 18 December 1784 & 2 April 1785.
[108] *Ipswich Journal*, 11 December 1784 & 2 April 1785.
[109] *Ipswich Journal*, 14 May 1785.
[110] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 1 March 1785 & *Ipswich Journal*, 4 December 1784.
[111] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 April 1785.
[112] *Ipswich Journal*, 1 April 1786.
[113] *Ipswich Journal*, 3 February 1787.
[114] See Table 6.2.
[115] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 1 March & 16 August 1786.

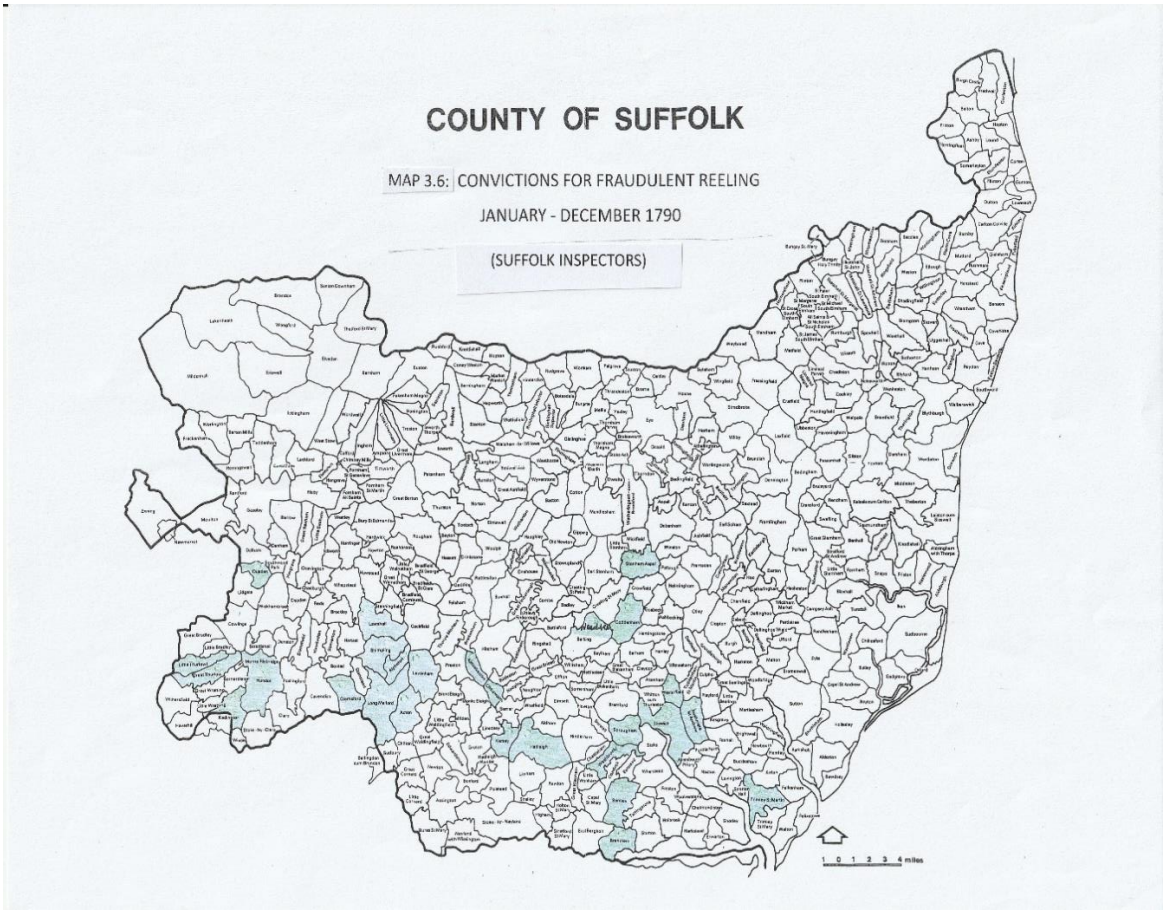

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.1: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
OCTOBER 1784 - DECEMBER 1785
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)
1 0 1 2 3 4 miles

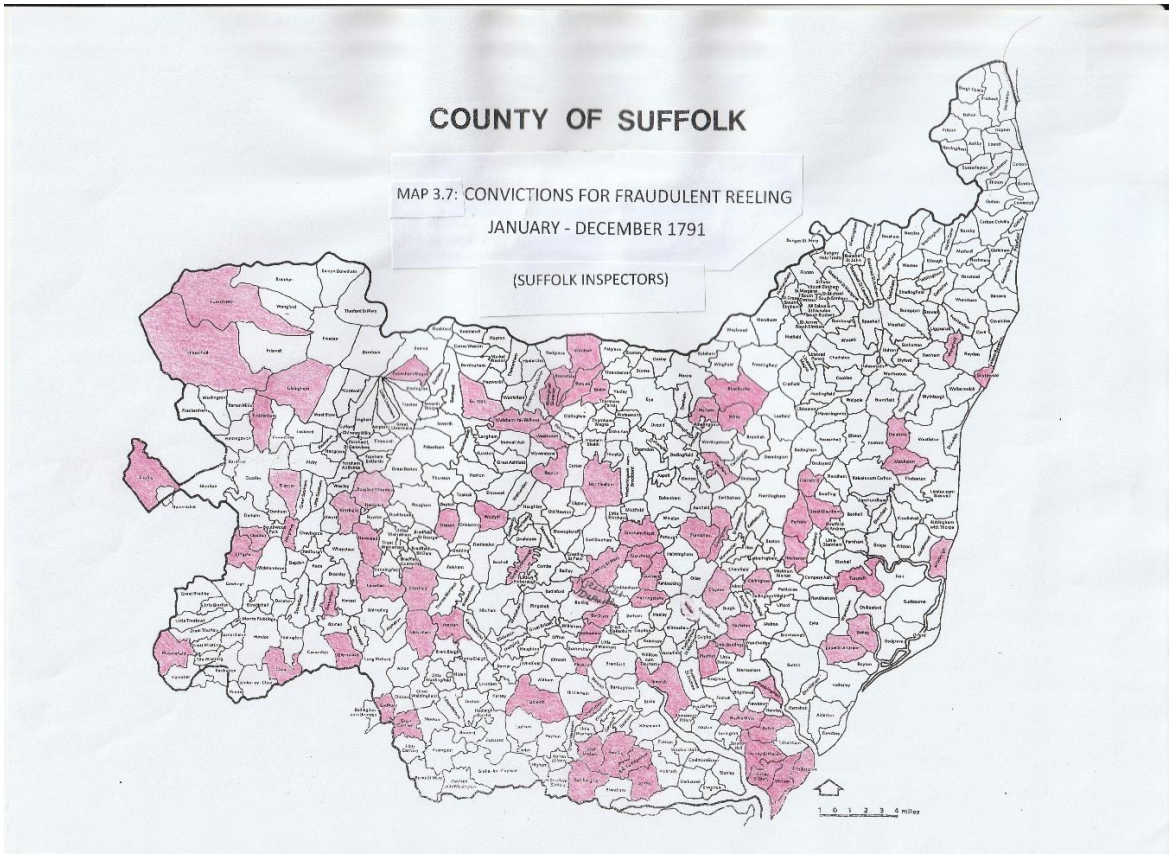

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.2: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1786
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)
1 0 1 2 3 4 miles

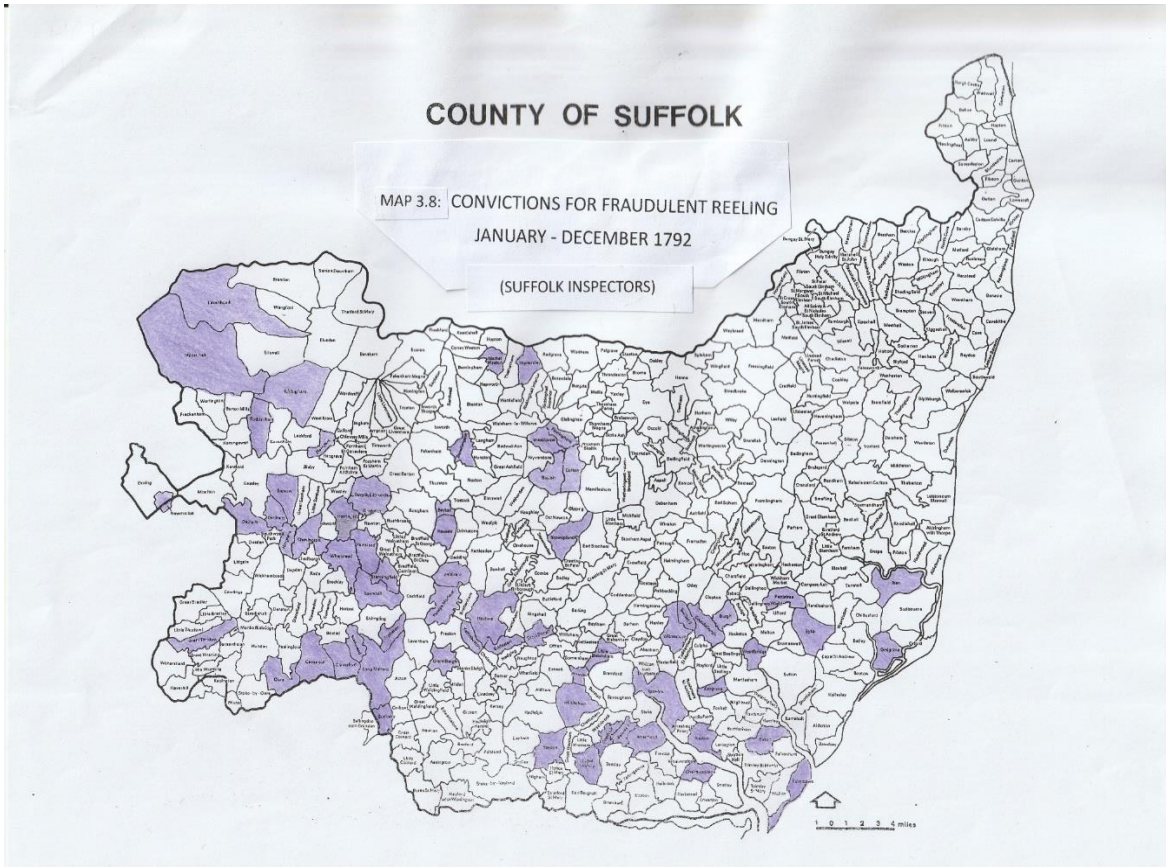

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.3: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1787
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)
0 1 2 3 4 miles


COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.4: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1788
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)
0 1 2 3 4 miles


COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.5: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1789
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)
0 1 2 3 4 miles


COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.6: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1790
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)
0 1 2 3 4 miles


COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.7: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1791
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)


COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
MAP 3.8: CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT REELING
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1792
(SUFFOLK INSPECTORS)

3.8 CONVICTIONS FOR FRAUDULENT SPINNING IN NORTHEAST SUFFOLK, 1784-1795

Although most spinning in Suffolk was controlled by the yarn-makers in Bury St Edmunds, the work of a number of spinners in the northeast of the county was under the direction of the Norfolk yarn-makers.[116] Oakes' diary provides evidence of competition for spinners between the two regions and of higher wages paid in consequence. His entry of 15 November 1792 records the 'Incroachment made on our Spinning in high Suffolk by the Norwich Weavers & Combers'.[117] The Suffolk Yarn Committee agreed to increase spinners' wages in the northeast of the county in response.[118] It is unclear if this lifted wages in the northeast to the same level as other parts of the county or above the rates paid elsewhere. Oakes' wage increase against the Norfolk yarn-makers' encroachment suggests that Suffolk spinners were in demand in northeast Suffolk in the early 1790s. A small number in this area of the Norfolk spinning industry, however, were convicted of fraudulent reeling by Norfolk inspectors in 1786 and 1787.[119]

Thirteen months after the earliest Suffolk convictions under the 1784 Act, the Norfolk weaving industry appeared to adopt the same approach towards fraudulent spinning as the Suffolk manufacturers. The Norfolk yarn-makers' followed the earlier actions of their Suffolk counterparts by appointing three inspectors 'to proceed against all offenders with the utmost severity of the law', even though the *Worsted Act for Norfolk* did not become law until 1791.[120] A notice in the *Norfolk Chronicle* of 3 June 1786 from the Norfolk Committee of Yarn-makers reported members' astonishment that 181 convictions had been recorded since November 1785.[121] However, convictions by Norfolk inspectors over the seven month period up to early June 1786 were lower than the 219 convictions recorded in Suffolk in the corresponding seven month period following the 1784 Act. This suggests that the closer proximity of spinners in Norfolk to the weavers in Norwich may have contributed to the better oversight and management of their work. Convictions within this county by the Norfolk industry continued well after the last Suffolk convictions were published in 1792.

A comprehensive examination of the weekly *Norfolk Chronicle* between 1784 and 1795 was undertaken to try to ascertain if any Suffolk spinners who worked for the Norfolk spinning industry were also convicted of fraudulent reeling. From 3 December 1785, convictions by

[116] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 43.
[117] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 286.
[118] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, p. 286.
[119] See Appendix 4.
[120] 31 Geo. III, c.56 (1791), *The Worsted Act for Norfolk and Norwich.*
[121] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 3 June 1786.

the Norfolk inspectors were printed in the 'Home' column of the *Norfolk Chronicle* and the vast majority were found to be in Norfolk.[122] Convictions of spinners in Norfolk were not recorded in this study, but the examination of press reports also showed that approximately 24 spinners from northeast Suffolk villages and towns were named in 1786 and 1787 alongside their Norfolk counterparts. Their convictions are recorded in Appendix 4 and Table 3.2 sets out the spinners' home villages and towns and the numbers of cases in the two years concerned.

Map 3.9 illustrates the distribution of these convictions by the Norfolk inspectors in these two years, in a wide hub around the low-lying Waveney valley between Bungay and Gorleston. It is possible that worsted spinning offered alternative employment for women who had previously worked in the linen weaving industry of north Suffolk and south Norfolk. This industry was itself in decline at the end of the eighteenth century.[123]

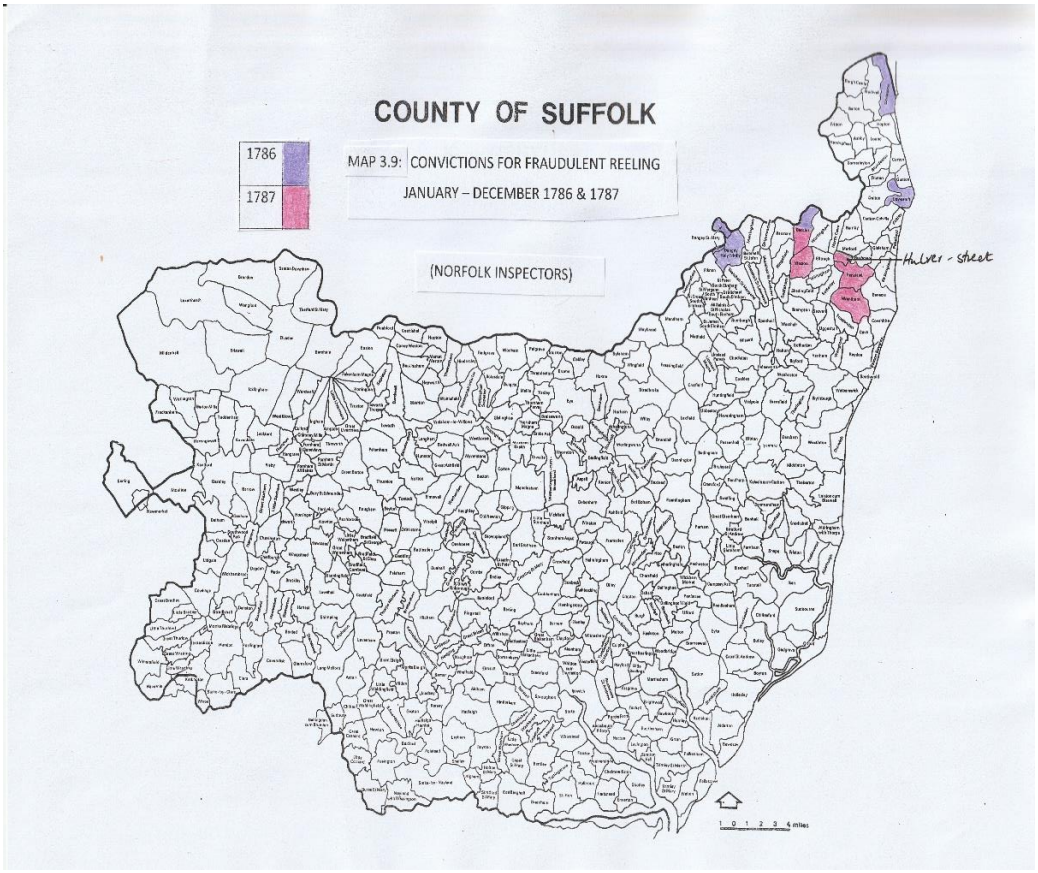
Table 3.2: Male and female convictions for fraudulent reeling (Norfolk inspectors), 1784-1795: Suffolk spinners

Year investigated	Place	No of convictions
1786	Beccles	4
	Bungay	3
	Gorleston	2
	Lowestoft	1
1787	Beccles	6
	Eye	3
	Henstead	1
	Hulver-street	1
	Weston	1
	Wrentham	2
TOTAL		24

A further two convictions in 1786 and 1792 have been entered in Appendix 4 but were not included in the total figures because of confusion over similarly named places in both counties (specifically, Hopton and Framlingham).[124] A further anomaly was found in the fact that four spinners from northeast Suffolk, whose convictions were printed alongside west

[122] *Norfolk Chronicle*, from 3 December 1785.
[123] Nesta Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1985), pp. 118-119.
[124] *Norfolk Chronicle,* 9 September 1786, Barbara Prior; 14 January 1792, Jemima Bales.

Suffolk cases in the *Ipswich Journal* in 1784 and 1792, appear to have been prosecuted by Suffolk inspectors under the direction of the Bury St Edmunds manufacturers.[125] In 1789, Elizabeth Wallage of Lowestoft was convicted of reeling false yarn and fined 5s.[126] In 1791, Sarah Dixon was convicted of the same offence in Wangford, while Sarah Mole and Mary Baldwin were convicted in South[w]old.[127] There is insufficient evidence to establish their employers and prosecutors and they are included in Appendix 3, but might equally have been brought by the Norfolk inspectors.



It is unclear if Oakes' 1784 estimate that 36,000 spinners were employed in the Suffolk domestic industry included spinners controlled by the Norfolk wool-combers, but as he did not have premises in the northeast it is likely this figure related solely to spinners employed

[125] See Maps 3.1 to 3.8. These four convictions appear alongside west Suffolk convictions in press reports and are included in Appendix 3.
[126] *Ipswich Journal*, 24 October 1789.
[127] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 May 1791; 25 June 1791.

by Suffolk yarn-makers.[128] The small number of convictions in the northeast region, however, suggests that the domestic spinning of yarn was less common in this region of Suffolk. Unlike other parts of the county where convictions by the Bury St Edmunds inspectors ceased to be reported in 1792, convictions in Norfolk continued to be published in the *Norfolk Chronicle* throughout 1793, 1794 and 1795, though no further convictions of Suffolk spinners were found. The low levels of Suffolk convictions in this region may be evidence that spinning was retreating back to the Norwich base of the surviving weavers.

3.9 THE DECLINE OF THE SUFFOLK SPINNING INDUSTRY

The deterioration of trade between Suffolk yarn-makers and the Norwich weavers began in the mid-1780s and was further exacerbated by war with France from 1793 which prevented cloth exports.[129] Arthur Young reported that the stagnation of spinning caused by the war left several workhouses (including the Cosford, Samford and Loes and Wilford houses of industry) unable to sell spun yarn to Norwich.[130] An article in the *Norfolk Chronicle* in 1793 claimed the price of wool itself remained artificially high because of a 'fatal rot' in sheep, though the price of yarn fell suddenly by 20% because of the war.[131] The article further claimed that 2,000 weavers had lost their jobs in Norwich and employment in the industry would only exist if wages were reduced.[132] Suffolk spinning had 'dwindled to almost nothing' by 1800, but the Norwich weavers continued to produce high end mixes of wool and yarns for the export market.[133] For this they presumably bought yarn produced by Norfolk spinners controlled by Norfolk yarn-makers. Oakes opened a bank in 1794 and sold his spinning assets in the late 1790s, along with most other yarn-makers in Bury St Edmunds.[134] The last inspector of yarn in East Suffolk, a Mr Crane, later confirmed that machinery had supplanted hand spinning by 1823.[135]

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[128] Young, *General View*, pp. 232-233; Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, 'Map of Suffolk Showing Wool Combing Centres and James Oakes's Spinning Depots', p. 29.
[129] Fiske, *The Oakes Diaries*, pp. 50-51.
[130] Arthur Young, *General View*, pp. 237-246
[131] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 9 March 1793.
[132] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 9 March 1793.
[133] Fiske, *The Oakes* Diaries, p. 52.
[134] Fiske, *The Oakes* Diaries, p. 53.
[135] PP 1843, XXI, *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, Report of Mr Denison on the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincoln, pp. 220-239.

3.10 THEFTS OF YARN IN THE DECLINING SWS-NWE WEAVING REGION, 1770-1800

The last part of this chapter returns to a small number of yarn thefts in the SWS area of Sudbury, in the Suffolk part of the diminishing SWS-NWE domestic weaving industry. This was distinct from the Norfolk weaving industry in structure and outputs. SWS-NWE operated in a vertically-integrated system whereby manufacturers directly employed and regulated workers at all stages.[136] Weavers in this region relied on plain middle and low quality worsted and wool cloth mixes, including bays with a raised nap and lightweight says, unlike their Norwich counterparts whose reputation was for producing high quality worsted cloth.[137] The weaving industry in this region was in decline throughout the eighteenth century as new, fashionable materials attracted customers and were increasingly available.[138] There was some continuation in the weaving and finishing textiles industry in Sudbury.[139]

A small number of thefts of yarn and cloth attributable to SWS-NWE were tried at the quarter sessions in Sudbury and the limited remaining court evidence suggests that domestic weavers may have stolen yarn for their own survival. At this same time, several spinners in Sudbury and surrounding villages were convicted of fraudulent reeling by inspectors employed by the Manufacturers Committee in Bury St Edmunds. This suggests there was some overlap between the two regional industries. It also suggests that while the market for lower grade fabrics in SWS-NWE declined and struggled, demand for fine worsted yarn continued in Norwich until the 1790s and thus provided employment for spinners in the southwest part of Suffolk. Significantly, the Suffolk spinning industry may have additionally offered alternative work to unemployed SWS weavers for a few years.

A small number of female theft and embezzlement records survive for the Suffolk part of the SWS-NWE cloth-weaving sector in the sessions books of the Borough of Sudbury.[140] Two of these cases involved the non-completion of work by women employed and paid to weave yarn into cloth. In 1782, Lydia, wife of William French of Great Cornard, was accused of 'purloining and imbezilling part of a chain and woof about one yard' which she was paid to 'work up' for Andrew Burton, a Sudbury manufacturer.[141] It is probable that Lydia French cut and retained a yard of cloth for her own use after weaving a bolt for Burton. Her

[136] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 155.
[137] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', pp. 154.
[138] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', pp. 154.
[139] David Dymond, *The Suffolk Cloth Industry: 700 Years of Textile Making*, (Lavenham: Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, 2015), p. 14.
[140] SA, Borough of Sudbury Sessions, EE501/2/18, 1781-1836.
[141] EE501/2/18, 15 January 1782. The 'chain' was the warp of a piece of woven fabric, 22 yards in length; the 'woof' or weft was the finished measurement across the fabric, 'about one yard'.

conviction was 'affiled', with no further action. The same year Grace Hale, a single woman from Ballingdon (then in Essex, now part of Sudbury, Suffolk), was convicted at Sudbury and 'affiled' for 'returning a crape chain and woof unworked'.[142] Hale had also received goods from Andrew Burton to 'work up' and which remained 'his property'. By returning the yarns unworked she failed to fulfil her contract and the case appears to have remained on file for future reference.

The underlying reason why Lydia French and Grace Hale did not complete their contracted work is unclear, as is Burton's decision to pursue a costly prosecution against them. It is possible that the depressed state of demand for low quality cloth produced in SWS-NWE meant that wages for home weaving had fallen to an untenably low level. K. H. Burley found that attempts to revive the declining weaving industry in Sudbury involved the employment of women (who were cheaper than men) to weave cheap bunting, rather than the worsted which was traditionally woven by men.[143] Yet, while the SWS-NWE industry declined, the Suffolk spinning industry was still active and, for a few years, French and Hale may have been able to find better paid and more reliable work spinning for the wool-combers and yarn-makers who supplied the Norwich weavers.

A similar case at Sudbury involved Jude, wife of weaver Isaac Wright, who was convicted in 1797 of 'buying, receiving and taking' four skeins of woollen yarn from John Wells, weaver, 'knowing same to have been purloined' from William Musgrave.[144] This appears to have been a complex case of receipt of stolen goods. The few surviving details suggest that a network of men and women who were employed in the Sudbury weaving industry stole and resold skeins of yarn within the same group.[145] This combined male and female network differs from the gendered networks of daily economic crime and dispersal of stolen goods identified by Garthine Walker in Cheshire and Lyn MacKay in London, which reflected the separate spaces in which men and women conducted their daily lives.[146] These cases in Sudbury appear to confirm that male and female members of weaving households worked together to produce cloth at the end of the eighteenth century but also collaborated to sell on goods purloined from their employers as the industry declined.

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[142] EE501/2/18, 10 April 1782.
[143] K. H. Burley, 'An Essex Clothier of the Eighteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 11, 2 (1958), 289-301 (p. 289).
[144] EE501/2/18, 14 July 1797.
[145] EE501/2/18, 14 July 1797.
[146] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 169 & 273; Lynn MacKay, 'Why They Stole: Women in the Old Bailey, 1779-1789', *Journal of Social History*, 32, 3 (1999), 623-639 (pp. 625 & 629).

3.11 CONCLUSION

Sugden's research into the decline of the Norwich worsted industry focused on weavers because there were 'few reliable statistics to track temporal change' relating to the spinners who worked for them.[147] This chapter has contributed significant data on over 1,900 Suffolk spinners, putters-out and associated workers who provided worsted yarn for the Norwich weavers and were convicted of fraudulent reeling. Analysis of the nature, scale and distribution of their convictions over the period between 1784 and 1792 suggests that the domestic spinning industry in Suffolk was buoyant across many towns and villages in the mid to late 1780s. However, the gradual decline in convictions from then until 1792, when cases ceased to be reported in local newspapers, appears to indicate the serious decline of the Suffolk worsted spinning industry as the Norwich weaving industry itself shrank and became more specialist. This pattern of diachronic change in the Suffolk industry is illustrated in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and Maps 3.1 to 3.9. Notwithstanding the decline in Suffolk, the fact that convictions of spinners across Norfolk continued after 1792 suggests that spinning here remained buoyant whilst demand for worsted yarn continued from the Norwich weavers.

The evidence retrieved has shown that spinning convictions were widely distributed across Suffolk after the appointment of inspectors by the Bury Manufacturers Committee in October 1784, with the exception of the northeast. Furthermore, the vast majority involved women or girls. Of the 1,900 convictions by Suffolk inspectors, 1,746 were of women. Norfolk yarn-makers took a similar approach towards spinning prosecution after 1785, even though the *Worsted Act for Norfolk* was not passed until 1791.[148] Convictions across Norfolk were not retrieved in this investigation. However, a further 24 spinners were convicted in northeast Suffolk in 1786 and 1787 by inspectors for the Norfolk yarn-makers whose networks had spread into Suffolk: 23 were female. The overall number of Suffolk convictions by the inspectors of both counties is, therefore, 1,924, of which at least 1,769 were of women. This figure is far higher than the numbers of women prosecuted at Suffolk Quarter Sessions and Assizes and discussed in the previous chapter.

The divergent patterns of prosecution of spinners in Suffolk and Norfolk suggest the two systems were not co-ordinated, although both provided worsted yarn to the Norfolk weavers. This indicates a significant flaw for the Suffolk domestic spinning industry in the vertically-disintegrated system of yarn production. The Suffolk yarn-makers inevitably stockpiled yarn

[147] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', n. 37, p. 219.
[148] 31 Geo. III, c.56 (1791), *The Worsted Act for Norfolk and Norwich.*

ahead of sale to the Norfolk weavers. Yet, as the needs of the Norwich weavers changed and declined, Suffolk yarn-makers were left with unsold supplies of yarn and reduced the wages paid to spinners. It seems probable that Norfolk spinners and yarn-makers were better connected to the weavers and would not have been encouraged to produce yarn that was not needed and could not be sold.

The geographical distribution of cases indicates that inspectors appointed by the Bury Manufacturers Committee systematically visited large numbers of Suffolk villages and towns, with the exception of the northeastern sector of the county.[149] Data presented in Appendix 3 indicates that the highest numbers of annual convictions in the nine year period of investigation took place between October 1784 and December 1785, the first two years of enforcement of the 1784 Act. Thereafter convictions decreased. All available weekly editions of the *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury and Norwich Press* were additionally researched between 1793 and 1800, but no further evidence was found. This proposes that large scale spinning across Suffolk had declined by this time.

In their approach to detecting fraudulent yarn, the Norfolk yarn-makers appear to have copied the *modus operandi* of the Suffolk Manufacturers Committee when they appointed inspectors in Norfolk in 1785, six years before such action was mandated by the *Worsted Act for Norfolk.* Inspectors continued to convict spinners in Norfolk until at least 1795, which confirms that spinning continued here beyond its apparent decline in Suffolk.

Convictions of fraudulent reeling were undoubtedly lower than the numbers of women and men in the industry who were neither prosecuted nor convicted. The numbers of convictions show that fraudulent reeling was relatively commonplace in the Suffolk domestic spinning industry. They additionally indicate that poorly paid spinning was widespread and of significant economic importance for the female working population in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

The decline of spinning in Suffolk, brought about by the decline and specialisation of weaving in Norwich, lagged behind the decline of the SWS-NWE weaving region. Thus, it is possible that SWS-NWE workers in Suffolk turned towards the Bury St Edmunds spinning industry for employment while this industry remained vibrant. The few cases of yarn theft and embezzlement prosecuted by manufacturers in the Sudbury weaving industry suggest both the decay of SWS-NWE as an employer and employees' willingness to turn to spinning

[149] See Maps 3.1 – 3.8.

for the Bury industry. Pockets of weaving lingered on in both regions but did not require the vast numbers of spinners previously employed.

CHAPTER 4: WHAT UNDERPINNED THEFTS BY WOMEN?

> 'Saturday last Eliz. Ling and Mary Bugg were committed to our gaol by Thomas Maynard, Esq, the former for stealing divers quantities of cheese, belonging to Mr. John Seaman of Fressingfield and the latter for receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen'.[1]

This chapter investigates further the reasons why women may have committed property crimes in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 and considers the significance of theft in the relationship between unemployment and poverty. Chapter 1 showed that the population of Suffolk was adversely affected in this period by several long and short term factors. Sharply increasing wheat prices resulted from the demand for basic foodstuffs by the growing population, especially when harvests were poor and the needs of the troops were prioritised over local people. At the same time, employment and wages in agricultural work remained low, particularly for women, and the domestic wool and worsted weaving and spinning industries across East Anglia were in decline. No alternative employment replaced these traditional industries and when factors such as unemployment and rising prices occurred at the same time, men, women and children became liable to suffer financial distress. In these circumstances, theft may have become part of their survival strategy, or 'economy of makeshifts'.[2] Women, whose wages were always lower than men's for similar work, would have experienced this distress acutely, particularly if they were single and had no support from family members.

Steven King and Alannah Tomkins have defined the 'economy of makeshifts' as comprising the totality of different ways in which the poor made ends meet during times of serious hardship and destitution.[3] Samantha Williams also affirmed that survival strategies included petty theft and the receipt of stolen goods, the crimes for which Ling and Bugg (cited above) were prosecuted.[4] These minor crimes were elements of an all-encompassing personal economy that additionally involved wages, charitable donations, credit and debts, and the sale and pawning of goods.[5] Williams' observations appear to distinguish between

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[1] *Ipswich Journal*, 24 October, 1789.
[2] O. H. Hufton, cited in Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760-1834* (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical society in association with The Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 7-8.
[3] Steven King and Alannah Tomkins, 'Introduction', in *The Poor in* England, *1700-1800: an Economy of Makeshifts*, ed. by Steven King and Alannah Tomkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1-38 (p. 13).
[4] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life*-Cycle, p. 7-8.
[5] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life*-Cycle, p. 7-8.

lesser thefts which helped women to get by in the short term and were for immediate consumption or dispersal for money, and larger thefts, sometimes with violence against people and property, which may have contributed to an offender's professional trade in stolen goods.

Evidence of the loss of employment in linen production in north Suffolk at the end of the eighteenth century suggests that some property crimes committed by women in this region may have been part of their 'economy of makeshifts' which resulted from poverty. However, the chapter also suggests that the largest thefts of goods and money may have been intended to provide the defendant with sufficient funds to leave behind an impoverished life in Suffolk for a new life in London.

4.1 MANAGING POVERTY : POOR RELIEF

Poor relief was central to the support of the poor in Suffolk in the late eighteenth century but provision was under pressure from the demands of the growing population and single women appear to have been unlikely to be eligible to receive it. Richard Smith and Max Satchell have calculated that expenditure *per capita* on poor relief in Suffolk in the first year of each decade between 1802 and 1831 was above the national average.[6] This implies that poverty at the turn of the nineteenth century was more serious in this county than in other parts of England.

The Committee of the Loes and Wilford workhouse in east Suffolk recognised in 1795 that 'the price of all the necessaries of life are at present so high that labourers having families cannot maintain them at the present price of labour without some relief'.[7] John Shaw further recorded that outdoor relief from this workhouse and its contributing parishes for distressed families and individuals between 1765 and 1826 also included the regular support of women and children who had been deserted by a male breadwinner.[8] Amounts awarded ranged from 1s for families with two children under twelve to 6s for seven children. Furthermore, a significant number of single mothers in the last two decades of the eighteenth century typically received outdoor relief of around 1s 6d a week from the contributing parishes to

[6] Richard Smith and Max Satchell, 'Malthus, Poverty and Population in Suffolk 1780-1834', *Proceedings of the Institute of Archaeology and History*, 44, 2 (2018), 256-269 (pp. 257-258).
[7] John Shaw, ed., *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation, 1765-1826: 'A Prison with a Milder Name'* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 2019), p. 216.
[8] Shaw, *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation*, pp. 86 & 96.

support their 'infant bastard[s]'.[9] However, the provision of poor relief was not evenly spread across all members of the population. Childless able working men and women, including single labouring women without other networks of support, appear to have been excluded from outdoor relief by the large incorporations in central and east Suffolk.

While a married woman would have been included in the payment of outdoor relief awarded to her husband, single women appear to have been left to fend for themselves. Frederick Morton Eden's survey in 1797 confirmed the provision of outdoor relief was not routinely extended to single women across England unless they were sick.[10] Some other groups of women were also specifically excluded: neither the single mother of a bastard child nor a healthy widow with only one child were considered 'object[s] of relief'.[11] This may have meant that unemployed single women across Suffolk had to choose between the possibility of applying for indoor relief and entering the workhouse, and making a living through an 'economy of makeshifts'.[12]

Even if single women in Suffolk did seek indoor relief, provision was inconsistent across the county. The parish workhouses in the west of the county were described by Henry Stuart as 'abodes of misery, depravity and filthy'.[13] It is likely that these were avoided by most women where possible. Stuart further claimed that the large incorporated workhouses in central and eastern parts of the county accommodated three main categories of inmate: the old and infirm, orphaned and illegitimate children and unmarried pregnant women.[14] This observation, however, was at odds with Arthur Young's confirmation in 1792 that more women between the ages of 20 and 30 lived in the large, incorporated Bosmere workhouse (north of Ipswich) than in any other workhouse that he or Stuart visited. Stuart conceded by omission, however, that indoor relief was not generally offered to single working women.[15] The exclusion of many women from both outdoor and indoor poor relief in Suffolk appears to have been widespread, which suggests that they had to live by all other means available if

[9] Shaw, *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation*, p. 194.
[10] Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor*, cited in John Shaw, ed., *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation,* p. xxxi.
[11] Shaw, *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation*, p. xxxi.
[12] Hufton, cited in Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle*, pp. 7-8.
[13] Henry Stuart, BPP 1834, xxviii, *Report into the Poor* Laws, cited by David Dymond, in 'Parish and Hundred Workhouses, before 1834', in *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk: Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond and Edward Martin (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), pp.120-121.
[14] Stuart, cited by Dymond in 'Parish and Hundred Workhouses', pp.120-121.
[15] Arthur Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1813* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers) Limited, 1969), p. 246.

they became unemployed, including from the receipt of charitable donations in money or kind, and by theft.

From research into poverty in Lancashire between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Margaret Hanly confirmed that thefts were part of the poor's economy of makeshifts.[16] Hanly established that applications for poor relief increased across the country after 1760 but were neither routinely successful nor adequate.[17] Hanly also found that the award of relief relied on the understanding that applicants would work if it was available and unless they were sick, too young or too old.[18] Furthermore, they should also sell or pawn their own goods, draw benefit from clubs and societies and reach out to kin and relatives for support.[19]

According to Steven King, half of all applications in some northwest parishes of England were turned down between 1780 and 1816.[20] Female applicants included widows, women abandoned by their husbands and women who had sold the clothing and other items previously provided for them by the parish.[21] But even when an application was successful, the relief received was not necessarily adequate or even monetary. The amount paid in the northwest was substantially lower than a fifth or seventh of a regular wage.[22] Furthermore, Widow Etherington in Halliwell requested 2s per week but received a sack of potatoes instead.[23]

4.2 MANAGING POVERTY: COMMITTING PROPERTY CRIME

Whether or not women received poor relief or other support, they appear to have become vulnerable to committing property crime at similar points in the life-cycle. Peter King confirmed that in Essex this tended to occur at predictable points of change.[24] These points included after single women went into domestic service, their contract of employment came

[16] Margaret Hanly, 'The economy of makeshifts and the role of the poor law: a game of chance?', in *The Poor in England, 1700-1800: an Economy of Makeshifts*, ed. by Steven King and Alannah Tomkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 76-99 (pp. 76-77).
[17] Hanly, 'The economy of makeshifts', p. 76.
[18] Hanly, 'The economy of makeshifts', pp. 79-80.
[19] Hanly, 'The economy of makeshifts', pp. 79-80.
[20] Steven King, 'Making the most of opportunity', the economy of makeshifts in the early modern north', in *The Poor in England*, 228-257 (pp. 233-235).
[21] Steven King, 'Making the most of opportunity', pp. 233-235.
[22] Steven King, 'Making the most of opportunity', pp. 232-233.
[23] Steven King, 'Making the most of opportunity', p. 234.
[24] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 201-207.

to an end and they lost their accommodation. They also included the period when children were too young to contribute to family income and home circumstances prevented their mother from working long hours; and when women in later life were impacted by widowhood.[25] King confirmed that prosecutions of both male and female offenders on the Home Circuit between 1782 and 1787 surged between the ages of 16 and 26, the mobile period between the time they first left home for work and the age at which they were likely to get married.[26] Never-married women who left home at 16 may have been financially vulnerable and susceptible to stealing for the rest of their lives.[27] However, King also observed that marriage marked a turning-point in the stability of some women, who then became less liable to commit property crimes.[28]

Unfortunately, defendants' ages were not recorded in the quarter sessions books and many of the assize records for Suffolk that have been investigated in this study. This omission has prevented comparison between age-related thefts in Essex and Suffolk. It has, however, been possible to make tentative connections between thefts and other, unpredictable points in women's lives: for example, when rising wheat prices caused by poor harvests meant that earned income was insufficient to meet the need for basic sustenance. In these circumstances women may have been forced to adopt makeshift survival economies, which may have included thefts and fraudulent crimes. A further unpredictable point of susceptibility to crime for women may have occurred when the widespread loss of work in the worsted spinning industry removed their ability to contribute towards family income.[29]

In eighteenth century Essex, single women accounted for approximately 60% of female property crime at the quarter sessions and assizes, while married women and widows together accounted for most of the remainder.[30] If it can be assumed that court clerks generally recorded the marital status of women accurately in the quarter sessions books, it could be claimed that a far higher proportion of single women were prosecuted in Suffolk for minor property crimes than married women.[31] Where the married status of women is provided in the quarter sessions books for Suffolk, it has been noted in Appendix 1. The

[25] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 201-207.
[26] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 200-202.
[27] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 202-203.
[28] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 202.
[29] Benjamin Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment in the British Industrial Revolution: The Destruction of Hand Spinning', *Past & Present*, 270, 1 (2026), 106-149.
[30] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 203: Essex assizes, 1776-1804; Essex quarter sessions, 1750-1775.
[31] Appendix 1.

assize rolls and calendars appear to reflect a similar preponderance of single women. The married status of women who faced trial at the assize courts is noted in Appendix 2.[32] Caution needs to be exercised over the reasons for this imbalance, however. Even though single women appear to have been in the majority of defendants in both courts, it does not necessarily follow that they were more likely than married women to commit property crimes. It may alternatively reflect the greater tendency of victims and the judiciary to show discretion towards married women who stole because of financial distress and poverty than towards single women.

Because no petty sessions books for Suffolk for the period of this study have been retrieved, no evidence has been found of discretion towards female spinners on low wages who embezzled small amounts of wool or yarn in the domestic spinning industry at the end of the eighteenth century. However, Benjamin Schneider's research (discussed in Chapter 3) concluded that the decline of all domestic hand spinning across the country led to endemic poverty in spinning regions.[33] Schneider estimated that 15% of the population in these regions worked in the spinning industry in 1770 and the lack of alternative employment for women and children when the industry went into decline in the last decades of the eighteenth century led to their 'technological unemployment'. This may have pushed families and single workers in declining spinning regions into poverty if parish and charitable support were not forthcoming and may have led some to commit property crimes in order to sustain life. In Suffolk, the decline of spinning for the Norwich weavers may similarly have led to thefts by a range of women who had been employed to spin (including married women, young and old single women, widows and girls) but became technologically unemployed and were unable to find alternative employment.

Anne-Marie Kilday investigated the reasons why petty thefts (below 1s) were committed in the relatively prosperous rural county of Oxfordshire between 1750 and 1800 where 'background endemic poverty' could generally be ruled out.[34] She established that just under 25% of petty criminals at the quarter sessions were female; most male and female defendants were charged with first offences; and less than 5% of were recidivists.[35] This suggests that theft was outside defendants' usual behaviour and may have been provoked by unusual circumstances. However, from an investigation of indictments, she was unable to establish a

[32] Appendix 2.
[33] Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment', p. 109.
[34] Anne-Marie Kilday, ''Criminally Poor?' Investigating the Link Between Crime and Poverty in Eighteenth Century England', *Cultural and Social History*, 11, 4 (2014), 507-526 (p. 508).
[35] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 512.

relationship between theft and wage rates, prices and weather conditions. Nevertheless, she confirmed that although some endemic poverty still existed, wages were higher in Oxfordshire than in neighbouring counties.[36] This position suggests that indictments for theft at the quarter sessions may have reflected 'particular and immediate impoverished circumstances', which included the loss of employment or the sudden illness or death of a breadwinner.[37] But, as Clive Emsley found in Henry Mayhew's work in London, they appear to exclude regular, professional thieves who 'preferred to live by plundering others'.[38]

Reports of women's criminal activities in court records and newspapers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provide some of the only tangible evidence of events in people's lives, other than in entries of baptisms, marriages and burials that are recorded in parish registers. J. M. Beattie's assertion that crime provided the only 'insight into the behavior of ordinary men and women who have left few records of their lives and attitudes' appears to be true in the prosecution of Elizabeth Ling and Mary Bugg.[39] Their committal in 1789 was reported in the *Ipswich Journal*; their prosecution in 1790 at the Suffolk quarter sessions in Ipswich was recorded in the county sessions book.[40] The 'divers quantities of cheese' stolen and received respectively by Ling and Bugg may have been a response to basic need. But no other evidence of their individual lives in and around the Fressingfield area of northeast Suffolk has been found to substantiate whether this was a first offence driven by poverty or if theft was a regular part of their lives.

Examination of the decline of hemp and linen production in this area of Suffolk suggests the local circumstances which may have led to Ling and Bugg's crimes. According to Nesta Evan's research into the linen industry along the Waveney and Little Ouse valleys in northeast Suffolk and south Norfolk, hemp was grown on small farms in this area in addition to dairying.[41] Local hemp growers supplied the industry, while demand for linen was such that additional materials were imported.[42] The industry employed ancillary workers to heckle (comb), spin and bleach at different stages of production.[43] The industry was supported by

[36] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 520.
[37] Kilday, 'Criminally Poor?', p. 520.
[38] Henry Mayhew, *et* al, *London Labour and the London Poor, cited in* Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England: 1750-1900*, 4th edn. (Harlow: Longman, 2010), p. 73.
[39] J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p3.
[40] *Ipswich Journal*, 24 October, 1789; SA, Quarter Sessions, B105/2/49, 1790-1794.
[41] Nesta Evans, 'The Linen Industry', in '*An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Revised and Enlarged Edition'*, 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond & Edward Martin (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), 142-143 (pp. 142-143).
[42] Evans, 'The Linen Industry', pp. 142-143.
[43] Evans, 'The Linen Industry', pp. 142.

the region's large and growing population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and its success encouraged further inward migration.[44]

The village of Fressingfield where Ling and Bugg stole from John Seaman was an important centre of linen weaving until the industry declined in the late eighteenth century.[45] However, the involvement of large numbers of the working population in linen production across this region and in other parts of east Suffolk suggests there may have been considerable 'technological unemployment' when the industry declined at the end of the eighteenth century.[46] An indication that it may have been under pressure from manufacture in other parts of the country is suggested by the stagnation of women's wages 'for some years' for spinning hemp (linen) yarn.[47] It is likely that the livelihoods of many people in the local area, including Ling and Bugg, were directly impacted by the loss of this industry.

4.3 OTHER POSSIBLE MARKERS OF SUSCEPTIBILITY TO STEALING

Investigation into the backgrounds of women convicted for theft from parish registers and indexes has shown that several defendants were recorded in baptismal registers as 'baseborn'. This in itself does not imply that a child born to an unmarried woman at the end of the eighteenth century would be more inclined towards crime than others. It does suggest, however, that because a poor mother would be forced to return to work, her child may have been brought up in a workhouse which did not adequately prepare them for life outside this institution. The skills acquired by children in the workhouse in the late eighteenth century continued to include worsted spinning, even though this industry was already in decline.[48] Older girls who left the workhouse at this time may have lacked other work skills and thus been unable to remain in employment.

Several girls or women during the period of this study were accused of running away from the workhouse without permission and wearing the clothing it had provided for them. Ann Baker was transported to New South Wales in 1789 at around the age of 17 for a series of minor crimes that began in 1783 when she was convicted and punished for running away from Cosford workhouse wearing clothing that belonged to it. She was sent back to the workhouse but ran away again, accused twice of vagrancy and finally sentenced to

[44] Evans, 'The Linen Industry', pp. 142-143.
[45] Evans, 'The Linen Industry', p.142.
[46] Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment', p. 109.
[47] 'Rev. Mr. Mills of Bury', cited in Young, *General View*, p. 158.
[48] Young, *General View*, p. 245.

transportation.[49] Parish baptism indexes suggest that Baker may have been born in Great Bricett (in west Suffolk) in 1773 to an unmarried mother, also called Ann.[50] She probably entered Cosford workhouse (also in west Suffolk) shortly after birth when her mother returned to work. Her upbringing in the workhouse and lack of family support tentatively suggest that illegitimacy may have been more likely to predispose her towards regular minor criminal activity than a young woman brought up with family support. Accordingly, the sentence of transportation handed down by the quarter sessions court in 1785 may acknowledge the magistrates' response to her as an 'undesirable' person, as Rhiannon Markless has suggested.[51]

The collapse of a family unit and the removal of children to the workhouse may similarly have had a long term impact on women's liability to commit property crime. Parish indexes indicate that Sarah Barker was born in 1776 in Bungay to James and Alice Barker but that Alice died in 1780, leaving Sarah to enter the workhouse.[52] As a young woman Sarah Barker appears to have lived 'on the tramp', committing larceny in different places before her final crime of housebreaking, consequent appearance at the assizes in 1798 and sentence of transportation in 1801. Her continued vulnerability during the voyage to New South Wales and after arrival there was recorded by Margaret Catchpole in a letter to Dr Stebbenes, the gaol physician. This confirmed that Barker remained in the factory stores as a spinner for some time after arrival and no evidence has been found to show that she left the factory to work anywhere else.[53]

4.4 THEFTS BY SERVANTS FROM EMPLOYERS

Live-in servants were not vulnerable in the way that destitute homeless women without income or family support were, yet several women in Suffolk in the period of this study were found guilty of purloining goods or money from their employers. As well as receiving bed and board, servants were usually paid an annual wage which was often not received until the end of the year.[54] Wages for the youngest and least experienced servants were low even in a

[49] B105/2/47, 1781-1786, 17 January & 10 October 1785.
[50] Suffolk Baptism Index 1538-1911.
[51] Rhiannon Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire, 1735-1775' (unpublished PhD thesis (University of Roehampton, 2013), pp. 115-116; B105/2/47, 1781-1786.
[52] National Burial Index For England & Wales.
[53] State Library of New South Wales, M944, Letter from Margaret Catchpole to Dr Stebbenes, 21 January 1802.
[54] John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 278-279.

wealthy household, but as agricultural work and spinning petered out in Suffolk at the end of the eighteenth century, live-in service was one of the few occupations remaining for single or widowed women in Suffolk.[55]

King's examination of the surviving trial reports of cases on the Home Circuit found that nine out of fifteen cases between 1739 and 1786 involved live-in or former live-in servants who robbed their 'places'.[56] King drew on Arthur Young's comment of 1771 to explain why they committed this crime:

> 'Young men and women in the country fix their eye on London as the last stage of their hope; they enter into service in the country for little else but to raise enough money to go to London… the number of young women that fly thither is almost incredible'.[57]

Evidence from parish register indexes for Suffolk suggests that live-in servants were recruited from stable families, yet several were accused of stealing from their employers. This vulnerability may have been a response to a daily life surrounded by their employers' possessions during a long period of separation from the constraints of their own family. Frank McLynn argued that thefts of property were prompted by the juxtaposition of servants' own low wages and lack of material goods set against their employer's wealth.[58] What is surprising, in some cases, is the high value of goods or money stolen. Larger thefts from employers or former employers appear to confirm Young's claim that servants' crimes were not intended merely to relieve poverty but that offenders' intentions may have been to swap rural life in Suffolk for better opportunities in London or some other town.[59]

A number of women in Suffolk were prosecuted at the assizes for stealing large quantities of goods or money from their employers during their term of employment. Elizabeth Killett, for example, was the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Killett from the small village of Belton (then Suffolk, now Norfolk).[60] Killett's theft of £164 in bank notes from John Crow in the rural village of Bradwell, a few miles west of Great Yarmouth on the east coast, may have indicated her drive to get away from a situation of poorly paid domestic servitude and move into a better situation in a larger place. Her sentence of transportation to New

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[55] Stone, *The Diary of John Longe*', pp. 179-180. The annual wage in 1811 for Elisabeth Davy, a kitchen girl employed by John Longe, the vicar of Coddenham, was £3. When she left she was replaced by Mary Gooch on the same annual wage.
[56] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 205.
[57] Arthur Young, 1771, cited in King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 205.
[58] Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 124.
[59] Appendix 2.
[60] Norfolk Baptisms, 1769-1812.

South Wales at the age of 19 led to marriage to John Gray and, eventually, succession into his role as Lessee of the Tolls of the Sydney Market in 1818 after his death.[61] This punishment may have been an unintended route to the kind of success she sought and eventually achieved.

In the case with the most serious consequences for any defendant in this study, Sarah Lloyd was executed after she was found guilty of stealing goods totalling 40s upwards, including pockets containing between 10 and 11 guineas, from her elderly widowed employer, Sarah Syer, and Syer's companion, Elizabeth Hoborough in Hadleigh.[62] The trial report suggests that once she had left the immediate influence of her large but conventional family, she was easily coerced into 'illicit connection effected under repeated promises of marriage' by Joseph Clarke and was easily led by him into committing theft.[63] At the time of her arrest, Sarah Lloyd was single, also aged nineteen and one of eleven children whose parents lived a few miles away in Naughton. Lloyd was tried without legal representation, was found guilty and executed after the failure of appeals to the Home Secretary.[64] The narrative that followed the trial report blamed her for lacking even rudimentary knowledge of Christianity, which appeared to point the finger of blame at her upbringing.[65]

The apportionment of blame on the offender because of their lack of 'early impressions of religion' is also evident in Richard Cobbold's *History of Margaret Catchpole*.[66] Catchpole's upbringing and early life were unconventional in comparison with the family of John Cobbold, her employer. She was the 'natural' daughter of Elizabeth Catchpole, who was unmarried and returned to work after Margaret's birth and baptism in Hoo.[67] She was left in the care of her maternal aunt Sarah who then gave birth to two natural children with William Edwards before she married William Leader of Brandeston.[68] Nonconformity and alternative ways of living appear to have been the normality of Catchpole's life. Her prosecution for the theft of John

[61] Portia Robinson, *The Women of Botany Bay: A Reinterpretation of the Role of Women in the Origins of Australian Society*, 2nd edn., revised by Portia Robinson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), pp. 242-243; *Convict Records* https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/killett/elizabeth/69712 [accessed 21 November 2024].
[62] *The Trial of Joseph Clarke the younger and Sarah Lloyd* (Ipswich: printed by S. Jackson, 1800).
[63] *Trial of Clarke and Lloyd.*
[64] *Cambridge Independent Press*, 1 May 1875.
[65] *Trial of Clarke and Lloyd.*
[66] Richard Cobbold, *The History of Margaret Catchpole: A Suffolk Girl* (originally published, London: Henry Coulburn, 1847; facsimile edition, Ipswich: The Deben Bookshop, 1971), pp. v-vi.
[67] SA, FC108/021/1, Hoo Parish Registers (baptisms); Richard Cobbold Papers, letter from Matilda Stanford, 29 July 1848; Laurie Chater Forth, *Margaret Catchpole: the Hawkesbury's Convict Midwife* (Richmond, N.S.W.: Laurie Chater Forth, 2006), p. 11.
[68] SA, Brandeston Parish Registers, FC105/D1/1-5 & FC105/D1-4; Hoo Parish Registers, FC108/D2/1.

Cobbold's horse eighteen months after she left his employment may not have been her first serious crime. The *Suffolk Chronicle* in 1858 included a statement from John Glyde that she had previously been charged with 'entering a house in Brook-street [in Ipswich] at night and stealing a purse from the head of the bed […] from the lady she had lived as servant'.[69] No further evidence has been found on this incident.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has investigated the impact of poverty on women's lives in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 and the possible contribution of theft to women's economies of makeshifts as the means of survival in exceptionally poor circumstances. Although no information has been uncovered about the lives of Eliz. Ling and Mary Bugg before or after they were accused of stealing cheese from John Seaman of Fressingfield, the chapter has highlighted the difficulties faced by the local population of this northern region of Suffolk during the decline of the linen industry in the north of the county, which included this village. It has suggested that the impact of this decline may have been faced by all members of the community who worked as weavers in the linen industry and in ancillary roles connected with it. Because their crimes took place in this region, the chapter has suggested that Ling and Bugg may similarly have faced harsh economic circumstances caused by this decline. If this were the case, the theft and receipt of cheese may have been part of their own economies of makeshifts.

The chapter has also explored the limited award of outdoor and indoor relief to women in Suffolk and the measures they may have taken to survive without this support. These may have involved legitimate sources (such as receiving donations from charities, and the pawning and selling of goods) and non-legitimate means (minor thefts and the receipt of stolen goods).[70] The possible reasons underlying the thefts by Ling and Bugg were also contrasted with motivations underpinning thefts of large quantities of goods or money by female live-in servants from their employers. The chapter has suggested that women such as Elizabeth Killett may have attempted to take large amounts of goods or money from their employers in order to escape a badly paid rural situation in favour of escaping to London to live on the proceeds of crime.

The chapter has also looked further into the backgrounds of some women accused of theft. The difficulty in this search has been that very few records exist of women's lives at the

[69] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 17 April, 1858.
[70] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life*-Cycle, p. 7-8.

turn of the eighteenth century and few women can be traced back to their parish of origin. Furthermore, quarter sessions records and petty sessions reports of fraudulent spinning provide very few details about the women themselves or their ages. However, evidence has been found that may tentatively suggest that some women may have been susceptible to stealing because circumstances of poverty in their early lives meant they were brought up in the workhouse and lacked the skills to survive outside it when they left.

CHAPTER 5: PROSECUTION, PROSECUTORS AND PROSECUTION ASSOCIATIONS

> '[…] the right of prosecution instead of being exercised for the public good […] is placed entirely in the hands of the offended party, who becomes by this means the sole arbiter of the fate of the offender […][1]

The visiting French judge and jurist Cottu observed in 1820 that victims of property crime in England played the central role in decisions to prosecute offenders; responsibility was rarely taken by officials. That the onus was on the victim to detect, arrest and take the offender before a magistrate for committal, and then to prosecute them at the quarter sessions or assizes, has been confirmed by Peter King.[2] However, King also found that the victim usually retained 'immense freedom of manoeuvre' in their decision to turn up, to prosecute the offender (or not) as well as in their efforts to influence the charge against the offender and the resulting sentence.[3]

Cox, Shoemaker and Shore have elaborated further on the victim's obligations in the prosecution process. If the magistrate decided there was sufficient evidence to substantiate a prosecution at the higher courts, and because crimes under English common law were 'public wrongs against the king's peace', the victim would be 'bound over by recognizance to appear at the next meeting of the relevant court' to prosecute the offender.[4] When victims were obliged to proceed, they became 'prosecutors' because they were acting on the king's behalf and the offender was probably committed to gaol to await trial. [5] Before a case was heard, however, it went before the grand jury to decide if the evidence was strong enough to proceed to trial before the petty jury.[6] If it was, the indictment was annotated with the words 'true bill' or TB; 'no true bill' or NTB confirmed there was insufficient evidence and the case was rejected.[7]

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[1] M. Cottu, *On the Administration of the Criminal Code in England and the Spirit of the English Government*, vol xvi, xxxi (published in translation, London: 1820), p. 23.
[2] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 17.
[3] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 17.
[4] Pamela Cox, Robert Shoemaker and Heather Shore, *Victims and Criminal Justice: A History*, (Oxford, 2023; online edn., Oxford Academic, 19 Oct 2023), pp. 61. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192846488.003.0003> [accessed 1 Aug. 2024].
[5] Cox *et al*, *Victims and Criminal Justice*, pp. 61.
[6] Cox *et al*, *Victims and Criminal Justice*, p. 51.
[7] Cox *et al*, *Victims and Criminal Justice*, p. 51.

This chapter investigates victims of property crime who took the decision to prosecute women who stole their property at the quarter sessions or assizes, or were obliged by recognizance to do so. It attempts to find out what motivated individual victims of property crime to prosecute offenders and explores cases that involved a third party who stood in for the victim to conduct the prosecution. The chapter also examines the growth of prosecution associations in Suffolk at the end of the eighteenth century and the connection between technological developments in printing and the actions threatened by associations against thieves. It extends the discussion of the case of Margaret Catchpole by investigating her arrest, committal and trial after she tried to sell John Cobbold's horse in London. It begins, however, by looking at the ways in which informal punishment may have been used to avoid costly recourse to the courts.

5.1 INFORMAL RESOLUTION VERSUS FORMAL PROSECUTION

Not all offenders were caught or committed for trial for their alleged offences. Because the high costs involved deterred poorer victims of crime, King has argued that perpetrators of theft were most likely to be prosecuted by well off victims, but he also proposed that local informal options may have been available for some crimes.[8] This confirmed J. M. Beattie's earlier observation that informal resolution in small communities may have been preferred to formal prosecution.[9] Beattie further argued that the relationship between victim and offender was central to the victim's decision to proceed with prosecution or to look for an alternative solution.[10] If the victim and accused lived in the same village, justice for a first offence may have been served informally within the local community, particularly if the family of the accused had a reputation to protect.[11] Recourse to a magistrate was only likely to be considered if the accused were a repeat offender or came from outside the village.[12] While the decision to prosecute was realistically available only to wealthier members of small communities, resolution by local informal justice was no doubt common to all groups across society.

Carolyn A. Conley found that 'traditional patterns of judicial discretion and extra-legal community sanctions' were still favoured over court procedures in nineteenth century Kent.[13]

[8] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 17.
[9] J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 8.
[10] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 8.
[11] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 8.
[12] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 8.
[13] Carolyn A. Conley, *The Unwritten Law: Criminal Justice in Victorian Kent* (New York: Oxford

In Suffolk, George Ewart Evans found that as late as the first part of the twentieth century 'Rough Bands' played outside offenders' homes in cases of incest or wife-beating.[14] For the period of this study, it is likely that informal justice was favoured for minor offences in Suffolk, but additionally possible that some crimes went unnoticed or unreported because victims accepted theft as part of their lives. If informal justice did not remedy the problem, offenders could be taken before one or two magistrates at the petty sessions, depending on the offence.

The dearth of surviving petty sessions books in Suffolk for the period of this study limits observations on prosecutions for theft at the summary courts; however, hearings of petty cases may already have been in the process of moving from petty to quarter sessions. Beattie observed a shift away from the petty sessions at the end of the eighteenth century in Surrey.[15] There, House of Correction quarter sessions calendars indicate that most common property offences were no longer dealt with summarily by magistrates, but by the higher courts, which required magistrates to take testimonies from offenders and witnesses.[16] This apparent hardening of attitudes towards property crime is reinforced by the increase in capital statutes for crimes against property. Leon Radzinowicz estimated that between 50 and 200 crimes were made capital by statute between 1688 and 1820 and most related to offences against property.[17] The consequence of this legislative change was to increase the number of cases at the assizes against men and women for serious crimes.

The broadly similar numbers of female prosecutions for property crime in consecutive books of Suffolk quarter sessions between 1781 and 1801 (around 34 per book) appear to confirm that prosecutors in this period proceeded consistently against female offenders for relatively minor, low value and non-violent thefts.[18] In light of the growing number of capital statutes, an additional interpretation is that some prosecutors were prepared to down value the goods stolen in order to punish the offender but avoid a capital sentence. A further view proposed by Beattie is that women were believed to 'pose[…] a less serious threat to lives,

University Press, 1991), p. 3.

[14] George Ewart Evans, *The Pattern under the Plough* (Toller Fratrum: Little Toller Books, 2013), pp. 109-113.

[15] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 270.

[16] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 270.

[17] Leon Radzinowicz, *A History of the English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750*, vol. 1, p. 4, cited in Douglas Hay, 'Property, Authority and the Criminal Law', in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, 2nd edn., rev by Cal Winslow, Douglas Hay and Peter Linebaugh (London: Verso, 2011), p. 18.

[18] As discussed in Chapter 2 and itemised in Appendix 1.

property, and order' and, therefore, were not usually charged with the most serious crimes which generated the harshest physical punishments, including execution.[19]

The reasons why victims were prepared to prosecute female offenders in the most serious cases are rather less clear. Prosecutions of women at the assizes between 1796 and 1807 may reflect the fact that some victims were unwilling to downgrade the value of goods stolen from them, particularly if the quantity and value were high.[20] This discretional option was unavailable, whatever the prosecutor's wishes, in cases where thefts were committed against people and property with violence: these were the most serious capital offences. The element of violence thus forced the magistrate's decision to bind over the victim by recognizance to prosecute an offender at the assize court. In several cases between 1797 and 1803 in Suffolk, women worked in small groups with other women or men to commit theft and dispose of the goods; these cases were almost all prosecuted at the assizes and involved large amounts and high values of goods.[21] The crime of horse stealing, which may have required only one person to break into a stable and take the horse, had been a capital offence since 1699 and was similarly tried at the assizes.[22] In the late eighteenth century, horses were valuable assets that were increasingly used in agriculture in place of oxen and in transport to pull carriages.[23] Furthermore, they were in increasing demand from the troops during years of war.[24]

Despite their obligations, victims of property crime did not always pursue prosecution. Accepting that costs of prosecution militated against the involvement of the poor in the pursuit of justice, King has argued that formal prosecution by wealthier victims was also rare.[25] By examining the diaries of relatively wealthy householders in seventeenth and eighteenth century southern England, he concluded that losses to theft were acknowledged but offenders were not commonly prosecuted. The farmers, clergymen, shopkeeper and clothier in this sample indicated that a rough minimum of three felonies were recorded per household over ten years, though very few resulted in prosecutions.[26] Nonetheless, victims

[19] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 438.
[20] No women were prosecuted at the assizes for property crime in 1796 but between four and six were prosecuted annually at this court in most other years.
[21] Appendix 2.
[22] Will. III, c.23 (1699): *An Act for the better apprehending, prosecuting and punishing of Felons that commit Burglary, Housebreaking or Robbery in Shops, Warehouses, Coach-houses or Stables, or that Steal Horses.*
[23] Nicholas Woodward, 'Horse-stealing in Wales, 1730-1830', *The Agricultural History Review*, 57 (2009), pp. 70-108, p. 73.
[24] Woodward, 'Horse-stealing in Wales, 73.
[25] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 18-19.
[26] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 18-19.

at this level of society, mid-way between the very rich and the poor, were likely to make up the main body of prosecutors in Essex.[27] In the second half of the eighteenth century, farmers, tradesmen and artisans accounted for about 70% of prosecutions for felony at county quarter sessions courts; labourers and servants accounted for 26%; the gentry and professionals accounted for 10%.[28] Almost all prosecutors in this period were men.

King also claimed that though the working poor undoubtedly sustained losses of property and lacked the resources to prosecute suspects, they also sometimes fell victim to theft because they lacked servants to protect their goods.[29] They were particularly vulnerable if they travelled to find work and the chances of recovering stolen goods were slim. Indictment levels were further compromised by the costs involved in travel to the county assize and quarter sessions courts. King further argued that numbers of prosecutions fell during wartime periods because many poor offenders enlisted for the army, rather than facing prosecution.[30] This loss of the breadwinner for military service undoubtedly also contributed to family hardship and may have led to some increase in women's crime, but the fall in prosecutions during wartime was a short term feature which was likely to be reversed when the war ended and demobilized men returned home.[31]

5.2 THE PROCESS AND COST OF PROSECUTION

In eighteenth century Surrey, Beattie found that prosecution was usually initiated when the victim made a complaint to a local magistrate.[32] Alternatively, the victim could attend a sitting court to request the drawing up of an indictment and a warrant to detain the offender.[33] But for minor offences including hedge-breaking, wood-theft and embezzlement from employers, magistrates were empowered to work alone or in pairs to hand out summary justice.[34]

Hay and Snyder's detailed description of the steps involved in prosecution in the eighteenth century confirms a costly and time-consuming process which demanded that

[27] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 36.
[28] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 35-38.
[29] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 20.
[30] King, *Crime, Justice and* Discretion, pp. 156-157.
[31] King, *Crime, Justice and* Discretion, p. 162.
[32] Beattie, *Crime and the* Courts, p. 268.
[33] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 268.
[34] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 269.

victims were relatively well off.[35] The victim was bound by recognizance to prosecute the defendant and to take witnesses before the magistrate; he was further compelled to decide on the charge, to 'draw the indictment' with the clerks and ensure that he and the witnesses were present at the court hearing.[36] The decision to go ahead indicated the victim could meet the costs involved, which Beattie estimated to be in the order of £3, based on the average amounts paid to prosecutors when costs were awarded at the Surrey assizes.[37] However, there was increasing encouragement to the less well off victim to prosecute: in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, discretionary payments of costs at the assizes increased and were more likely to be awarded to labourers than the better off.[38] But these payments did not cover the fees of solicitors or prosecuting counsel and were unlikely to match the actual expenditure involved.[39] The victim's determination to punish the offender and deter other potential offenders from stealing his property in future may have been more realistic than his resolve to recover the items stolen.

Although most victims of property crimes were unlikely to be recompensed for the prosecution of an offender, some discretionary payments were awarded for successful prosecutions from the mid-eighteenth century.[40] For the conviction of a horse thief, a 'Tyburn Ticket' would automatically be issued by the assize judge to grant lifelong exemption to the prosecutor from parish office.[41] This ticket could be sold by the prosecutor for as much as £25.

5.3 PROSECUTIONS BY VICTIMS

Chapter 4 showed that limited information on Suffolk female property offenders survives in the court records, newspaper reports or other records in the public domain, apart from in a few high profile cases. On the other hand, victims who prosecuted them were mainly situated socially and financially mid-way between the very rich and the poor and were likely to be well-known locally and traceable in contemporary publications, including newspapers and trade directories. John Seaman, the farmer who prosecuted Eliz. Ling and

[35] Douglas Hay and Francis Snyder, 'Using the Criminal Law, 1750-1850: Policing, Private Prosecution, and the State', in *Policing and Prosecution in Britain, 1750-1850*, ed. by Douglas Hay and Francis Snyder (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989), 3-52 (pp. 25-26).
[36] Hay and Snyder, 'Using the Criminal Law', p. 26.
[37] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, pp. 41-48.
[38] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, pp. 43-47.
[39] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 46.
[40] King, *Crime, Justice and* Discretion, p. 48.
[41] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 52.

Mary Bugg (discussed in Chapter 4) belonged to Fressingfield Prosecution Association which implies that he owned property that he wanted to protect and may previously have experienced pilfering or larger thefts of his goods.[42] As an association member he would be obliged under its terms of membership to prosecute anyone who stole his property, in return for the financial and administrative support of the association.

Bailey's British Directory of 1784 enables some of the prosecutors in Suffolk to be identified from the information derived from entries by name, town, trade or occupation and place of business.[43] *Bailey's* confirms that prosecutors in Suffolk were mainly in the middle range of society and were skilled tradesmen or craftsmen but included farmers, shopkeepers and innkeepers.[44] Entries for prosecutors in the county town of Ipswich include the wealthy brewer John Cobbold and members of the Notcutt family who ran haberdashery, drapery and grocery shops in the Butter Market. Entries for smaller rural towns include Branwhite Brook, a yarn-maker of Lavenham, Owen Holmes a grocer in Beccles, and Thomas Slapp of Botesdale, an attorney and farmer, all of whom prosecuted women for theft. The economic and social grouping of these prosecutors equates approximately to the statuses of the writers of the diaries and letters used by King above.[45]

Although the statuses of prosecutors appear to be broadly similar in King's sample and *Baileys* entries for Suffolk, relationships between prosecutors and defendants were usually unequal. Samuel Elliston prosecuted Sarah Green at the Sudbury Borough Sessions in 1782, for stealing haberdashery from his wife Mary Elliston, a milliner.[46] Samuel Elliston was a plumber and glazier in Sudbury, who advertised his business in *Bailey's*.[47] The case against Green was that she obtained various goods from different shops under false pretences by 'going for them in the name of some reputable persons in the same place'.[48] No evidence has been found to substantiate her age, except that the *Ipswich Journal* reports that Mary Everett, 'another girl', was acquitted on a similar charge for lack of evidence.[49] This suggests that both defendants were young enough to be described as girls. As a tradesman, Samuel Elliston would not have been particularly wealthy and as a milliner, Mary Elliston's income would

[42] *Ipswich Journal*, 9 December 1789, 12 December 1793 & 19 December 1795.
[43] W. Bailey, *Bailey's British Dictionary, Volume the Fourth, The Eastern Directory*, *the first edition* (London: W. Bailey & Co., 1784).
[44] *Bailey's British Dictionary*.
[45] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 18-19.
[46] SA, Borough of Sudbury Sessions, EE 501/2/18, 1781-1809.
[47] *Bailey's British Dictionary*.
[48] *Ipswich Journal*, 13 April 1782.
[49] *Ipswich Journal*, 13 April 1782.

have been low. It is possible that the prosecution was funded jointly by owners of the other shops that Sarah Green had stolen from in a bid to pre-empt further thefts in the area.

George Hayward prosecuted Elizabeth Bexwell in 1783 at the Sudbury Borough Sessions for stealing an earthen pan.[50] *Bailey's* shows that Hayward was the keeper of the Rose and Crown coaching inn on the market place in Sudbury.[51] He was also one of the signatories to a motion passed by the Borough of Sudbury in 1792 which 'resolved to support the constitution in its three several branches of King, Lords and Commons' against 'seditious and treasonable meetings'.[52] Clearly he was well known for his political stance and was of some status in Sudbury. On the other hand, the parish registers suggest that Elizabeth Bexwell may have been born in Sudbury in 1766 and married in 1790.[53] She was around 17 and single at the time of the theft and the economic and social differential between her and Hayward in this case would have been immense.

A group of thefts of barley 'in the straw' in Exning in 1784 led to the prosecution of four women: Alice Short, Martha Bennett, Mary Livitt and Elizabeth Bridgeman. Short, Bennett and Livitt were described as married, which suggests they had family responsibilities. King has argued that if the grain had been taken while the barley remained standing and uncut in the field, it could have been tried summarily.[54] Furthermore, if the crop had been cut and taken away, the field could have legally been gleaned.[55] However, the theft of grain which had been cut and gathered but was not yet taken away was an indictable larceny.[56] This last alternative seems to have been the case of the four women, who were prosecuted at the same quarter sessions in 1784 Bury St Edmunds by three farmers from Exning: Wm Haxall, Robert Bones and Robert Houghton.[57]

The year from 1784 to 1785 was one of eleven periods of very harsh winters and low temperatures between 1775 and 1820 which, in turn, caused poor harvests and high food prices. It is likely the women's actions were a response to basic need, while the farmers' reaction was to try to protect their foodstuffs and to deter others from similar actions, possibly because they stood to gain from high grain prices. Further information on the status

[50] EE 501/2/18, 1781-1809.
[51] *Bailey's British Dictionary.*
[52] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 26 December 1792.
[53] Suffolk Baptism Index, Part 4; Suffolk Marriage Index.
[54] King, *Crime and Law*, p, 7; Peter King, 'Gleaners, farmers and the failure of legal sanctions, 1750-1850, *Past and Present*, 125 (1989), pp. 116-150.
[55] King, *Crime and Law*, p, 7.
[56] King, *Crime and Law*, p, 7.
[57] SA, Suffolk Quarter Sessions, B105/2/47, 1781-1786.

and ages of the prosecutors and defendants in this case has been difficult to find but an announcement of the death in 1787 of William Haxall of Exning described him as 'an eminent farmer and carcase butcher'.[58] This confirms his situation in the 'middling' category of prosecutor as a farmer who prepared carcases for sale at the market.

5.4 PROSECUTION ON BEHALF OF VICTIMS

In cases where victims themselves were too poor or not competent to prosecute, Suffolk court records suggest that prosecutions were undertaken by men with professional connections to law and order. John Ripshaw, the gaoler of the New Gaol in Ipswich fulfilled this role in the prosecution of Diana (or Dinah) Parker in 1797.[59] In October 1796, Parker was committed for stealing a black satin cloak and various other items from Susan Howes, a widow from Ixworth.[60] The victims and several witnesses to this offence were obliged by recognizance to appear at the hearing but prosecution does not appear to have gone ahead. This was possibly because the victim was not competent or financially able to proceed. It is also possible that Parker was shown leniency and allowed to remain out of gaol until the trial because she had a child.[61] This would have saved the parish the financial responsibility of the child's upkeep in the poor's house.

However, Parker was charged for second offence of theft in December 1796 and was committed to the New Gaol in Ipswich. This was for the capital offence of breaking and entering the house of labourer Charles Mason in Mellis and stealing a cotton gown and calamanco petticoat belonging to Elizabeth Mason.[62] The theft took place during the day when no one was at home. At the assizes in July 1797, Parker was prosecuted by John Ripshaw, for the offence against Charles Mason.[63] From the limited evidence available, it appears that Charles Mason had no involvement in the prosecution, although Elizabeth Mason was a witness.[64] Parker was found guilty and sentenced to death, the sentence commuted to seven years' transportation.[65]

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[58] Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 31 August 1787.
[59] TNA, Suffolk Assize Rolls, ASSI 94/1441, 1797 L&S.
[60] ASSI 94/1441.
[61] State Library of New South Wales, M944, Papers relating to Margaret Catchpole, letter 21 January 1797 to Dr Stebbenes.
[62] *Ipswich Journal*, 17 December 1796.
[63] ASSI 94/1441.
[64] ASSI 94/1441.
[65] HO 13, Correspondence and Warrants, 7 April 1797.

Parker was tried at the same assizes in July 1797 at which Margaret Catchpole was tried for stealing John Cobbold's coach horse in Ipswich and was convicted of this capital crime.[66] Catchpole was also found guilty and sentenced to death but was reprieved on condition of transportation for seven years. The two women were held in the County Gaol in Ipswich and were among three 'Transports' named in the Calendar of Prisoners for the Lent assizes in March 1798. Parker was said to be 25 years of age, Catchpole was 35 and they were both single.[67] Parker's age puts her at the top end of the age profile (between 16 and 26) when mobile single people in Essex left home and may have been at their most likely to commit property crime.[68] Catchpole's age puts her a year over the age group (between 30 and 34) by which 70% of women were married.[69] Local parish records confirm that Diana Parker was probably born in Mellis in 1771 to a single mother.[70] She may have known Mason and the time of day when no one would be at home. Mason seems to have been a long-standing member of that community who was eventually buried there.[71]

Diana Parker's full pardon and release in 1801 may be connected to Margaret Catchpole's escape from gaol in 1800. Information in the press suggests that Parker may have been the person who alerted the gaoler to Catchpole's family connections in Sudbourne (in east Suffolk) where she was recaptured after she escaped from the gaol in Ipswich on 28 March 1800.[72] An article in the *Ipswich Journal* in March 1800 about Catchpole's escape states that she and other female convicts had been locked in their ward on that day to undertake the washing for the gaol, which normally finished at seven in the evening when they would usually knock at the door to be allowed out 'for sustenance'.[73] On this occasion the *Ipswich Journal* reported that Catchpole was said to have sworn vengeance to 'anyone who should give the usual signal till 8'.[74] It is possible that between seven and eight o'clock she put the apparatus in place that enabled her to climb out of the gaol later that night and that Parker passed on the information about Catchpole's whereabouts to the gaoler some time afterwards. Catchpole was recaptured in Sudbourne by John Ripshaw and the constable, John Lee. For this second crime, Ripshaw was bound by recognizance to prosecute Catchpole

[66] ASSI 94/1441.
[67] SA, Lackford Petty Sessions, Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, Prisoners at Lent Assizes, 21 March 1797.
[68] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 201.
[69] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 202.
[70] England Births & Baptisms, 1538-1975, register shows that she was baptised in Mellis on 12 May 1771.
[71] ASSI 94/1441; the National Burial Index for England and Wales shows that Mason died in 1826 aged 77.
[72] ASSI 94/1513.
[73] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 March 1800.
[74] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 March 1800.

for being 'at large'; Lee was bound to appear as a witness. Parker's action may have resulted in her second 'Free Pardon for her said Crime […] without any condition whatever' from Portland, the Home Secretary, in July 1801 and her release.[75]

5.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROSECUTION ASSOCIATIONS

The prosecution of offenders was the victim's legal and expensive obligation and was beyond the reach of many victims.[76] For those members of society who could afford an annual fee, prosecution associations provided a mutual system of financial and legal insurance against property losses, with the overall purpose of crime prevention.[77] Associations were 'rooted in civil society and voluntarism' and aimed to deter crime by prosecuting felons and offering rewards to witnesses for successful convictions.[78] Philips asserted that associations represented a half-way, transitional position between the old system of law enforcement and 'state-run, tax-funded policing'.[79] He further suggested this was preferable to a new policing system, which would financially impact wealthier residents who already shouldered responsibility for the old and poor.[80] Philips also claimed the upsurge in prosecution associations was a reaction against events such as the civil disorder of the Gordon Riots, the perceived 'crime wave' that followed war with America and the build-up of prisoners on hulks awaiting transportation to the new colony of New South Wales.[81] The development of these associations seems to have signified a general hardening of attitudes towards property offenders in the last decades of the eighteenth century. This attitude has already been suggested in Chapter 3 in the hostility of the Norwich weavers towards spinners from Suffolk and other counties who pilfered small quantities of wool and supplied them with fraudulent yarn.

Clive Emsley interpreted the sharp increase in prosecution associations in the 1770s and 80s as a collective response by owners to perceived threats against property, particularly their horses and livestock.[82] Nicholas Woodward's research into horse-stealing in Wales between 1730 and 1830 provides a plausible explanation for this specific concern in Suffolk.

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[75] HO 13, Correspondence and Warrants, 11 July 1801.
[76] Cox *et al*, *Victims and Criminal Justice*, pp. 67.
[77] Mark Koyama, 'Prosecution Associations in Industrial Revolution England: Private Providers of Public Goods?, *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 41, 1 (2012), 95-130 (p. 96).
[78] Cox *et al*, *Victims and Criminal Justice*, pp. 67.
[79] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', pp. 114-115.
[80] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', pp. 114-115.
[81] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', p. 123.
[82] Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England: 1750-1850* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), pp. 195-196.

Woodward argued that legitimate trade in horses increased in the eighteenth century because of growing demand in agriculture and decline in the use of oxen, as well as in private transport and in response to the demands of war.[83] He found high demand for Welsh horses in the eastern English counties, which probably reflected changing patterns of agriculture here, as well as the needs of the army during the wars with France.[84] He further noted that as horse prices rose between 1790 and 1820, stolen horses gave a considerably higher return than many other kinds of theft, apart from stolen cattle which had roughly equivalent value.[85]

The belief that existing systems of crime prevention were inadequate led the magistrate John Fielding to encourage the setting up of prosecution associations by private subscription to support the victims of crime in different parts of the country.[86] These organisations were formally established by articles of association and sets of regulations; management was by a secretary (usually a solicitor) or treasurer who received a retainer for his services, including the preparation of prosecution cases and the payment of expenses and rewards to witnesses.[87] It was the role of the secretary to take an offender before a magistrate for committal to trial at the quarter sessions or assizes.[88] On behalf of the association, the secretary took responsibility for all procedures concerned with the preparation of legal documentation, including the brief for the prosecution. He also ensured that witnesses were bound over to appear at the trial; paid fees; and arranged transport and accommodation during the trial.[89]

5.6 PROSECUTION ASSOCIATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRINT

Styles recognised the development of commercial printing in the eighteenth century as significant to the increase of prosecution associations because it enabled the fast transmission of information that could help in the detection, detention and prosecution of criminals.[90] He argued that the printing press ultimately displaced the slow system of hue and cry, which required a magistrate to draw up a written warrant to instruct village constables

[83] Woodward, 'Horse-stealing in Wales', p. 73.
[84] Woodward, 'Horse-stealing in Wales', p. 76.
[85] Woodward, 'Horse-stealing in Wales', pp. 81-82.
[86] David Philips, 'Good Men to Associate and Bad Men to Conspire: Associations for the Prosecution of Felons in England, 1760-1869', in *Policing and Prosecution in Britain, 1750-1850*, ed. by Douglas Hay and Francis Snyder (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 113-170, pp. 123-12 4.
[87] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', pp. 132-138.
[88] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', pp. 138-139.
[89] Philips, 'Good men to Associate', pp. 138-139.
[90] John Styles, 'Print and Policing: Crime Advertising in Eighteenth-Century Provincial England', in *Policing and Prosecution*, pp. 55-111, (pp. 55 & 88).

to seek out stolen goods and arrest suspects.[91] With local printing technology, the prosecution association secretary had the means to quickly advertise thefts in a newspaper or portable, printed handbill.[92] The handbill had advantages over a newspaper advertisement because it could be put up in public places and read out to people who could not or did not read the newspaper.[93] Moreover, it was usually cheaper and could be printed and distributed more quickly than a weekly newspaper such as the *Ipswich Journal*.[94] Importantly, a handbill could be directed towards a target audience, particularly in areas where newspapers were not widely circulated.

Newspaper advertisements had several different functions. First, they promoted the existence and purpose of a named association in a specific region. They also alerted members to forthcoming meetings and confirmed resolutions passed. Thus, a notice placed by Mendlesham Association in the *Ipswich Journal* reported on a meeting of 'Members of this Association for apprehending and prosecuting felons and other offenders, holden at the Royal Oak on Monday Oct.7, 1793'.[95] This notice listed the rewards payable for a wide range of different felonies after successful prosecution:

> 'For every house-breaker, £5
> For every person stealing a horse or cattle of any description, £5
> For every person robbing a barn, stable or outhouse, or maliciously setting fire to them, or to any stack of corn or stover, £5
> For every murderer, highwayman or footpad, £5
> For every person stealing poultry, turnips, wood, damaging fences & c. £1
> For every person convicted of buying or receiving any stolen property whatsoever, knowing the same to have been stolen, £1.'[96]

Advertisements also alerted the reading public to specific thefts, described the goods stolen, named the association's members and its secretary or treasurer.[97] The treasurer of Mendlesham Association was John Timpson. Members of rural associations typically comprised gentlemen and farmers from local villages, while gentlemen and tradesmen formed the basis of urban groups.[98] Lists named a few women (usually widows) and, occasionally, 'men of lesser properties'.[99] The fees paid by members were relatively cheap,

[91] Styles, 'Printing and Policing', pp. 82-83.
[92] Styles, 'Printing and Policing', pp. 82-83.
[93] Styles, 'Printing and Policing', p. 70.
[94] Styles, 'Printing and Policing', p. 85.
[95] *Ipswich Journal*, 12 October, 1793.
[96] *Ipswich Journal*, 12 October, 1793.
[97] Styles, 'Printing and Policing', p. 88.
[98] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', p.132.
[99] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', p.132; King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 53.

with subscriptions varying according to the size of overall membership and the frequency of anticipated activity.[100]

Occasionally, advertisements in the form of confessions and apologies named offenders and included a signed promise that they would not repeat their crimes.[101] This would have been cheaper than prosecution and the parish's support of an offender's family if the breadwinner were to be imprisoned. The *Ipswich Journal* printed a joint confession from Robert Eighteen and his wife Mary in May 1790, headed 'A Caution to Barley Gleaners', in which she confessed 'to gleaning barley from off certain lands in […] Hadleigh' and for which he was held in Ipswich Gaol 'suffer[ing] great distress' for four months.[102] The confession promised they would publish the advertisement three times at their own expense 'as a caution to others' and their marks were witnessed by John Ripshaw, the gaoler. The confession does not name the association involved but it includes 'sincere thanks to the Prosecutor, and such other gentleman as consented to my discharge'. The gentlemen were probably members of the local association, who were likely to have been payers of the poor rate which supported Mary while Robert was in gaol. His release would have cost them less than the support of his family.

5.7 PROSECUTION ASSOCIATIONS IN SUFFOLK

The proliferation of prosecution associations in the 1780s and 1790s seems to confirm that wealthier residents in Suffolk were concerned about thefts of their property. Associations began to increase here in the 1780s, a decade later than Emsley proposed, but the earliest example retrieved in this study, the Blackbourn Hundred Association for Apprehending and Prosecuting Horse-stealers, was set up in 1761.[103] Its inauguration, purpose, administration and membership were recorded in the *Ipswich Journal* and served as a model for other groups. The association's purpose was to prevent thefts of members' horses by offering a large reward for information that would lead to conviction of the thieves. An editorial comment in the *Journal* (copied from *Lloyd's Chronicle*) stated the association proposed a subscription that would pay £40 to anyone who helped in the arrest and conviction of horse thieves.[104] 'Gentlemen, farmers and others' were invited to a meeting at

[100] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', p.135.
[101] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', p. 129.
[102] *Ipswich Journal*, 1 May 1790.
[103] *Ipswich Journal*, 15 August 1761.
[104] *Ipswich Journal*, 15 August 1761.

the Pickerel coaching inn in Ixworth where subscription books would be opened.[105] The subscription was formally set up on 25 September 1761 with Charles Beart, Attorney at Law, appointed as Treasurer and Agent.[106] Articles of Association were entered into at the Pickerel on 23 October 1761 but the premium payable was by now reduced to £20.[107] This figure, nonetheless, remained considerably higher than the one guinea usually offered by individuals who advertised lost or stolen animals in the *Ipswich Journal* and were not association members. For example, Francis Goldsmith of Ixworth, who does not appear in lists of members of the Blackbourn Hundred Association, offered one guinea in 1780 following the theft of a black cart horse.[108]

Stimulus for the inauguration of this association probably arose from the vulnerability of properties and land to theft in this region of north Suffolk. Blackbourn Hundred comprised 34 rural and isolated villages on or close to the main east-west route between Bury St Edmunds and Scole (Norfolk) and along an older route to Thetford in the north.[109] At its inception, members came from the wealthier classes of 12 villages and all were men.[110] Their membership implied that they owned horses for transport and agriculture, and were concerned that these animals could be easily stolen and ridden away from fields and stables. Thomas Crofts Read, William Hovell and Robert Quince were Esquires (landed gentry). Wm. Rye and Mr Welton were clerics; Mr Hall and Mr Grimwood were Chief Constables. The other 34 members were probably farmers or of similar status.

The proposal to establish Blackbourn Hundred association was well received in the press. An editorial comment in the *Ipswich Journal* suggested it would be followed by 'every Hundred and County in the Kingdom because of its laudableness'.[111] Yet further response in Suffolk was slow. A comprehensive search of the *Ipswich Journal* between 1 January and 31 December 1770 found the Blackbourn association was the only one to advertise meetings.[112] No further proposals to set up associations were found in Suffolk, although proposals were

[105] *Ipswich Journal*, 19 September 1761.
[106] *Ipswich Journal*, 3 October 1761.
[107] *Ipswich Journal*, 7 November 1761.
[108] *Ipswich Journal*, 27 May 1780.
[109] Alistair Robertson, 'Turnpikes and Stagecoaches', in '*An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Revised and Enlarged Edition*', 3rd edn., ed. by David Dymond & Edward Martin, (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council & The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999), 126-127. The route between Bury and Scole opened as a turnpike in 1769.
[110] *Ipswich* Journal, 7 November 1761.
[111] *Ipswich Journal*, 15 August 1761.
[112] *Ipswich Journal*, 14 April; 8 September; 29 September 1770.

printed in the *Journal* in 1770 to set up associations in Swaffham (Norfolk), Witham (Essex) and Harleston, Norfolk (for residents there and across the border in Suffolk).[113]

Similar investigation between 1 January and 31 December 1780 established that a further eleven prosecution associations had been established in Suffolk and now advertised themselves in the *Ipswich Journal*.[114] These associations represented hundreds and groups of villages across the county. Their titles foregrounded the vulnerability of specific goods in different regions. For example, notices by the Melford Association for Prosecuting Felonies, Burglaries etc., offered a reward of 'five guineas and reasonable expenses' after 13 yards of say were stolen at night from the tenterground of William Brome.[115]

Horse-stealing was a common determinant, however. For this specific offence, Styles considered the printed advertisement 'an effective and successful instrument of detection [and] one of the most important means of bringing suspects to trial and conviction.'[116] The Samford Association advertised the theft of a mare from Robert Baker of Brantham.[117] The Ipswich, Saxmundham and Colneis prosecution associations focused more broadly on the prosecution of felons in general.[118] The Rose and Crown Association for Apprehending and Prosecuting Horse Stealers, and all other Offenders whatsoever focused primarily on horse thefts but included everything else too.[119] This association also stated that any member whose horse had been stolen, and had used their utmost endeavours to find it, would be entitled after six months to recompense of at least two thirds of its value, agreed by three members who had known the horse in question.[120] The position of this public house in St Matthew's, Ipswich, was on the edge of the town, at a point where the roads from Norwich and Stowmarket met and was also close to the road from London. It is probable that members of the association were involved in the coaching trade or the transportation of goods to markets in Ipswich and surrounding districts.

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[113] *Ipswich Journal*, 30 June; 15 September; 1 December 1770.
[114] *Ipswich Journal*, 1 January 1780 – 31 December 1780.
[115] *Ipswich Journal*, 12 & 19 February 1780.
[116] Styles, 'Printing and Policing', p. 86.
[117] *Ipswich Journal*, 13 May 1780.
[118] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 December 1786 (Ipswich); 29 October 1791 (Saxmundham); 5 May 1787 (Colneis).
[119] 'An Account of the Gifts and Legacies that have been Given and Bequeathed to Charitable Uses in the Town of Ipswich', 1819, p. 278 <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=LwC0AEXS6h8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=An+account+of+the+gifts+and+legacies+that+have+been+given+and+bequeathed+to+charitable+users+in+the+town+of+Ipswich&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi9wOPIxontAhV-UBUIHTT-DQoQ6AEwAHoECAQQAg#v=onepage&q&f=false> [accessed 26 June 2024].
[120] 'Account of the Gifts and Legacies', p. 278.

A further investigation showed that around 40 associations placed advertisements in the *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury and Norwich Post* between 1 January and 31 December 1790. These, and the associations previously retrieved from the *Ipswich Journal* in 1780 are named in Table 5.1. Comparison between 1780 and 1790 confirms that this movement expanded considerably in the 1780s.

Table 5.1: Prosecution Associations, January - December 1780 & 1790

Prosecution Associations featured in newspapers 1 Jan – 31 Dec 1780	Prosecution Associations featured in newspapers 1 Jan – 31 Dec 1790
Bosmere & Claydon Hundred	Badwell Ash
Colneis Hundred	Ballingdon
Cosford Hundred	Benacre
Debenham	Benhall
Hundreds of East and West Flegg (Norfolk) &	Blackbourn
Hundred of Lothingland (Suffolk)	Blything Hundred
Melford	Bosmere & Claydon Hundred
Needham-Market	Botesdale
Rose & Crown, Ipswich	Boxford
Samford Hundred	Brockford
Yoxford	Bury
	Clare
	Coddenham
	Colneis Hundred
	Debenham
	Diss (including Suffolk villages)
	Finningham
	Framlingham
	Gt Thurlow, Lt Thurlow, Gt Wratting,
	Lt Wratting & Lt Bradley
	Heveningham
	Hoxne
	Ilketshall St Andrews
	Ipswich
	Lavenham
	Leiston
	Loes & Wilford Hundreds
	Lowestoft
	Melford
	Mendlesham
	Metfield
	Needham-Market
	Rose & Crown
	Samford Hundred
	Stowmarket
	Thedwastry Hundred
	Thingoe Hundred
	Tunstall
	Wangford
	Westleton
	Yoxford

Via notices in the *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury and Norwich Press*, Suffolk prosecution associations announced the dates, times and places of forthcoming meetings, named their subscribers and stated their home villages.[121] Central to the association's function were the quarterly, half-yearly and annual business meetings that were usually conducted in public houses. Business included the audit of accounts, the consideration of ways to attract new members and reports of recent thefts of members' property to which the association had lent support. In rural associations, business proceedings usually started in late morning or mid-afternoon, followed by dinner. This allowed members to arrive and return home in daylight. Notices further indicate that rural associations were set up to protect rural properties in hundreds or groups of neighbouring villages, within or across the Suffolk county boundaries. Groups of isolated, rural farms and villages which shared the same tracks, roads and access to common lands, would be vulnerable to similar kinds of theft. The benefit of scale in associations that involved several villages was that it gave them greater financial ability to prosecute offenders than would be available to individual members or smaller organisations.

Associations varied in membership, size and longevity and were largely rural. The Rose and Crown Association in St Matthew's, Ipswich was relatively small but was in existence until at least 1817 when its membership was 42.[122] It attracted subscribers from the Borough itself and several villages outside it, who drove along the same roads to reach markets in Ipswich.[123] Other associations were far larger. Subscribing under the umbrella of the Diss Association, 96 members in 1780 were resident in 25 villages in Suffolk and Norfolk, situated broadly along the Waveney valley, the boundary between the two counties.[124] This places it geographically to the east of the Blackbourn Association in north Suffolk. By 1789 the Diss Association had 174 members in 52 villages or towns in the two counties, the largest of which was Diss.[125] In 1820, it had a membership of 205 from 45 villages and towns.[126] Yet, smaller associations were also evident. Yoxford Association brought nine other villages in its orbit and still existed in 1823.[127] The association centred on Needham-Market similarly brought together 12 small

[121] For example, The *Ipswich Journal* of 16 January 1790 announced next meetings of the Finningham, Ballingdon, Rose & Crown (Ipswich) and Loes & Wilford prosecution Associations.
[122] 'Account of the Gifts and Legacies', p. 278.
[123] *Ipswich Journal*, 30 September 1780.
[124] *Ipswich Journal*, 26 June 1780.
[125] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 10 June 1789.
[126] *Ipswich Journal*, 19 June 1820.
[127] *Ipswich Journal*, 21 October 1780 & 29 March 1823.

and isolated villages with a membership of 36.[128] It continued to advertise losses of property until at least 1796.[129]

5.8 IPSWICH PROSECUTION ASSOCIATION

The Ipswich Prosecution Association for Apprehending and Prosecuting Felons and other Offenders was established on 27 December 1784, following a meeting of residents at Gowing's coffee-house.[130] The attorney Thomas Notcutt was appointed as its Agent and an 'association and subscription was entered into' at this meeting. The purpose of the association was to arrest and prosecute offenders in Ipswich itself and within a five mile radius. Notice of the quarterly meeting on 28 June 1785 listed 80 subscribers to the association, including two women: Ann Clarke, the widow of Joseph Clarke, a brandy merchant; and Susan Notcutt, the draper in the Buttermarket.[131]

The names of 40 of these subscribers are recorded in the Suffolk Poll Book of 1790, which implies that, by this point, they owned freehold land or property with an annual value of 40s or more.[132] They included town administrators R. Trotman and Wm. Truelove (Bailiffs) and Richard Crawley (Orwell River Commissioner); attorneys (Thomas Notcutt, Mr Not. Daldry and Benjamin Brame); a banker (John Spooner); surgeons (George Stebbing and James Brooks). They also included wealthy business owners: John Cobbold (brewer and shipbuilder); Stephen Teague (ship-builder) George Gowing (proprietor of the coffee house where association meetings were held); Thomas Turner (currier); John Ward (linen draper) and Thomas Roper (auctioneer). Less wealthy members included owners of smaller businesses in the town: Lionel Gowing (merchant), Benjamin Rix and John Doughty (auctioneers) and Joseph Conder (linen and woollen draper). This evidence of livelihoods suggests that members were first and foremost involved in administration, trade and commerce; there is no evidence that they were primarily farmers.

Membership of the Ipswich Association remained at the same level in October and December 1786 but numbers slumped soon after, dropping in 1788 to 46, of whom

[128] *Ipswich Journal*, 22 July 1780.
[129] *Ipswich Journal*, 9 July 1796.
[130] *Ipswich Journal*, 1 January 1785.
[131] *Ipswich Journal*, 25 June 1787.
[132] S. A. Raymond, and M. J., Raymond, *The Suffolk Poll Book 1790*, facsimile copy (Exeter: S. A. and M. R. Raymond, undated).

approximately 30 appear to be original members.[133] In 1789 and 1790 the Ipswich Association published occasional small announcements of meetings in the *Ipswich Journal* but did not publish lists of members.[134] According to these announcements, meetings continued to be held at Gowing's coffee-house and, unlike rural associations, often began at seven in the evening, even in the winter. This suggests that these meetings were as important for their social function as they were for association business purposes. It may also acknowledge that travelling home at night was safer in the town than travelling along dark, rural roads.

Associations in general published fewer notices in the *Journal* between 1792 and 1795. To establish if associations continued to practise between 1796 and 1800, newspaper notices in the *Ipswich Journal* were examined in January of each year, when associations commonly published dates of annual, half-yearly or quarterly meetings. The numbers of associations in Table 5.2 suggests that many continued to operate in this period when England was at war with France. Thus, concern for the protection of property continued to exist.

Table 5.2: Notices by associations in the *Ipswich Journal*, 1-31 January 1796-1799

1-31 January 1796	1-31 January 1797	1-31 January 1798	1-31 January 1799	1-31 January 1800
Barking	Badwell Ash	Benacre	Barking	Barking
Bildeston	Barking	Bildeston New	Beccles	Benacre
Bosmere & Claydon	Benacre	Association	Bildeston New	Bildeston Original
Bramfield	Bildeston	Bosmere & Claydon	Association	Association
Bungay Tuns	Bramfield	Bramfield	Bosmere & Claydon	Bildeston New
Bures	Bures St Mary	Bures St Mary	Bramfield	Association
Coddenham	Gt Bealings	Coddenham	Bures	Bosmere & Claydon
Friston	Ipswich	Framlingham	Friston	Botesdale
Gt Bealings	Leiston	Gt Bealings	Gt Bealings	Bramfield
Hoxne	Westleton	Ipswich	Hoxne	Bungay Tuns
Ilketshall St Andrew			Ipswich	Bures
Ipswich	Total = 10	Total = 9	Lowestoft	Gt Bealings
Lavenham				Hoxne
Leiston			Total = 11	Ipswich
Loes & Wilford				Lowestoft
Lowestoft				Stradbrook
Mendlesham				Westleton
Middleton				
Samford				Total = 14
Stradbrook				
Westleton				
Total = 21				

[133] *Ipswich Journal*, 7 October 1786 & 23 December 1786; 27 September 1788.
[134] *Ipswich Journal*, 20 June 1789; 2 October 1790.

5.9 IPSWICH ASSOCIATION AND THE PROSECUTION OF MARGARET CATCHPOLE

The detention and committal of Margaret Catchpole in Middlesex in 1797 for a property crime committed in Suffolk stand unique among other crimes of women investigated in this study. First, this appears to be the only case here between 1770 and 1820 in which a female defendant was accused of stealing a horse and the only one in which the actions of a prosecution association led to the swift capture of a female defendant. Moreover, many details of the case are confirmed by the surviving court evidence of Catchpole's detention, committal and trial at the summer assizes in Bury St Edmunds and are uniquely supported by other documents, including large numbers of contemporary newspaper articles.[135] This evidence enables the positions of both victim (John Cobbold) and defendant (Margaret Catchpole) to be investigated in the judicial process. It additionally shows that Ipswich Prosecution Association was central to her detention and prosecution.

Catchpole was charged with stealing Cobbold's valuable coach horse at night from his stables on St Margaret's Green in Ipswich. Cobbold was a wealthy and established Ipswich brewer and Catchpole's former employer.[136] He was also a member of the Ipswich Association for the Prosecution of Felons and the place of theft was on the edge of urban development at that time. The capital crime of horse-stealing was committed during the period when several privately-funded mutual prosecution associations operated in Suffolk, most notably with the purpose of preventing this crime.[137]

Catchpole was detained in Shoreditch when she attempted to sell the horse for £30 at a livery stables in Curtain Road, Shoreditch. This aroused the suspicion of the stables' owner, George Park, who had been alerted to the horse's theft by a handbill published by the Ipswich Prosecution Association, which included a description of the horse and had earlier been left with him by the Mail Coach guard, Edward Proctor.[138] Catchpole was taken into custody and committed to Newgate before her removal to Ipswich Gaol to await trial at the assizes in Bury St Edmunds.[139] This pre-emptive action by Park may be attributable to the 'extensive preventive powers' of magistrates and constables under the 1792 *Middlesex Magistrates Act*,

[135] ASSI 94/1441, 1797, L & S; ASSI 94/1331, 1800 S; *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury & Norwich Post*, 1797 and 1800; National Library of Australia, Margaret Catchpole Papers, MS 4211; State Library of New South Wales, Collections of papers relating to Margaret Catchpole, 1845-1965, M 944.
[136] MS 4211/6, Examination of Margaret Catchpole.
[137] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', p. 122.
[138] MS 4211/7, Brief for the prosecution, including Catchpole's confession.
[139] MS 4211/7, Brief for the prosecution, including Catchpole's confession; HO77/4, Newgate Prison Calendar.

following a succession of legislation in response to the London crime wave between 1749 and 1753.[140]

When Margaret Catchpole confessed to stealing Cobbold's horse, she was single and 35 years old, by which age 70% of women were either married or widowed.[141] She had been baptised in Hoo, the illegitimate daughter of Elizabeth Catchpole, and brought up in neighbouring Brandeston by Elizabeth's sister Sarah and Sarah's own illegitimate children.[142] Letters among Richard Cobbold's papers and her own correspondence with Ann Catchpole (another sister of Elizabeth) suggest that Margaret Catchpole remained in contact with her family throughout her life.[143] She was thus in a well supported network. Richard Cobbold's letters additionally confirm that Elizabeth Cobbold (his mother and John's second wife) had a great deal of respect for Catchpole.[144] However, Catchpole left the Cobbold household eighteen months before the crime, had suffered a prolonged period of illness and was living in a hostel in the parish of St Clement's in Ipswich at the time of the crime.[145] As a single unemployed woman, she might have been vulnerable to committing property crime to survive, although the support she received from her family suggests otherwise. In her confession Catchpole claimed that she was forced to take John Cobbold's horse by a man named John Cook, whom she had recently met and who threatened to murder her if she did not do so.[146]

John Cobbold's membership of the Ipswich Association helps to explains its swift response to the loss and subsequent recapture of his horse.[147] The sequence of events that led to Catchpole's arrest is told in annotations written on the draft *Brief for the Prosecution*.[148] This starts with a note that John Pipe (Cobbold's gardener) was the first person to enter the stable at 5 o'clock 'on Wednesday morning' (24 May 1797); he noticed the stable door was open and the horse was missing. The draft *Brief* includes a further note that the horse was

[140] 32 Geo. III, c. 53 (1792): *Middlesex Magistrates Act*; Paul Lawrence, 'The Vagrancy Act (1824) and the Persistence of Pre-emptive Policing in England since 1750', *British Journal of Criminology*, 57 (2017), 513–531 (pp. 515-516).
[141] P. Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations* (Cambridge, 1977) p. 27, cited in King, p. 203.
[142] FC108, 1653-1992, Hoo parish registers; FC105, 1560-2000, Brandeston parish registers.
[143] SA, HD 1/2/2/4, Letters to Richard Cobbold, 1845-1847; National Library of Australia, Papers of Margaret Catchpole, 1797-1917, MS 4211; State Library of New South Wales, Special Collections, Collections of papers relating to Margaret Catchpole, 1801-1870, M 944.
[144] SA, HD 1/2/2/4, Letters to Richard Cobbold, 1845-1847.
[145] MS 4211/7, Catchpole's confession.
[146] MS 4211/7, Catchpole's confession.
[147] *Ipswich Journal*, 23 December 1786.
[148] MS 4211, *Draft Brief for the Prosecution.*

presumed to have been stolen between 10 and 11 the previous evening.[149] It confirms that John Hagger, the prosecutor's coachman, had checked the horse was in the stable the previous evening and locked the door when he left. It further states that Edward Proctor, the Guard of the London Mail Coach, was travelling to Ipswich 'three miles this side of Colchester' when he was passed by a horse riding fast in the opposite direction towards London. Proctor saw the description of the horse when he arrived in Ipswich, which suggests the printed handbill had already been distributed by the Ipswich Association.[150] Cobbold dispatched Proctor and another person towards London to search for the horse but they 'lost intelligence' of it within 20 miles of London.[151]

The draft *Brief* also states that when Proctor travelled into London by mail coach the following Thursday he saw a horse leaving Wallis's Livery Stables that matched the description on the handbill.[152] After delivering bags to his Post Office he pursued the search at Wallis's livery where the horse had been baited and the rider had attempted to sell it for £30. He called at several other livery stables, leaving details of the horse at Messrs Yare and Park's stables in Moore Fields. Ten minutes after Proctor left Yare and Park's, the defendant took the horse there and offered to sell it. The draft *Brief* states that 'in consequence of a Hand Bill which [was] received from Proctor [George Park] caused her to be taken into custody'. Park sent for a Police Officer from the Public Office at Worship Street and she was arrested, wearing man's apparel. This police officer was John Blaketer.

The Cobbold family continues to maintain that John Cobbold did not want to prosecute Margaret Catchpole, who had saved the life of one of his sons when she was working for him, though the handbill indicates that he wanted to recover his roan coach horse.[153] But Cobbold was bound over by recognizance to prosecute her, while George Park (the horse dealer from Curtain Road, Shoreditch) and William Blaketer (the police constable from Worship Street police office, Shoreditch) were bound over to appear as witnesses.[154]

The remaining evidence suggests that prosecution in Middlesex had become more professional with the passing of the 1792 *Middlesex Magistrates Act*.[155] John Floud, the magistrate who committed Catchpole, was a new kind of professionally qualified, stipendiary

[149] MS 4211, *Draft Brief for the Prosecution*.
[150] MS 4211, *Draft Brief for the Prosecution*.
[151] MS 4211, *Draft Brief for the Prosecution.*
[152] MS 4211, *Draft Brief for the Prosecution.*
[153] Conversation with Antony Cobbold, 2020.
[154] MS 4211/6.
[155] 32 Geo. III, c. 53 (1792): *Middlesex Magistrates Act.*

magistrate appointed under this act.[156] Furthermore, Worship Street was one of six new police offices set up on the lines of the existing Bow Street police office.[157] Clive Emsley confirmed that each office had three stipendiary magistrates, one of whom was required to be professionally qualified, and a team of constables.[158] This act marked a turning point in the professionalisation of the magistracy in the capital, although in Suffolk most magistrates were still either clergy or men of financial means.

Ruth Paley has argued that gentlemen of limited means were attracted to these posts for financial reasons and John Floud, a barrister, was one of several justices who applied for the position of stipendiary magistrate.[159] At the time of his appointment Floud had several years' prior experience since being called to the bar by Inner Temple on 9 February 1781.[160] He was also directly employed by the Home Office to carry out investigations of potential civil unrest in London and other towns, as well as to conduct arrests for sedition.[161] This paints a picture of a magistrate whose practice was to stick strictly to the letter of the law. He may additionally have been inclined to follow the rules exactly because of his limited means and his need to work, giving John Cobbold no opportunity to apply discretion towards Catchpole. This was different from the way some magistrates worked in other places, where emphasis was often placed on arbitration and negotiation to settle minor crimes and serious crimes could also be downgraded.[162] King argued in Essex, for example, that the rule of common sense allowed a case of horse stealing to be discharged because there was 'no felonious intent appearing'.[163] In other areas of the country, most justices were not professionally qualified and continued to interpret the law in a range of ways that suited them.[164]

The agents in Suffolk who managed the associations were usually solicitors. The agent for the Ipswich Association at the time of Catchpole's arrest was the attorney, Benjamin Brame, junior. His name also appeared in association advertisements as a subscriber.[165]

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[156] 32 Geo. III, c. 53 (1792): *Middlesex Magistrates Act.*
[157] 32 Geo. III, c. 53 (1792): *Middlesex Magistrates Act*; Clive Emsley, 'The English Magistracy, 1700-1850', *IAHCCJ Bulletin*, 15 (1992), Le monde judiciaire/The Judicial World, pp. 28-38 (34-35): there were seven police offices in total at this point in Middlesex.
[158] Emsley, 'The English Magistracy', pp. 34-35.
[159] Ruth Paley, 'The Middlesex Justices Act of 1792: Its Origins and Effects' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Reading, 1983), p. 299.
[160] Emsley, 'The English Magistracy', pp. 34-35; The Inner Temple Admissions Database, https://archives.innertemple.org.uk [accessed 18 January 2021].
[161] Clive Emsley, 'The Home Office and Its Source of Information and Investigation, 1791-1801', *The English Historical Review*, 94, 372 (1979), pp. 532-561 (533).
[162] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 86-88.
[163] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 86-88.
[164] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 84-99.
[165] *Ipswich Journal*, 27 January 1797.

Agents made use of contemporary developments in print and newspaper advertising to spread word of thefts of members' property: in the case of Cobbold's stolen horse, this involved the publication of a handbill describing the loss of his roan coach horse and one colt.[166]

Styles has argued that because there was no statutory reward on conviction for the capital offence of horse theft, some would-be investigators were less persuaded to pursue horse thieves than burglars or highway robbers, whose conviction attracted an award of £40.[167] Because a stolen horse could be moved quickly over long distances, detection could be difficult, but handbills could be directly distributed to a target audience, as happened to the handbill delivered by Edward Proctor to Yare and Park's stables in London.[168] Furthermore, they could be printed without waiting for the publication of a weekly paper. The publication of Cobbold's handbill on 24 May 1797, the same day as the discovery of the theft, is three days before publication of the next edition of the *Ipswich Journal* on 27 May. This suggests that Cobbold was strongly motivated to retrieve this valuable horse and the association also saw an opportunity to gain publicity from this case.[169]

Margaret Catchpole was committed to Newgate by John Floud on 27 May 1797, for burglary and horse-stealing and held 'on the Master's side', which mainly held debtors and where prisoners paid for their own accommodation.[170] As an unemployed woman with no known family in London, her detention in this part of the gaol suggests the financial intervention of John Cobbold on her behalf. She was then removed to Ipswich by Habeas Corpus and committed to Ipswich New Gaol in July.[171] A note on the *Brief for the prosecution* at the trial states that the judge 'being of the opinion that the stable was not a part of the curtilage, the Prisoner was only tried upon the indictment for horse-stealing'. This intervention meant she was not accused of the serious crime of violating Cobbold's house. At the assizes in August 1797, she was found guilty of the capital crime of horse theft, but was reprieved soon after and sentenced to seven years' transportation.[172]

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[166] ASSI 94/1441, 1797, L & S; ASSI 94/1331, 1800 S; *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury & Norwich Post*, 1797 and 1800; NLA, *Margaret Catchpole Papers,* MS 4211; SL NSW, *Collections of papers relating to Margaret Catchpole, 1845-1965*, M 944.
[167] Styles, 'Print and Policing', p. 73.
[168] Styles, 'Print and Policing', p. 71.
[169] Styles, 'Print and Policing', p. 73.
[170] MS 4211, Brief for the Prosecution; HO 26/5, May Sessions, 1797 at Newgate; PCOM2/180, Prisoners on the Master's Side, Newgate Prison, 1797.
[171] *Ipswich Journal*, 8 July 1797.
[172] ASSI 94/1441, 1797, Lent & Summer.

The final involvement of the Ipswich Association in Margaret Catchpole's case was at its annual meeting on 9 January 1798, when £5 was ordered to be paid to George Park and Edward Prockter [sic] for apprehending and giving evidence against Catchpole that led to her conviction.[173] However, the extent to which the Ipswich Association had been directly involved in the prosecution of Margaret Catchpole is further suggested by evidence in the Catchpole papers in the National Library of Australia. A statement by John Glyde of Ipswich included in the Catchpole papers confirms that he saw the handbill, together with Catchpole's examination and confession among the papers of the late Thomas B. Ross of Ipswich around 1858.[174] Ross was the executor of Benjamin Brame in 1851. This suggests that Brame, as association secretary and involved in the prosecution, had retained some of the papers.

5.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to establish what motivated the victims of property crime to prosecute offenders at the quarter sessions and assizes. Suggested reasons include the victim's wish to punish the offender, the deterrence of others from similar acts against the victim's property, and the recovery of the goods stolen. The surviving evidence also suggests that victims' motivations to prosecute offenders may have been informed by their own attitudes towards women who offended against their property. For example, the prosecution of Elizabeth Bexwell in 1783 by George Hayward, the keeper of the Rose and Crown in Sudbury, for stealing an earthen pan, indicates his dual intention to punish her and send a deterrent message to other would-be pilferers: it was unlikely she would be able to recompense him for his losses although the pan was probably an insignificant item. As a coaching inn on the route to London, the Rose and Crown provided hospitality to visitors passing through the town and would have been serviced by ostlers, cooks and other indoor servants. The busy nature of this establishment may have enabled small thefts from Hayward and his customers to be carried out unseen and he may have been concerned to protect the large amounts of money that regularly changed hands over the course of a day. This suggests a rather more proactive approach to prosecution than King found among his sample of eight diarists (including farmers, clergymen, a shopkeeper and a clothier) who rarely prosecuted.[175] The effect of Hayward's message would have been reinforced by the difference between his

[173] *Ipswich Journal*, 13 January 1798.
[174] MS 4211/1, *Margaret Catchpole Papers*
[175] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 18-19.

status as wealthy male victim and hers as a poor female offender. In addition, the sentence handed down to Bexwell of a public whipping round the borough spread his message clearly and visibly to both offender and the wider community.

Because the recovery of goods was often impossible, other quarter sessions and assize prosecutions in this chapter may also have proceeded in order to punish offenders and deter others. Perishable foodstuffs such as the cheese stolen by Eliz. Ling were probably for fairly immediate consumption because it could not be preserved for more than a short while: grain would last longer but would require careful storage to avoid weevils.

The recovery of stolen items of clothing or cloth might have been the widow Susan Howes' intention in her committal of Diana Parker. However, Parker had not been taken to trial before she undertook a further theft from the labourer Charles Mason. Probably because Mason could not afford the costs involved in prosecution, Parker was prosecuted by the Ipswich gaoler, John Ripshaw. The involvement of a prosecutor who was not the victim and the rare availability of public finance confirms that this was considered a serious, capital offence. Peter King argued that the offender's 'character, attitude and previous behaviour' were frequently connected to the victim's decision to prosecute.[176] In this case, Parker was a repeat offender and a capital conviction for the robbery from Mason, reprieved to transportation, would ensure that she was removed from her locality.

Finally, this chapter has extended the findings of Philips and Styles who have argued that prosecution associations developed in the last two decades of the eighteenth century in response to a perceived need to protect property crime and deter criminals.[177] Associations developed gradually across Suffolk in the 1780s, were numerous by 1790 and many remained active into the nineteenth century. The strategies adopted by Suffolk associations included the involvement of the printing industry in the production of handbills to describe stolen goods and offer rewards. Advertisements were also printed in newspapers to alert the public to the names of association members and the business of the association. Margaret Catchpole, for example, was detected, apprehended and prosecuted with the assistance of the Ipswich Prosecution Association. The chapter has also shown the process by which she was prosecuted for stealing a valuable horse, using court and other documents and newspaper reports. Importantly, this illustrates that although the victim in this case did not wish to prosecute the offender, he was forced to do so by a new kind of magistrate in

[176] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 33.
[177] Philips, 'Good Men to Associate', pp. 114-115; Styles, 'Printing and Policing', pp. 86-90.

Middlesex who applied the letter of the law to the case, rather than applying his own interpretation and judgment to the situation, as might have been the case in counties outside London. John Cobbold's successful prosecution of Margaret Catchpole for the theft of his horse was confirmed by the Tyburn Ticket issued to him in 1797 by Lord Chief Baron Archibald Macdonald, the judge at her trial.[178] This absolved him for life from 'all Manner of Parish offices within the parish of Saint Margaret in the Town'.

[178] Ipswich Museum, Documents Relating to Margaret Catchpole, R. 1941-26, *Discharge of parish duties*, 11 August 1797.

CHAPTER 6: SENTENCING AND PUNISHMENT, 1770-1820

On 19 April 1790, Mary Bincks was tried at the county quarter sessions in Bury St Edmunds for obtaining goods under false pretences from Mary Pettit.[1] She pleaded not guilty to the charge but was found guilty and sentenced to a custodial sentence of a week in the House of Correction with hard labour, followed by a public whipping at Haverhill. From the surviving records, it appears that Mary Bincks suffered the indignity and pain of being the last woman to be publicly whipped in Suffolk.

Chapter 2 indicated from Calendars of Prisoners that men accounted for 153 convictions of property crimes at the assizes (86%) between 1797 and 1804, women for 24 (14%). Closer examination of cases from the four quarter sessions courts for the two year period between 1800 and 1801 when wheat prices were at their height, showed that men accounted for 52 convictions of property crimes (71%), women for 21 (29%). The two sets of figures suggest either that women were less likely to face prosecution than men or that they committed fewer crimes. They also indicate that women were more likely to be convicted at the quarter sessions than at the assizes. This chapter focuses on the sentences handed down to women convicted of property crimes at these two courts.

During the period between 1770 and 1820, two changes in particular influenced the way in which female convicts were punished. Peter King has confirmed that the public whipping of women in Essex had been dying out since the 1750s as attitudes became entrenched against the infliction of physical punishment on them.[2] This change was slower to take hold in Suffolk. It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that non-capitally convicted women were likely to be punished by imprisonment and fines rather than being subjected to a public or private whipping.[3] If Mary Bincks had been found guilty of obtaining goods under false pretences in Essex rather than Suffolk, it is likely that she would have received a custodial sentence and a fine.

A second factor which changed the nature of punishments handed down to men and women was the American War of Independence in 1775, which ended transportation to America. Until the administration for the new penal colony of New South Wales could be

[1] Suffolk Archives, Quarter Sessions, B105/2/49, 1790-1794.
[2] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000), p. 286.
[3] The public whipping of women was banned in 1817, private whipping in 1820.

established and transportation was resumed in 1787, this hiatus left prisoners who had been capitally convicted by the assize courts and then reprieved, languishing in prisons or hulks. Prisoners sentenced to transportation by the quarter sessions courts were similarly impacted. The chapter will show that several women from Suffolk were sentenced to transportation in this period, or soon after it. The reprieve punishment of transportation was not applied to all capitally convicted women, however, and the chapter asks why some women were released after terms of imprisonment that were about the same length as the waiting time in prison for the women who were eventually transported.

This chapter first explores the sentences handed down by magistrates and judges at the quarter sessions and assize courts to women found guilty of property crimes in Suffolk between 1780 and 1820. In many cases the evidence of women's crimes is scant; however, the verdicts and sentences handed down were usually recorded diligently by the court clerk in the sessions books and assize rolls.[4] The chapter draws on these documents to observe changes in sentencing practice in Suffolk in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The second part of the chapter investigates the experiences of sixteen women from Suffolk who were transported to New South Wales between 1787, when the First Fleet left England, and 1811, when the *Friends* transport ship sailed.[5] The death sentences received by nine of the women, who had been capitally convicted at the assizes in Bury St Edmunds, were commuted to the lesser punishment of transportation by the Home Secretary on behalf of the King. A further seven women were sentenced directly to transportation after conviction at the quarter sessions or the borough sessions of Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. Over the same period, 76 men were transported from the county.[6] Women subject to transportation thus accounted for 17% of the total numbers in this period, men for 83%. Women thus formed a significant part of the overall number of convicts transported from the county. This part also investigates the waiting period experienced by many women between conviction and transportation and the challenges of voyages between England and the new colonies.

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[4] SA, Suffolk County Quarter Sessions Books, B105/2/47, 1781-1786; B105/2/48, 1786-1789; B105/2/49, 1790-1794; B105/2/50, 1794-1798; B105/2/51.1, 1798-1801. SA, Borough of Ipswich Sessions Books, C/2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815; Borough of Ipswich Sessions Rolls, C/2/9/1/1/1/138-144, 1790-1796; C/2/9/1/1/1/145-149, 1797-1801. SA, Borough of Bury Sessions Rolls, D8/1/3/1-11, 1735-1801. SA, Borough of Sudbury Sessions Book, EE 501/2/18, 1781-1836. TNA, Suffolk Assize Rolls: ASSI 94/1421, 1796, Summer; ASSI 94/1441, 1797, L & S; ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L; ASSI 94/1488, 1799 L; ASSI 94/1489, 1799 S; ASSI 94/1512, 1800 L; ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S. SA, Lackford Petty Sessions, Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1801 S; 1801 L; 1802 L; 1803 L; 1805 L; 1806 L; 1807 L.

[5] HO 10, 1-4, *New South Wales and Tasmania, Settlers and Convicts, 1787-1859*, *General Muster*; HO 11, 1-3, *Convict Transportation Registers, 1787-1870.*

[6] HO 11, 1-3, *Convict Transportation Registers, 1787-1870.*

Although transportation was an act of judicial discretion for a capital conviction, this chapter questions why the seven women sentenced for non-capital offences were also ordered to be sent to New South Wales. Was the sentence of transportation the means by which local magistrates at the quarter sessions could remove 'women considered to be particularly undesirable', as suggested by Rhiannon Markless?[7] Or were Suffolk women transported to correct the gender imbalance in the new colonies as Deirdre Beddoe argued?[8] This chapter also explores the contributions of Suffolk convict women to the new colonies, following Deborah Oxley's claim of their positive impact.[9] It suggests that many of these women contributed significantly to the colonies in their own right.

6.1 VERDICTS, SENTENCES AND PUNISHMENT, 1780-1820

An increase in the number of capital statutes over the course of the long eighteenth century meant that large numbers of male and female defendants were tried for offences under the Bloody Code. Leon Radzinowicz estimated that capital statutes increased by 190 between 1688 and 1820.[10] While 'not found and acquittal' verdicts by juries led prisoners to be cleared of capital offences, many capitally convicted defendants had their death sentence reduced on the judge's recommendation.[11] This enabled a range of punishments to be handed down to convicts, from a free pardon to transportation for life, the harshest discretionary option available.[12] Deirdre Beddoe has argued that transportation may have been considered a cheaper form of punishment than maintaining criminals in bridewells and gaols.[13] But she further observed that the removal of convicts from the country was a punishment imposed without any sense of reforming the offender.[14]

Peter King's comparative study of the gendered sentencing decisions at the Essex quarter sessions (1740-1805) and Home Circuit assizes (1782-1787 and 1799-1800), has

[7] Rhiannon Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire, 1735-1775' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Roehampton, 2013), pp. 115-116.
[8] Deirdre Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women: A Study of Women Transported from Wales to Australia, 1787-1852* (Barry: Stewart Williams, 1979), pp. 16-20.
[9] Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[10] Sir Leon Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750,* 4 vols., 1948-1968, vol. 1 p. 4. (London: Stevens & Sons Ltd, 1948); Douglas Hay, 'Property, Authority and the Criminal Law', in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, 2nd edn., revised by Cal Winslow, Douglas Hay and Peter Linebaugh (London: Verso, 2011), 17-63 (p. 18).
[11] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 355.
[12] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 355.
[13] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict* Women, p. 11.
[14] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, p. 11.

shown that the defendant's gender and age were influential in sentencing practices.[15] By comparing sentences received by male and female defendants, King found that women convicted of simple larceny were more likely than men to be fined or sentenced to whipping (considered lighter sentences) and less likely to be sentenced to transportation (the most serious punishment available for this offence).[16] He also found that women found guilty of the serious crimes of housebreaking and theft from a dwelling house were more likely to be imprisoned than men and were far less likely to be condemned to death.[17]

King emphasised that the Essex borough courts tended to favour women, although the county sessions courts were only slightly more lenient towards them.[18] Rhiannon Markless's regional study of gendered crime in eighteenth century Yorkshire confirmed these overall findings.[19] In cases of theft, she found that assize judges were lenient towards women if a capital sentence could have been imposed, whereas magistrates treated them more harshly than men at the quarter sessions where a capital sentence would not be applied.[20]

King has argued that gendered policy changes in the penal framework which became evident between 1740 and 1820 were an indication of differential attitudes towards the sentencing of men and women.[21] He additionally argued that sympathy towards defendants focused particularly on women in relation to physical and public punishments. Legislative change included the abolition in 1780 of burning women at the stake for murdering their husbands and, in 1790, for coining offences.[22] Whipping was intended to shame the offender and deter others from crime.[23] The public whipping of women was brought to an end in 1817; private whipping in 1820. Whipping informally ended for men in the 1830s and formally ceased in 1862.[24]

These changes in law appear to have confirmed practices that were already in the process of changing, rather than instigating the change itself. King has argued that the decline of publicly inflicted, physical punishments probably started in the second half of the eighteenth century.[25] The public whipping of women had largely ended in Essex by the late

[15] King, *Crime, Justice and* Discretion, pp. 278-283.
[16] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 279.
[17] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 279-280.
[18] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 280.
[19] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 265.
[20] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 265.
[21] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[22] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[23] *Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol. 4, p. 370, cited in Markless, p. 111.
[24] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[25] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 272.

1750s, although private whipping continued until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[26] By the mid-1770s, the whipping of men ceased in Essex as a punishment on its own.[27] Both Beattie and King found, however, that when imprisonment increased in the 1770s, whipping (still sometimes public for men) increased as an adjunct punishment.[28] However, John Beattie confirmed that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the whipping of both men and women in Surrey had virtually ceased, both as a punishment in its own right and when it was administered in addition to a custodial sentence.[29]

As whipping and execution lost favour as punishments for women, custodial sentences seemed to gain favour. This coincided in Essex between 1770 and 1820 with the introduction of early short-lived 'reformatory qualities' into county prisons.[30] Further reform did not take place until many years later; however, patterns of imprisonment evolved, measured in weeks for petty larcenies and six to twelve months for grand larcenies upwards.[31] From roughly the mid-eighteenth century, King confirmed a 'sea-change in attitudes' towards the execution of women.[32] Between 1740 and 1804 only one woman was hanged in Essex for housebreaking or burglary. Changing attitudes were also found in John Beattie's evidence in Surrey, where executions of women dropped to one between 1749 and 1802.[33]

Surviving official documents for Suffolk and reports in local newspapers have been scrutinised to establish if women's experiences of sentencing and punishment were similar to women's experiences in the neighbouring county of Essex. As suggested above, some changes appear to have been brought about by attitudes developing against the physical punishment of women, while others were hastened by the cessation of transportation to America in the late 1770s because of the War of Independence. Prisoners continued to be sentenced to transportation to America by courts in the 1780s but were obliged to remain in prison until the First Fleet to New South Wales was ready to sail.

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[26] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[27] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 272.
[28] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 272; J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 612.
[29] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 612.
[30] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 270.
[31] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 270-272.
[32] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[33] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts,* p. 612.

6.2 PROPERTY CRIME: PUNISHMENTS HANDED DOWN AT SUFFOLK BOROUGH COURTS

Table 6.1 divides the sentences handed down to women for property crimes at the borough quarter sessions by type of punishment. At the Ipswich Borough Sessions between 1776 and 1809, 9 women were sentenced direct to gaol, and a further 3 were fined and sent to gaol until they paid the fine. 8 women were sentenced to whipping: 3 publicly 'Saturday next', followed by discharge or removal to their place of last legal settlement; 4 privately followed by discharge; and 1 privately with a month in the House of Correction with hard labour. Additionally, 1 woman was sentenced by this court to transportation for seven years.

At Sudbury Sessions, 3 women were ordered to be whipped 'on Saturday next', 1 was gaoled and the convictions of three other women were 'affiled'. At Bury Borough Sessions, 1 woman was sentenced to transportation in 1786.

Table 6.1: Sentencing of women convicted at Suffolk Borough Sessions, 1776-1809[34]

SUFFOLK BOROUGH SESSIONS	Gaol only	Gaol and public whipping, 'Saturday next'	Gaol and private whipping	Private whipping and discharge or to place of last legal settlement	Fine with gaol until paid	Transportation	To Assizes (ASS); to parish of settlement (PAR); no further info. (NFI)
Ipswich C2/9/1/1/8/11 1776-1815; C2/9/1/1/1/148 1794-1800	9	3	1	4	3	1	0
Sudbury EE501/2/18 1781-1836 (to 1809)	1	3					3 'Affiled' & NFI
Bury St Edmunds 1786						1	

The whippings imposed on women by the borough courts in the 1780s suggest that sentencing practices in Suffolk lagged behind changes in Essex, where the public whipping of women had largely ceased by the late 1750s, private whipping by the early 1800s. The Borough of Ipswich sessions book, 1776-1815, indicates that women continued to be sentenced to public or private whipping until 1784.

[34] See Appendix 1.

Rhiannon Markless noted in Yorkshire that public physical punishments between 1735 and 1775 were purposefully staged to bring 'shame and dishonour' to the defendant with the aim of deterring spectators from crime.[35] Public whippings in Suffolk seem to have been predicated on thefts aggravated by violence, or theft from a master or shopkeeper. In 1777, Mary Woods (alias Spurgeon) was sentenced to a public whipping after pleading guilty to robbing Mrs Flatt.[36] She was also ordered to be removed to the place of her last legal settlement, which suggests she may have been a vagrant.[37] Mary Lockwood was sentenced to a public whipping in 1778 after conviction for stealing three halfpennies (1½d) from her master, Walter Bacon.[38] She was then ordered to be discharged. For stealing lace in 1779 from Miss Harwood, a milliner, Sarah Clubbe was ordered to be confined in the common gaol, publicly whipped the next Saturday between twelve and two o'clock, and then discharged.[39] The public whippings of Lockwood and Clubbe indicate that their crimes were serious; by their thefts they had broken the bond of trust demanded between employer and servant.

The Ipswich borough sessions also ordered private whippings in the 1770s and 1780s. Prudence Baldrey was ordered to be privately whipped in 1778 for stealing a linen gown, before being passed to the place of her last legal settlement.[40] The sentence of private whipping on its own was handed down to Jane Mitchell in 1779 for obtaining money by false pretences; to Elizabeth Wolfe in 1781 for stealing a silver table spoon; and to Patience Ward in 1784 for stealing a linen handkerchief.[41] For stealing a muslin apron, however, Mary Penning was sentenced in 1784 to a private whipping, as well as the adjunct punishment of a month in the House of Correction with hard labour.[42] From this point on the Borough of Ipswich appears to have ceased sentencing women to whippings.

The sentences handed down to women for theft by magistrates at the Sudbury borough sessions between 1781 and 1809 are similar to those imposed by the Ipswich borough sessions but, as King found in Essex, public whippings were described graphically in the sessions books to draw attention to the exact date, time and place of punishment.[43] Three

[35] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 327.
[36] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1794.
[37] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 183-190.
[38] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1794.
[39] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1794.
[40] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1794.
[41] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1794.
[42] C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1794.
[43] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 272.

women were ordered to be publicly whipped in Sudbury between 1781 and 1783 for thefts which appear to have been aggravated by the respectable position of the victim.[44]

For stealing a black satin gown from a widow named Sarah Segger, Mary Gentry, the wife of Daniel, was ordered in January 1781 to be taken back to the gaol until the next Saturday, then to be taken to the public whipping post between two and four in the afternoon, stripped naked from the waist upwards, and publicly whipped.[45] Sarah Green was found guilty of taking goods under false pretences from milliner Mary Elliston, wife of Samuel, in April 1782. A brief report in the *Ipswich Journal* suggested that Green had obtained shoes and other articles from different shops in Sudbury 'by going for them in the name of some reputable persons in the place'.[46] She also was ordered to be taken back to the gaol until the following Saturday, stripped naked from the waist upwards, put in an open cart and publicly whipped from the gaol round St Peter's Church between three and four in the afternoon and to receive '15 stripes until blood be thereby drawn'.[47] At Midsummer 1783, a similarly humiliating and painful punishment was ordered to be meted out to Elizabeth Bexwell for stealing an earthen pan.[48]

The public physical punishments handed down to women by Suffolk borough courts in the early 1780s do not appear to confirm the 'growing reluctance to physically punish women in public' identified at the Old Bailey in the second half of the eighteenth century by Robert Shoemaker and Saanika-Jeet Dhillon, and in Essex by Peter King.[49] Shoemaker and Dhillon further argued that leniency towards women at the Old Bailey meant that they were 'disproportionately likely to receive a less severe punishment than the one pronounced at their trial'.[50] However, no evidence has been found to suggest that the sentences of public whippings in Ipswich and Sudbury were either carried out or that leniency was applied towards the women concerned.

From the mid-1780s to 1800, property crimes committed by women were punished at the borough courts by fines, sometimes with a brief period in gaol until payments were made. Several victims appear to have applied prosecutorial discretion towards female defendants

[44] EE 501/2/18, 1781-1836.
[45] EE 501/2/18, 1781-1836.
[46] *Ipswich Journal*, 15 April 1782,
[47] EE 501/2/18, 1781-1836.
[48] EE 501/2/18, 1781-1836.
[49] Robert Shoemaker and Saanika-Jeet Dhillon, 'Gender in the Proceedings', *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/gender#reading [accessed 22 April 2024]; King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[50] Shoemaker and Dhillon, 'Gender in the Proceedings', https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/gender#reading [accessed 22 April 2024].

who may have resorted to theft because of severe financial hardship and the inability to afford the escalating prices of food staples. In these instances, when prosecutors failed to show up in court defendants were discharged by proclamation. For example, baker James Grom failed to appear at Sudbury Borough Sessions on 25 April 1800 to prosecute Mary Hibble for stealing flour and she accordingly was discharged in this way.[51] Similarly, Sarah Collins was discharged because no one appeared to prosecute her for felony.[52] The prosecutor was not named in this case. Faced with the costs of prosecution in court, victims may have considered the process of detention alone sufficient to punish defendants. Victims' failure to turn up to prosecute offenders in these instances may also have been an act of discretion because the victim acknowledged the 'failing strategies of the poor for material survival', which were identified by Steven King and Alannah Tomkins.[53]

6.3 PROPERTY CRIME: PUNISHMENTS HANDED DOWN AT SUFFOLK QUARTER SESSIONS

Table 6.2 indicates that women continued to be sentenced to whipping at the county quarter sessions after this punishment had ceased in the boroughs in the mid-1780s. It also shows that sentencing practices for property crimes at these courts between 1781 and 1801 were in transition away from physical punishment.[54] After 1790 the whipping of women was replaced by custodial sentences with or without adjunct fines.

Between 1781 and 1786, 8 sentences of a private whipping and a brief period in gaol were handed down, with 1 women in this group ordered to be whipped at the start and end of a month's imprisonment.[55] 3 further women were ordered to be whipped and discharged, with no custodial sentence. 10 other convicted women received short imprisonments of between 14 days and four months.

According to the next quarter sessions book, between 1786 and 1789, 6 women were sentenced to a private whipping with an adjunct custodial sentence of between two weeks and three months with hard labour.[56] Another was sentenced to whipping only. 9 women

[51] EE 501/2/18, 1736-1836, 25 April 1800.
[52] EE 501/2/18, 1736-1836, 6 October 1809.
[53] Olwen Hufton, cited in Steven King and Alannah Tomkins, 'Introduction' in *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: an Economy of Makeshifts*, ed. by Steven King and Alannah Tomkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1-38 (pp. 1-2).
[54] B105/2/47, 1781-1786 – B105/2/51, 1798-1801.
[55] B105/2/47, 1781-1786.
[56] B105/2/48, 1786-1789.

received prison sentences of between 1 week and 3 months and another was convicted but ordered to be returned to her parish of settlement.

Table 6.2: Sentencing of women convicted at Suffolk Quarter Sessions, 1781-1801[57]

SUFFOLK QUARTER SESSIONS	Gaol only	Gaol and whipping or whipping only	Whipping then discharge or to parish of legal settlement	Fine and gaol until paid	Transportation	To Assizes (ASS); or no further info. (NFI)	NTB; acquitted; discharged; or to parish of settlement
B105/2/47 1781-1786	10	8	3			1 - ASS	11
B105/2/48 1786-1789	9	6 & 1 whipping only	3				21
B105/2/49 1790-1794	14	1		5		1 - ASSI 1 - NFI	13
B105/2/50 1794-1798	12			6		1 - ASS	11
B105/2/51 1798-1801	13			4			9
B105/2/52.1 1801-1803 (to 12.1801)	7			1			8

The period between 1790 and 1794 is central in Suffolk to the transition away from the physical punishment of women and the introduction of custodial sentences with fines.[58] 14 were convicted and sentenced to custodial terms of between 14 days and 12 calendar months. A further 5 received gaol sentences of between 7 days and 12 months with a adjunct fine of 6d and the stipulation that this be paid before release. Most custodial sentences now stated that prisoners were to be held in solitary confinement and kept to hard labour. A few women were sent to the new common gaol in Ipswich, while most were sent to the House of Correction. However, against the trend in this period, Mary Bincks was sentenced at the county quarter sessions in Bury St Edmunds in April 1790 to a public whipping, with an adjunct sentence of hard labour in the House of Correction, for obtaining goods by false pretences. As suggested previously, Bincks was probably the last woman in Suffolk to receive this punishment, although confirmation that if it actually took place has not been found.

[57] Appendix 1.
[58] B105/2/49, 1790-1794.

In the next period between 1794 and 1798, 6 more women received custodial sentences of between 3 and 6 months and fines of between 6d and 1s 6d.[59] A further 12 women were sentenced to gaol for between 14 days and 12 months. Between 1798 and 1801, 13 women were sentenced to gaol for between 1 week and 6 calendar months.[60] 4 more were sent to gaol for between 3 weeks and 3 calendar months, each with an adjunct fine of 6d. Finally, from July to December 1801, 7 women were gaoled for periods of between 1 week and 3 months, and 1 was gaoled for 6 months with an adjunct fine of 6d.[61]

It is highly likely that property crimes committed in the 1790s reflected dire shortages of wheat, because prices more than doubled in years of acute shortage. including between 1794 and 1796.[62] Roger Wells argued that the increase in food prices in the last decade of the eighteenth century had the impact of lowering the real value of worker's wages.[63] In two periods of particularly severe wheat shortages and high prices (1794-1796 and 1799-1801), this situation would have left large numbers of the poor in Suffolk in a precarious situation. However, there is some evidence that charitable responses by communities to this desperate situation may have been successful in removing the need of the poor to steal goods for survival. A subscription raised in July 1795 in Woodbridge for the support of the poor may have been the reason why no women were prosecuted for theft at the Woodbridge sessions in that year.[64] In fact, only five women altogether were prosecuted at the other three quarter sessions in 1795, intimating either that victims may have been prepared to overlook minor thefts by women who stole out of desperation in acts of discretionary justice, or that philanthropic support for the poor was fairly widespread.[65]

The acquittals and discharges recorded in Table 6.2 between 1781 and 1801 further suggest that victims, juries and magistrates regularly exercised leniency and discretion at Suffolk quarter sessions. The discussion in Chapter 2 of 'not found' cases in the crisis period between 1800 and 1801 found that 106 men and 24 women were acquitted, discharged, prosecutors failed to appear, or the case was NTB. The reasons for acquitting and discharging women in this period of dearth and high prices may not have been entirely altruistic. Magistrates throughout the last two decades of the eighteenth century would have been

[59] B105/2/50, 1794-1798.
[60] B105/2/51, 1798-1801.
[61] B105/2/52.1, 1801-1803 (July to December 1801).
[62] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 145-153.
[63] Roger Wells, *Wretched Faces*: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801 (London: Breviary Stuff Publications, 2011), p. 1.
[64] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 July 1795.
[65] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 July 1795.

keenly aware that they, as rate-payers, would bear the costs of maintaining children on the parish if their mother was in prison.

Table 2.3 showed that 52 men were convicted of property crime at the county quarter sessions in the difficult period between January 1800 and December 1801.[66] This was more than double the number of women convicted. 20 men were imprisoned for up to two years, 5 received a fine only and a further 19 were imprisoned with an adjunct fine. 1 man was sentenced to whipping. A further 6 cases were sent to the assizes and 2 men were sentenced to transportation for seven years. It is not clear from the limited data in the sessions books if men were treated more harshly than women for similar offences, if their crimes were more serious, or if there was an inclination among magistrates to show greater judicial discretion towards women for similar crimes.

6.4 PROPERTY CRIME: PUNISHMENTS HANDED DOWN AT SUFFOLK ASSIZES

An initial observation on the punishments handed down to women convicted of property crimes at the assizes between 1796 and 1807 (summarised in Table 6.3) is that no women were sentenced to whipping. This appears to differ from King's observations in Essex.[67] King also observed that when a defendant was found guilty of crimes that had been excluded from benefit of clergy, the judge was obliged to pass the death sentence, unless the victim had indicted the defendant on a lesser charge or the jury had reached a partial verdict.[68] Benefit of clergy was 'an exemption from a capital sentence imposed following a conviction for certain offences' which was extended to men and women over time.[69] Beattie confirmed that several property crimes had been removed from clergy during the reigns of William III and Anne.[70] These included housebreaking and stealing goods valued at 5s while the owner was at home, stealing from shops to the value of 5s and stealing from houses or outhouses to the value of 40s.[71] Several of these serious crimes feature in the cases of Suffolk women who were prosecuted at the assize courts. In a few cases in this study, appeals were

[66] B105/2/51, 1798-1801 (January 1800 – December 1801); B105/2/52.1, 1801-1803 (13 January 1801 – 12 October 1801).
[67] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[68] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 260.
[69] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. viii.
[70] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 144;
[71] Will. III, c. 12 (1698): *An Act for the better apprehending, prosecuting and punishing of Felons that commit Burglary, Housebreaking or Robbery in Shops, Warehouses, Coachhouses or Stables, or that Steal Horses*; 12 Anne, c. 7 (1713): *An Act for the more effectual preventing and punishing Robberies that shall be committed in Houses.*

made to the Home Secretary after capital sentences were handed down by the judge. In some instances, reprieves were issued before the judge left Bury St Edmunds and ratified later by the Home Secretary. In other cases, appeals were submitted by defendants' supporters after the assizes ended. Some, but not all were successful.

Table 6.3: Sentencing of women convicted at Suffolk Assizes, L 1784 and 1797-1807[72]

ASSIZE ROLLS	Gaol only	Death, reprieved to gaol	Death, reprieved to transportation	Death, no reprieve	Found guilty but reprieved
ASSI 94/1249 1784 L			Elizabeth Harvey		
ASSI 94/1441 1797 L & S	Elizabeth Fisher		Margaret Catchpole; Diana Parker		
ASSI 94/1464 1798 L		Elizabeth Lacey; Mary Syret	Sarah Barker		
ASSI 94/1488 1799 L	Frances Bull; Susan Osborne	Phoebe Syret			
ASSI 94/1489 1799 S	Dinah Scrutton				
ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	Mary Howell; China Talbot; Mary Webber			Sarah Lloyd	Barbara Lambgerre
ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	Sarah Ely; Eliz. Fuller; Alice Sutton; Eliz. Sutton		Elizabeth Killett; also M. Catchpole for being at large		
ASSIZE CALENDARS					
19.3.1801	Emma Challice				
25.3.1802	Hannah Root; Sarah Pain				
24.3.1803			Hannah Williams		
20.3.1806	Susan Everitt				
18.3.1807			Susannah Carter; Martha Killick; Mary Buckle		

The Suffolk Assize Rolls in 1784 and between 1796 and 1800 indicate that eight women were capitally convicted for property crimes but Sarah Lloyd was the only woman to be

[72] Appendix 2, Parts 1 and 2.

executed.[73] As discussed in Chapter 2, the theft of goods in Hadleigh from Lloyd's employer Sarah Syer and her companion Elizabeth Hoborough by Lloyd and Joseph Clarke was aggravated by their attempt to set fire to the premises. Clarke and Lloyd were tried only on a charge of breaking and entering and stealing goods from the house and he was acquitted because no witnesses spoke against him.[74] Lloyd was found not guilty of burglary because she was already in the house when she allowed entry to Clarke but was found guilty of larceny from the dwelling house to the value of 40s. She was sentenced to death because she had violated the trust between householder and servant.[75] This was despite a letter from Sarah Syer requesting clemency: 'I shall be happy if my opinion on this poor, unfortunate, deluded girl may prove the means of her obtaining mercy.'[76] Despite a lengthy campaign by local dignitaries and clerics to the Home Secretary for her reprieve, Lloyd was executed aged 21 on 23 April 1800.[77] A brief report in the local newspaper some years after her death appears to suggest that Clarke later admitted his own guilt in this crime:

> 'A soldier lately returned from the Indies […] says he was present at the death of Joseph Clarke, whilst abroad, and that he confessed to him that he committed the robbery and set fire to the house of Mrs Syer at Hadleigh, for which Sarah Lloyd, the servant-maid with whom he intrigued and who admitted him into the house, was executed.'[78]

Of the other seven women capitally convicted in 1784 and between 1796 and 1800, the sentences of five were commuted to transportation. Elizabeth Harvey was reprieved in 1784 to serve 14 years' transportation for burglary. The death sentences of a further four were reprieved to seven years' transportation: Margaret Catchpole in 1797 for stealing her former employer's horse valued at £30; Diana Parker in 1797 for stealing clothing from the house of Charles Mason of Mellis valued at 19s 6d; Sarah Barker in 1798 for stealing clothing from the house of John Curtis of Benhall, valued at £1 3s 3d, and assaulting his daughter, Elizabeth;

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[73] ASSI 94/1421, 1796, S; ASSI 94/1441, 1797, L & S; ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L; ASSI 94/1488, 1799 L; ASSI 94/1489, 1799 S; ASSI 94/1512, 1800 L; ASSI 94/1513, 1800 S. SA 317/1, Cullum Collection, Commonplace Book of Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Copies of letters concerning Sarah Lloyd; *The Trial of Joseph Clarke the younger and Sarah Lloyd* (Ipswich: printed by S. Jackson, 1800); SA E/1/20/6/1, Lloyd's Case Correspondence – copies of letters; V. A. C. Gattrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 339-353.

[74] *Trial of Clarke and Lloyd*, pp. 3-6.

[75] *Trial of Clarke and Lloyd*, p. 10.

[76] E/1/20/6/1, Lloyd's Case Correspondence – copies of letters.

[77] Gattrell, *The Hanging Tree,* pp. 339-353: Gattrell has previously investigated the unsuccessful appeals to the Home Office against Sarah Lloyd's execution from a number of prominent men from Hadleigh and Bury St Edmunds.

[78] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 2 April 1806.

and Elizabeth Killett in 1800 for stealing bank notes to the value of £164 from her employer, John Crow.[79]

Members of the Syret (or Syrett) family of Beccles accounted for the other two capital convictions, which happened in quick succession at the Bury assizes, first for stealing a large amount of money and then for stealing a large quantity of textile goods. In 1798, 17 year old Mary Syret was capitally convicted of stealing just over £50 in notes and a bank draft from Owen Holmes of Beccles but was reprieved to two years' imprisonment.[80] Her mother Kezia, who may have been a widow, was prosecuted for inciting this crime and harbouring the defendant but appears to have been acquitted. In 1799, Kezia Syret was prosecuted at the Lent assizes with another daughter, Phoebe (aged around 18), for stealing a large quantity of textile goods valued at £4 19s 4d from the properties of Thomas Cavanagh and Eliz. Slight.[81] Phoebe was capitally convicted, reprieved to two years' imprisonment while Kezia appears again to have been acquitted.[82] It is unclear why Kezia was acquitted twice, unless the court acted to prevent other children in the family becoming the responsibility of the parish of Beccles by her imprisonment.[83]

The Assize Calendars between 1801 and 1807 show that one further woman, Hannah Williams, was sentenced to death but later reprieved. Williams and Richard Brown were capitally convicted in 1803 of stealing textile goods (pieces of cambric, cottons, nankeen, laces and other goods) valued upwards of £100.[84] The goods were burgled at night from the house of Thomas Jolly in Wickhambrook and belonged to John and Charles Hammond.[85] Both suspects were sentenced to death and Richard Brown was executed.[86] Hannah Williams was reprieved and transported to Botany Bay for life.[87] It is possible that judicial discretion was applied to Williams to avoid a repetition of the execution three years earlier of Sarah Lloyd, which had evoked very strong local feeling.

According to the Assize Calendars, another three other women were sentenced directly to transportation. In a case of exceptional value, Susannah Carter aged 21 was convicted in March 1807 of stealing haberdashery and fabrics to the approximate value of £29 4s 6d from

[79] ASSI 94/1421, 1796 S; ASSI 94/1441, 1797 L & S; ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L.
[80] ASSI 94/1464, 1798 L.
[81] ASSI 94/1488, 1799 L; *Ipswich Journal*, 26 January 1799.
[82] ASSI 94/1488, 1799 L; *Cambridge Chronicle & Journal*, 30 March 1799.
[83] ASSI 94/1488, 1799 L; *Ipswich Journal*, 26 January 1799.
[84] Appendix 2, Part 2; Lackford Petty Sessions, Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1803, L.
[85] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 30 March 1803.
[86] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 20 April 1803.
[87] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1803, L.

the house of her employer, William Parsonson, a hatter of Sudbury.[88] Carter was not transported, however, but received a free pardon on 11 February 1808 and was discharged.[89] The 40 year old widow, Martha Killick, who was the housekeeper of Samuel Mure of Herringswell, was sentenced to transportation at the same assizes in March 1807 for 'stealing and embezzling household stores belonging to him.'[90] This sentence was carried out.[91] In a report of the trials of Carter and Killick in the *Bury and Norwich Post*, the judge was reported as 'very pointedly notic[ing] this prevalent offence of servants purloining their employers' property and expressed the determination of the Court severely to punish all felonies of this nature'.[92]

The position of Mary Buckley or Buckle (alias Olley), aged 33, differs from most other defendants because she was a repeat offender who lived on the parish of Stanton. She was committed in January 1803 on suspicion of stealing an apron worth 12d from Elizabeth Carver of Stanton and appeared before quarter sessions in Bury St Edmunds. The outcome of this case is unknown but she was next prosecuted and acquitted at the Lent assizes of March 1803 for selling and exchanging wearing apparel provided by the parish of Stanton.[93] She was described in the *Bury and Norfolk Post* as a pauper maintained by this parish.[94] Buckley was finally found guilty in March 1807 of fraudulently obtaining three sums of 5s from the Parish of Bardwell which had been intended for Robert and Ann Lucas who lived in the next village (Stanton).[95] For this final fraudulent act and while she may have been in receipt of poor relief, Buckley was sentenced to seven years' transportation. This may well have been a ploy to rid the overseers of a troublesome parishioner.

6.5 THE EXPERIENCE OF INCARCERATION

> 'A work-room. Two lodging rooms with boarded bedsteads. No chimnies. Windows close glazed; and the workroom made offensive by a closet in it. Court-yard not secure; and Prisoners have no access to the well of fine water. The Prison walls are clay; and the whole of it is out of repair. The prisoner, a Woman at work, in irons. No allowance.'[96]

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[88] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1807, L.
[89] HO 13, *Correspondence and Warrants*, *1782-1871* (1808).
[90] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1807, L.
[91] Appendix 3.
[92] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 25 March 1807.
[93] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1803, L.
[94] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 30 March 1803.
[95] Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, 1807, L.
[96] John Howard, *The state of the prisons in England and Wales, with preliminary observations, and an account of some foreign prisons*, printed by William Eyres and sold by T. Cadell in the Strand, and N. Conant in Fleet-Street, London (Warrington: 1777), 263-268, (p. 266: Clare bridewell).

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 have shown that many women were sentenced to periods of incarceration by the quarter sessions and assize courts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the discussion in this chapter now turns towards the conditions inside Suffolk's gaols in this period. Depending on the nature of their criminal activity, men and women were incarcerated in prisons, houses of correction, bridewells and hulks at several stages in the process of prosecution and conviction: while they awaited trial; after conviction and sentencing; and while they awaited transportation. Even if found not guilty, they were held in prison until the fees for accommodation before the trial were paid to the keeper.

No details of imprisonment in Suffolk from the prisoner's perspective have survived but a sense of the conditions they experienced can be built up from contemporaneous reports of prison visits. The work of prison reformer John Howard described the squalor of prison conditions in the late 1770s and the above quotation is taken from his account of Clare bridewell.[97] Howard found that prisoners were held in limited spaces with little access to fresh air, were poorly nourished and highly susceptible to illnesses such as smallpox; he was further concerned that most institutions were insecure.[98] By the early 1810s James Neild noted some limited improvement in conditions, though incarceration remained unpleasant and insanitary.[99]

The surviving gaol records make it clear that prisoners were expected to work during their incarceration and were paid a small wage that was offset against the cost of their upkeep. Thus, in August 1799, seventeen year old Mary Syrett of Beccles earned 1s 1¼d for spinning tow (coarse fibre for low quality hemp) but her weekly upkeep cost 1s 2s.[100] The earnings of less competent spinners would not meet this cost.

Howard's description of Clare bridewell in 1777 suggests it was probably the most squalid the prison he visited in Suffolk that year but visits to other prisons and bridewells in the county confirmed that living standards varied between institutions and also within them.[101] The primary focus of this thesis is on property crimes. Nevertheless, Table 6.4 shows that the number of debtors far exceeded felons in Bury St Edmunds gaol and equalled them

[97] Howard, *The state of the* prisons, p. 266.
[98] Howard, *The state of the* prisons, pp. 263-268.
[99] John Neild, *State of Prisons in England Scotland and Wales* (London: printed by John Nicholson, Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street, 1812).
[100] ASSI 94/1464, 1798, L ; Mary Syrett was convicted of grand larceny, 21 March 1798.
[101] Howard, *The state of the prisons*, pp. 263-268.

in Ipswich during Howard's visit in 1779. The total number of debtors and felons recorded in these gaols also exceeded the numbers held in the bridewells. A difficulty for this research study is that Howard generally lumped all male and female felons together in his records, although he distinguished between male and female debtors. During incarceration, debtors and felons were kept apart, and male and female prisoners in each category were also kept separate.

In Ipswich gaol, all prisoners slept in crib bedsteads, with straw beds and a blanket. In Bury gaol, men were chained to staples fixed to the bedsteads but five died of smallpox in 1773. Howard did not describe women's sleeping quarters. Male felons had separate day and night rooms, but female felons had no day room and no fireplace in the night room. In Ipswich, debtors' day and night accommodation was more spacious than felons' and they were allowed to make garters and purses for sale at the front gate. Howard noted two drinking rooms, probably one each for debtors and felons and two rooms for the sick, which he stated were not sufficiently separate from the rest of the accommodation. In addition to regular prisoners, Howard confirmed that male and female prisoners were brought twice a year from Ipswich to the assizes in Bury and confined for four or five nights in the assize court's large dungeon downstairs.

The keepers of Ipswich County and Town gaol, and Bury St Edmunds gaols did not receive a salary and therefore charged fees to debtors and felons for their upkeep, as well as for their committal and release.[102] In 1776, felons in Ipswich received a daily allowance of 18½ ozs of bread per day (costing 2d). Howard did not record what further nourishment felons received, but debtors additionally received an occasional allowance of 1½ lbs of beef for broth from the legacy of John Pemberton. It is unclear if these same allowances were given to women.

In Sudbury Borough gaol in 1776, Howard found separate provision for debtors and felons, a separate room with fireplace for women and a loom for weaving.[103] It is unclear if the loom was for male or female prisoners. Prisoners received no monetary allowance and a fee of 4s was charged by the keeper, who was not in receipt of a salary. It is possible that whippings were handed down to women in Sudbury because they could not pay or earn this fee if they were imprisoned.[104]

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[102] Howard, *The state of the prisons*, pp. 263-268.
[103] Howard, *The state of the prisons*, p. 268.
[104] Appendix 1; EE501/2/18, 1871-1836.

Table 6.4 additionally shows that Howard's visits to Suffolk extended to the bridewells of Beccles, Bury, Clare, Ipswich, Lavenham and Woodbridge. He recorded that the keepers of Beccles, Bury, Clare, Lavenham and Woodbridge bridewells received a salary.[105] Howard also noted in 1776 that prisoners in Beccles and Woodbridge received the same bread allowance of 2d per day as felons in Ipswich gaol. Conditions in the bridewells were poor, however. At Woodbridge there were two dirty rooms, with no chimney in the women's room. There was no straw or water available for prisoners and no-one had work. At Lavenham, there was a courtyard but no water and prisoners were kept padlocked indoors. Work here involved spinning.

Table 6.4: Numbers of Prisoners in Gaols and Bridewells in Suffolk, 1779[106]

Gaol or Bridewell (House of Correction)	Male debtors	Female debtors	All Felons & other serious offenders	Petty Offenders
Beccles Bridewell	0	0	0	9
Bury St Edmunds Borough Gaol	18	0	5	0
Bury St Edmunds Bridewell	0	0	0	2
Clare Bridewell	0	0	0	1
Ipswich County Gaol & Town Bridewell	22	2	23	0
Lavenham Bridewell	0	0	0	3
Woodbridge Bridewell	0	0	0	1

By the time of James Neild's visits to Suffolk in 1811, the two county gaols had been replaced by new, secure buildings and both gaol keepers were paid salaries. In the new Ipswich county gaol, which opened in 1790, women and men's living accommodation and chapel seats were segregated by gender and according to their classification as debtors or

[105] Howard, *The state of the prisons*, pp. 263-268. The keeper of Clare was a manufacturer who received a salary of £13 15s 4d.

[106] John Howard, *Appendix to The state of the prisons in England and Wales, &c., Containing a farther account of foreign prisons and hospitals, with additional remarks on the Prisons of this Country*, (printed by William Eyres and sold by T. Cadell in the Strand, and N. Conant in Fleet-Street, London (Warrington: 1780), p. 201. Howard does not separate male and female felons and petty offenders.

felons, prisoners or convicts.[107] Female prisoners before trial had a dayroom 'fitted up for cookery in the same manner as the men's' and a courtyard. Female convicts awaiting for transportation had a dayroom, sleeping cells on the upper floor and a separate courtyard. Similar segregation was practised at the Town and Borough gaol and the House of Correction. Here, Neild noted that the five well-ventilated and glazed cells kept for women were furnished more comfortably than at the time of Howard's visit. The iron bedsteads were now furnished with straw beds in sacking, as well as two blankets and a coverlet. Their rooms were also furnished with spinning wheels. There is evidence of greater concern for hygiene in the new gaols with prisoners allowed access to small courtyards, ventilated cells and clean linen once a week. In the new Bury county gaol and House of Correction which opened in 1805, women prisoners were divided into debtors, felons to be tried, females convicted of misdemeanours and females convicted of felonies.

Not all prisons had been updated or rebuilt at the time of Neild's visits. The conditions he found in Sudbury Borough gaol and bridewell in 1811 stand out because of their squalor and 'filthy negligence'.[108] He described this as 'a miserable place, for the imprisonment of inferior delinquents only or their confinement until full committed for trial'. The two rooms on the ground floor had iron grates which allowed in fresh air and prisoners could beg for charity through them from passersby. The rooms had only straw on the floor and a 'bar of wood laid across one corner of each with a little straw underneath' as the 'vile substitute for a privy!' The women's one 'wretched room' was upstairs, devoid of furniture and dilapidated.

Neild's report on Beccles House of Correction provides evidence of the prison diet in 1811. Prisoners received 1½ lb of bread per day from the baker's. Breakfast was oatmeal gruel. They received ½ lb meat and 1 lb potatoes for dinner on Sunday; ¾ of a pint of pease (or rice when pease were dear) with broth from Sunday's meat on Monday; rice or oatmeal made into porridge with leeks or onions on Tuesday; 2 lbs of potatoes on Wednesday. Thursday's dinner was the same as Sunday; Friday repeated the menu for Monday; and Saturday repeated Tuesday's dinner. The same menu was provided at Bottesdale House of Correction (which opened in 1801), at a weekly cost of 1s 6d. Neild noted here that employment was the spinning of wool and prisoners received half of their earnings at the time of their discharge.

[107] Neild, *State of Prisons*, 1812, p. 295.
[108] Neild, *State of Prisons*, 1812, p. 546.

6.6 WOMEN'S TRANSPORTATION TO AUSTRALIA: A BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHY

Though transportation to the penal colonies of New South Wales did not begin until 1787, it was originally mandated under the *Vagabonds Act* of 1597 as the means by which 'vagrants and undesirables' could be disposed of to America.[109] The legacy of this act probably explains why some Suffolk women in this study were sentenced directly to transportation by the quarter sessions for seemingly minor offences. Rhiannon Markless confirmed that transportation was extended in the seventeenth century to capital convicts recommended by assize judges for mercy from the King.[110] It was further extended to other crimes, including the receipt of stolen goods, by the *Transportation Act* of 1718.[111] These acts allowed many thousands of convicts to be sent to the Americas until transportation was halted by the American War of Independence in 1775.[112]

After several years' hiatus during which large numbers of convicts were sentenced to transportation but held in gaol or on hulks, transportation resumed in 1787 to the new colony of Botany Bay.[113] But while convicts sent to America in the eighteenth century had been received into an established administration that had been founded 'on the English system of civil administration', the first convicts sent to the new penal colony in New South Wales found that the administration had not yet been set up.[114]

The historiography of transportation developed in the 1970s within the Australian women's movement. Portia Robinson argued that this early research sought to push back against the attitudes of early white male officials in New South Wales who considered male convicts to be debased and degraded but female convicts to be utterly immoral, depraved, wanton and vile, even after serving their sentences and settling as free citizens.[115] Feminist historians of this period, including Beddoe and Robinson, attempted to retrieve the names and identities of transported women from crime registers and other official documents in Wales, England and Australia and reinstate their existence.[116] Beddoe described this as a feminist response to women's crime and further argued that women were transported to

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[109] 39 Eliz. I, c.4 (1597): *The Vagabonds Act*; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 31.
[110] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 31.
[111] 4 Geo. III, c.11 (1718): *An Act for the further Preventing Robbery, Burglary and other Felonies and for the more effectual Transportation of Felons.*
[112] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 31.
[113] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, pp. 565-566.
[114] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 31.
[115] Portia Robinson, *The Hatch and Brood of Time: A study of the first generation of native-born white Australians, 1788-1828* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 16-17.
[116] Robinson, *Hatch and Brood of Time*, pp. 7, 16-17; Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, pp. 22-151.

New South Wales mainly for the 'sexual gratification of both free and convict males', because of the vast imbalance between numbers of male and female convicts.[117]

A second wave of feminist historiography in the last decade of the twentieth century informed efforts to investigate the lives of the women themselves and their contributions to Australia. Deborah Oxley's enquiry into the attributes of women transported to the new colonies between 1826 and 1840 placed them above their working-class contemporaries in skills and education; furthermore, they brought experiences from previously having migrated for work.[118] Oxley later concluded that if convict women had left diaries or letters behind, their voices would have refuted the view commonly held until the middle of the twentieth century that they were depraved and criminally professional.[119] Kay Daniels has since explored the lives of convict women in the new colonies and the changing attitudes that ensured some written archives and convict buildings were deliberately destroyed at the end of the nineteenth century to remove the 'convict stain' from the records.[120] For Daniels, items of material culture from convict times offer tangible evidence of the female experience of women's lives after they left England for the colonies, even though such items are rare.

Historians such as Oxley and Daniels have enquired into the impact of convict women's lives on the society of Australia, rather than on their early lives in England and Ireland. This is not surprising: Australia was where the Suffolk women spent the long remainder of their lives after deportation and, accordingly, where the majority of records about their lives are held. The next part of the chapter is concerned with a period that begins some forty years before Oxley's research. It examines the surviving evidence of a small number of women who were transported from Suffolk. It aims to enquire into women's experiences of the process of transportation itself and to establish if their personal stories refute earlier views of depravity and professional criminality. Evidence is rare, however, and most of the women who were transported from Suffolk left behind little evidence of their lives and experiences.

[117] Deirdre Beddoe, *Discovering Women's History: A practical guide to researching the lives of women since 1800*, 3rd edn. (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 1 & 16.
[118] Deborah Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*, ed. by Stephen Nicholas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 85-97.
[119] Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 198.
[120] Kay Daniels, *Convict Women* (St Leonards 2065, Australia: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1998), pp. 241-250.

6.7 WOMEN'S TRANSPORTATION FROM SUFFOLK

> 'It is said to be the intention of government to send all the female convicts to Botany Bay, who are found to be of a proper age and health to undertake such a voyage; and that ships are to proceed annually to that place with convicts. Those, therefore, who are in the high road to this new settlement, should be reminded that to *work* or *starve* will be the only alternative in that desolate country [….which is a] long voyage […] from whence they can never return […]'[121]

This quotation was appended to a news report in the *Ipswich Journal* that announced the start of Elizabeth Harvey's transportation to Botany Bay from Ipswich Gaol in 1786.[122] It was clearly intended to warn members of the public against criminal activity that could lead to transportation, even though few were ever likely to read the extract. As it starkly pointed out, a return passage to England for time-served convicts had not been factored in by the government and most would never return from the penal colonies. The power of this prospect was equally chillingly set out in the Home Secretary's standard response to Justices of Assizes who recommended reprieves to some prisoners on whom they had imposed capital sentences. In his response in 1797 to the recommendation by the Justice of Assizes for the Norfolk Circuit (which included Suffolk) to reprieve Margaret Catchpole and George Bedwell, the Home Secretary granted a discretionary sentence of seven years to both convicts in the following terms:

> '[…] you […] humbly recommended them as fit objects for the Royal Mercy on condition of their being transported beyond the seas […] to the Eastern Coast of New South Wales, or some one or other of the Islands adjacent […]'[123]

The establishment of new penal colonies in Botany Bay (in 1788) and Van Dieman's Land (in 1803) followed Captain Cook's exploratory voyage to the east coast of Australia in 1770.[124] This marked the opening up of a landmass that was inhabited by aboriginal peoples for the forced and free settlement of Europeans. Settlement began with the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 and was the final part of a harsh legal process that banished hundreds of convicts from Britain and Ireland for fixed terms of seven years, fourteen years, or life. These men and women, together with the free settlers who migrated at the same time, ultimately formed

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[121] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 November 1786.
[122] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 November 1786.
[123] HO 13, *Correspondence and Warrants*, *1782-1871* (19 August 1797).
[124] Daniels, *Convict Women*; Dianne Snowdon, 'Female Convicts', in *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, ed. by Alison Alexander, (University of Tasmania: Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, 2006) https://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/index.htm [accessed 26.3.2024].

the bedrock of a modern and successful new nation. Most convicts, however, never returned to their country of origin.

Between 1787 and 1811, 88 men and women from Suffolk were transported to New South Wales to serve sentences of seven years, fourteen years or life.[125] Of the 71 male convicts, 40 were sentenced to seven years' transportation, 9 to fourteen years and 22 for life. Of the 40 transported for seven years, 29 were convicted of thefts from shops, fields and houses and, in most cases, were capitally convicted at the assizes before their sentences were commuted to transportation. The items stolen were varied and included clothing, plate and watches, wheat, livestock and horses.[126] A further 11 convicts were sentenced at the quarter or borough sessions to seven years' transportation and a final convict to fourteen years. The longer sentence was handed down if the theft was aggravated by other actions, such as the onward sale of a stolen animal. Transportation for life was handed down if the theft involved violent crimes such as the burglary of shops or houses or if the convict escaped from gaol whilst awaiting transportation for a previous offence.

Of the 16 women convicted, 12 were transported for seven years, 1 for fourteen years and 2 for life. Of the 12 sentenced to seven years' transportation, 7 were convicted at the assizes of thefts of clothing, fabric, money and household items from houses (including their employers') and shops. A further 5 of this seven year group were convicted at the quarter or borough sessions for theft, obtaining goods under false pretences and crimes against the workhouse, including running away. The female convict sentenced to fourteen years was convicted of burglary at the assizes. The 2 women sentenced at the assizes to life were Margaret Catchpole (previously convicted of horse stealing and sentenced then to seven years' transportation before she escaped; and to life after her escape, for being at large) and Hannah Williams who was jointly convicted of a serious burglary with Richard Brown, who was executed. The sentencing at the quarter sessions of Ann Kell, the sixteenth Suffolk woman, was recorded in 1806 but details of her crime or life after transportation have not survived.[127]

This section of the chapter reconstructs aspects of a number of cases that illustrate individual women's experiences of transportation to New South Wales from England between 1779 and 1811. For cases where women were sentenced to transportation at the

[125] HO 10/2, volumes 1-3, *A Nominal Alphabetical Return of Female Convicts in New South Wales from 1788 up to December* 1819; HO 11/1-3, *Convict Transportation Registers, 1787-1870*; *Australian Convict Ships, 1786-1849.*
[126] Various editions of the *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury and Norwich Post*, 1784-1810.
[127] HO 11/2, *Convict Transportation Registers.*

quarter sessions, the discussion again draws on evidence from the four quarter sessions books for Suffolk, the borough sessions books for Ipswich and Sudbury, and the borough sessions rolls for Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, which are summarised in Appendix 1. For serious cases where women were sentenced to transportation at the assize courts after being reprieved from a capital conviction, it draws on evidence in the assize rolls and assize calendars, summarised at Appendix 2.

Further sets of local documents record the journey taken by women from gaol to the hulks and convict ships to await departure. These include a unique contract between Justices of the Peace and a contractor in Surrey for Susannah Hunt's removal from Ipswich, her transportation to Woolwich where she boarded the *Lady Juliana* transport, and the Master's receipt for her on board the ship.[128] The departures of some other convicts from Suffolk have been found in local newspaper reports.[129] Although the surviving sessions and assizes records partially document an individual prisoner's experience in the judicial system, they do not provide information on imprisonment, the journey towards the port of departure or the sea passage to New South Wales.

For the purpose of identifying individual experiences between conviction and the start of their lives in the new penal colony, other official and informal documents have been drawn together. These documents together suggest that 'transportation' may be understood not just as a long passage by sea but as a liminal process between the old world and the new that would be experienced differently by each individual convict.

Details of the first women from Suffolk who were tried between 1784 and 1810 (and transported between 1787 and 1810) have been drawn together from several sources and are summarised in Appendix 5. Deirdre Beddoe observed with irony that the British government herded convicts onto transports at the dockside, yet took care to record the names and personal details of all those sentenced to transportation.[130] Home Office documents in the series HO 10 are among the most important for identifying female convicts who were transported: HO 10/2, for example, includes an alphabetical return of female convicts who were transported between 1788 and 1819. The series HO 11 comprises 21 volumes of Convict Transportation Registers, 1787-1870, which name convicts, the place and date of their conviction and the term of sentence.[131] In several instances, local newspaper

[128] SA, C/2/9/1/1/11/5, Papers re transportation of Susanna Hunt, wife of John Hunt, 1-9 April 1789.
[129] For example, the *Ipswich Journal* and *Bury and Norwich Post.*
[130] Beddoe, *Discovering Women's History*, p. 22; HO 11/1-3, Convict Transportation Registers.
[131] HO 10, 1787-1859: *Settlers and Convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania*; HO 10/2, volumes 1-3, *A Nominal Alphabetical Return of Female Convicts in New South Wales from 1788 up to December*

reports also contribute to what is known about verdicts and sentencing from the reporting of criminal trials and the movement of convicted women from gaol to hulks or transports where they awaited departure for Botany Bay.[132]

Despite the British government's endeavour to comprehensively record all transported convicts, some women were missed out of the English records altogether but were accounted for in registers completed in New South Wales, including the musters of all convicts and settlers living in the colony.[133] While British sources provide substantial evidence, related official registers held in Australia have enabled the convict experience of transportation to be built up in more depth. Papers held in the Australian State Library of New South Wales and the National Library of Australia hold more original evidence about the lives of convict women than can be found in British records alone.[134] The original court documents of Margaret Catchpole's first trial in 1797, for example, are held in the National Library of Australia.[135]

On other occasions local British newspapers printed letters sent home by Suffolk women. These letters confirmed, as Oxley found, that some of these women were skilled and literate. Undoubtedly they had the ability to contribute significantly towards the formation of Australia and may eventually have achieved more in this new society than their lives in England would have allowed. Not all the woman who were transported from Suffolk appear to have been skilled and literate, however, and it is argued that this punishment was a tortuous ordeal for many convicted women whose ordinary lives may already have been impoverished.

In general, fewer details survive from the seven cases in Suffolk between 1785 and 1809 in which women were sentenced to seven years' transportation at the county and borough quarter sessions, than in cases at the assize courts where transportation was considered to be a reprieve following a conviction for a capital offence. The remaining evidence, however, appears to confirm that women sentenced by the county and borough sessions were found

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1819; HO 11/1, *Convict Transportation Registers, 1787-1870*; *Australian Convict Ships 1786-1849*; HO 13, 1782-1871: *Correspondence and Warrants*; HO 47, 1784-1830: *Judges' Reports on Criminals*; HO 77, 1780-1853, *Newgate Prison Calendar & Commitment book*, 'Prisoners upon Orders' for removal; State Library of New South Wales: https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/; National Library of Australia: https://www.nla.gov.au/ [both accessed 20.3.2024].

[132] For example, the *Ipswich Journal* & *Bury & Norwich Post.*

[133] For example, *New South Wales, Australia Convict Ship Muster Rolls and Related Records, 1790-1849* [accessed via *Ancestry*].

[134] State Library of New South Wales: https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/; National Library of Australia: https://www.nla.gov.au/ [both accessed 20.3.2024[.

[135] National Library of Australia: MS 4211, 1791-1868, Margaret Catchpole.

guilty of crimes that were far less serious than the crimes for which women were prosecuted at the assize courts.

The quarter sessions books and rolls show that Ann Baker was sentenced to be transported in 1785 at the county quarter sessions in Bury in her fourth appearance for running away from Cosford workhouse without permission.[136] Baker is included in this thesis as a 'property criminal' because for her first offence in 1783 she was charged with the 'embezzil[ment]' of clothing that belonged to the workhouse.[137] Elizabeth Edwards was sentenced in 1786 at the Borough of Bury Sessions for two thefts of clothing, one with force.[138] In 1789 Susannah Hunt was sentenced by Ipswich Borough Sessions for grand larceny: stealing linen from Wm. Notcutt.[139] Mary Barber was sentenced in 1807 at Ipswich Borough Sessions for stealing a handkerchief, while Ann Briggs was sentenced in 1807 at the county quarter sessions in Bury for obtaining goods under false pretences.[140] Ann Kell was sentenced to seven years in 1806 and appears in the Convict Transportation Registers but no further information has been found of her life or crime.[141] Finally, Mary Anne Drake was sentenced in 1809 at Woodbridge sessions for stealing furnishing materials and wearing apparel from her employer, Mrs Short of Boulge-hall.[142] Drake was prosecuted together with another servant, Mary Bloomfield, and both women were accused of having keys in their possession to open drawers in the house, but Bloomfield was sentenced only to three months imprisonment.

6.8 FROM GAOL TO THE PORT OF EMBARKATION

The first women who were reprieved for a capital offence at the assizes and sentenced to transportation to New South Wales, or sentenced directly to transportation, waited a very long time before they left the prison and were taken to the port of embarkation. As seen above, Elizabeth Harvey was tried at the assizes in March 1784 but did not leave Suffolk until November 1786, left the country in May 1787 and finally arrived in New South Wales in January 1788. In 1785 Ann Baker was sentenced to transportation at the quarter sessions in

[136] B105.2.47, 1781-1786.
[137] B105.2.47, 1781-1786.
[138] Bury Borough Sessions Rolls, D8/1/3/1-11, 1735-1801.
[139] Ipswich Borough Sessions Books: C/2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815; Ipswich Borough Sessions Rolls: C/2/9/1/1/1/138-144, 1790-1796.
[140] State Records Authority of New South Wales: Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1788-1842.
[141] Home Office, HO 11/02: Convict Transportation Registers.
[142] Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1788-1842.

Bury as 'an incorrigible rogue' for repeatedly running away from the workhouse (with a first conviction for running away in workhouse clothes) but she did not leave Suffolk until December 1789, arriving in New South Wales in June 1790. As the administration improved, these lengthy waits gradually became shorter. Susan Wyatt, the last woman in this Suffolk group, was tried at the assizes in October 1810 and reached New South Wales in October 1811.

While female convicts waited to be removed from the New Gaol in Ipswich, the *General Regulations for the new gaol at Ipswich* outlined the conditions under which their lives were controlled.[143] Convicts were required to wear a uniform of yellow and blue, to have their hair shorn and were allowed 'one hour's airing if they behave[d] well'.[144] It is unclear if the same rules applied to women as well as men. Convicts were required to undertake 'labour of the hardest and most servile kind, in which drudgery is chiefly required […]'[145] Women were expected to 'wash for themselves and other prisoners'.[146]

The *General Regulations* also stated that convicts were not allowed visitors 'on any account', although their friends could ask after their health by paying a penny at the lodge.[147] This rule appears to have been less rigidly observed than proscribed as at least two female convicts were permitted to receive visitors. A report of the arrest of 14 year old Barnes Hunt for theft in the *Ipswich Journal* states that he was 'often indulged with seeing his mother', Susannah, and so was her husband John.[148] Margaret Catchpole also received occasional visits. In a letter in 1848 to Richard Cobbold (author of *The History of Margaret Catchpole, a Suffolk Girl)*, Matilda Stanford claimed that Catchpole's elderly cousin had gone to see her in prison and the cousin's husband had given her half a crown.[149] Catchpole was also visited 'in her cell' by Mrs Priscilla Wakefield, a Quaker who was visiting a daughter who lived in Ipswich.[150] Elizabeth Cobbold, Catchpole's former employer and a member of the wealthy social elite of Ipswich, visited her a few times in prison, according to Richard Cobbold's part-

[143] *General Regulations for the Government of the New Gaol at Ipswich, for the County of Suffolk*, (G. Jermyn: Ipswich, 1791; undated facsimile copy published by ECCO Print Editions).
[144] *General Regulations*, p. 16.
[145] *General Regulations*, p. 17.
[146] *General Regulations*, p. 17.
[147] *General Regulations*, p. 17.
[148] *Ipswich Journal*, 7 February 1789.
[149] SA, HD 1/2/2/4, Richard Cobbold's letters; Richard Cobbold, *History of Margaret Catchpole,: A Suffolk Girl* (originally published, London: Henry Coulburn, 1845; facsimile edition, Ipswich: The Deben Bookshop, 1971). The cousin was probably Sarah Scotchman of Framlingham: letter from Curate of Laxfield to Richard Cobbold, 6 August 1845.
[150] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 February 1861, 'Suffolk Worthies and Persons of Note in East Anglia, No. 93'.

factual novel.[151] A copy of a letter allegedly written by Catchpole to Elizabeth Cobbold and dated 25 May 1801 asks if Cobbold would visit the gaol 'on tuesday before I leve englent' and 'consider me a littell trifell of money'.[152]

The first part of the journey to New South Wales involved the removal of convicted men and women to a hulk or convict ship from the gaols in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. The *Bury & Norwich Post* reported in 1788 that a group of 17 male convicts from Bury were brought to Ipswich to be sent to Portsmouth by wherry with their Ipswich counterparts.[153] This was likely to have been the method of transport for other convicts from Suffolk because turnpikes across Suffolk and Essex and horse-drawn vehicles in the eighteenth century were expensive and impractical.[154] While some convicts were sent direct to hulks or sailing vessels at the port of embarkation on the south coast, others were sent to vessels moored on the Thames.

Following Susannah Hunt's conviction for theft at the Borough of Ipswich Sessions on 17 March 1789, several documents were drawn up by the Town Clerk, William Batley, for her transportation to Botany Bay.[155] These included a contract dated 1 April 1789 between Ipswich Justices and William Richards, the Younger of Walworth, Surrey and a bond dated 2 April between William Batley and William Lynch of Surrey and George Atkin of Deptford for the contract to be carried out.[156] The documents also included a warrant dated 4 April 1789 mandating Geo. Atkin, Master of the galleon *Juliana* in Woolwich, to take her on board for transportation; and his acknowledgement of receiving her on 4 April 1789.[157]

Wherever convicts were held pending departure from England, they usually had a further long wait while convict ships were made ready to receive a human cargo and fleets of vessels sailing together were assembled. Convicts were transferred from hulks to the transports, forced into cramped, unsanitary spaces for weeks, if not months, before their ship sailed. But even more hazardous was the dangerous, nine-month sea voyage before convicts arrived at the new penal colony.[158]

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[151] Cobbold, *History of Margaret Catchpole,* p. 304.
[152] Ipswich Museum, Copy letter from Margaret Catchpole to Elizabeth Cobbold, 25 May 1801.
[153] *Bury & Norwich Post*, 23 July 1788.
[154] J. M. L. Booker, 'The Essex Turnpike Trusts' (unpublished Master's thesis, Durham University, 1979).
[155] C2/9/1/1/8/11/5, 1776-1815.
[156] C2/9/1/1/8/11/5.
[157] C2/9/1/1/8/11/5.
[158] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, pp. 13-14.

6.9 FROM PORT OF EMBARKATION TO NEW SOUTH WALES

> 'A letter has been received from on board the Lady Juliana, the transport ship which sailed with the women convicts for Botany Bay, dated Sept. 20th at the island of Jago; all were well, and proceeding on the voyage.'[159]

The journey taken by convicts from ports on the south coast of England to New South Wales or Tasmania was long and dangerous. The prospect of the long journey to an unknown country would have been terrifying to many, not least because sailing itself could be dangerous and shipwrecks were common. As seen above, several women were held in gaol for long periods before they were delivered to a hulk or convict ship. For the first convicts, this process could not begin until the complex arrangements for the passage of the First Fleet had been put in place.

As already mentioned, Elizabeth Harvey was probably the first female convict to be sent to New South Wales from Suffolk.[160] A 30 year old single woman, she was tried at the Lent assizes in Bury St Edmunds in 1784 for the capital offence of breaking into William Firmin's house in Bungay.[161] She was convicted and sentenced to death along with eight male prisoners, but was reprieved on 19 May 1784 by the Home Secretary, Lord Sydney.[162] The royal mercy meant her sentence was reduced to fourteen years' transportation to America.[163] However, because transportation to the Americas had been halted in 1775 by the outbreak of the American war of Independence and the new penal colony in New South Wales had not yet been established when Harvey was convicted, she was held in gaol from conviction in April 1784 until October 1786.[164] According to the *Ipswich Journal* she was then taken by John Ripshaw, the Ipswich gaoler, to Plymouth-Dock (now Devonport) where she was handed over to the captain of the *Dunkirk* hulk to join other female convicts.[165]

According to Samuel Hadfield and Robert Shoemaker, the *Dunkirk* was the only hulk reserved solely for female prisoners and it operated between 1784 and 1791.[166] Elizabeth Harvey finally left England for New South Wales on 13 May 1787, on the *Friendship* transport,

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[159] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 18 November 1789.
[160] *Derby Mercury*, 8 April 1784; HO 47/3/118, 13 May 1784; HO 13, 19 May 1784; *Ipswich Journal*, 4 November 1786.
[161] *Derby Mercury*, 8 April 1784.
[162] HO 13, 19 May 1784.
[163] HO 47/3/118, 13 May 1784.
[164] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, pp. 12-13.
[165] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 November 1786.
[166] Samual Hadfield and Robert Shoemaker, https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/Convict_Hulks#:~:text=There%20was%20only%20ever%20one,in%20operation%20from%201784%2D1791 [accessed 25 March 2023].

one of eleven vessels of the First Fleet, six of which carried convicts. However, Robert Shaw has shown that the women on board this ship were transferred to three other female convict ships at Cape Town because the *Friendship* was by then full of sheep that were taken on board at the port.[167] Elizabeth Harvey thus arrived at Port Jackson on 26 January 1788 on board the *Charlotte*.[168]

After Susannah Hunt's arrival in Botany Bay, William Richards (holder of the contract with Ipswich justices for her conveyance) wrote to the Keeper of Ipswich Gaol requesting the final instalment of payment.[169] The *Lady Juliana*, with over 220 women and six children on board, was the first ship to arrive in New South Wales after the First Fleet. The ship had left Deptford for Plymouth after six months and departed from Plymouth on 29 July 1789. It arrived in New South Wales on 3 June 1790.[170] However, Susannah Hunt's name does not appear in the early Convict Transportation Registers or the Musters for Botany Bay and she may have been one of the many women taken to Norfolk Island.[171] She later appears in the Muster for Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land.[172]

Deborah Oxley's research for the period between 1826 and 1840 placed transported female convicts them above their working-class contemporaries in skills and education. A small number of the women who were convicted in Suffolk and subsequently transported between 1787 and 1810 are known to have been literate from the letters they wrote home to newspapers, family and friends. The brief report (above) printed in the *Bury and Norwich Post* on 18 November 1789 is highly likely to have been sent from Jago by Susannah Hunt, since she was the only woman known to have sailed from Suffolk in the *Juliana.*[173] Soon after the *Juliana* arrived in New South Wales, Hunt wrote to the *Ipswich Journal* relaying the gist of the experiences of convicts on the Second Fleet.[174] The letter was published in the editor's words on 26 November 1791:

> 'This letter speaks of the cruelty of the Captain on board one of the transports; […] they lost near 400 unfortunate victims in the voyage, and when the others were landed they died like rotten sheep. This person was a mantua-maker here, the business she says she now follows. Of the convicts sent from hence

[167] Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, *A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868* (London: Vintage, 2003), p. 82.
[168] State Record Authority of New South Wales, New South Wales Convict Arrivals, 1788-1842.
[169] C2/9/1/2/6/2/24.
[170] Penny Edwell, *The Dictionary of* Sydney, State Library of New South Wales, https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/lady_juliana [accessed 17.3.2024].
[171] HO 11/1; https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/lady_juliana [accessed 17.3.2024].
[172] Convict Musters, 1806-1849.
[173] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 18 November 1789.
[174] *Ipswich Journal,* 26 November 1791.

> […] John Wiseman, John Lovel, and Sarjeant Howard were amongst the number who perished […] Weavers and Cone are both alive […] the latter has been very ill ever since his arrival […] Allington […] now follows his business (a cooper) in the storehouse; and James Riches, who went from the hulks in the Neptune, lived only a week after his arrival.'[175]

The men named by Susannah Hunt were all convicts from Suffolk who were transported on the *Guardian* or the convoy of the *Neptune*, *Scarborough* and *Surprize* in 1789.[176] They were probably among the group of 17 male convicts from Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich (mentioned above) who were transported by wherry to Portsmouth.[177] Hunt's letter is likely to have brought the news of their deaths and illnesses to Suffolk and was probably the first information the families had received since the men left Ipswich for the hulks and transport ships. This fleet of eleven ships, named the *Death Fleet*, transported approximately 1,250 male convicts altogether, a quarter of whom died during the passage. Many others required immediate medical treatment and yet more others died within 12 months.[178] A few women also died, though most of the female convicts on the *Juliana* arrived safely.[179] There was a serious food shortage in the colony when the 2nd Fleet (of which the *Lady Juliana* was the first ship) arrived, however, because the *Guardian*, which carried stores of food, sank when it hit an iceberg.[180]

Details that emerge about Susannah Hunt's family around the time of her trial on 17 March 1789 suggest that crime may have been a regular part of their lives. Reports in the *Ipswich Journal* of the arrest of Susannah's 14 year old son, Barnes Hunt in February 1789, suggest that he regularly pilfered 'whatever laid in his way' when he ran errands for the prisoners in gaol at the same time as visiting his mother.[181] His father, John Hunt, was prosecuted for stealing 'fifteen fine fat ducks' with an accomplice in October 1789.[182] Father and son, who lived in the poor neighbourhood of St Mary at the Quay in Ipswich, were described as 'a terror to the neighbourhood for some time past.'[183] John Hunt himself was among a group of seven men who were conveyed to the hulks at Woolwich, though no record of his transportation has been found.[184]

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[175] *Ipswich Journal,* 26 November 1791.
[176] HO 11/1.
[177] *Bury & Norwich Post*, 23 July 1788.
[178] Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, pp. 98-99.
[179] State Library of New South Wales, https://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/convicts-bound-for-australia/second_fleet [accessed 27 March 2024].
[180] https://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/convicts-bound-for-australia/second_fleet [accessed 27 March 2024].
[181] *Ipswich Journal*, 7 February 1789 & 21 March 1789.
[182] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 10 October 1789.
[183] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 10 October 1789.
[184] *Ipswich Journal*, 5 December 1789.

6.10 TRANSPORTATION AND NEW LIVES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

On 16 May 1812, the *Suffolk Chronicle* printed a letter from Susan Wyatt, who was sentenced to transportation for seven years at the Summer Assizes in Bury in 1810 for stealing £3 from the house of John Garrod of Leiston.[185] The letter, dated 20 November 1811, confirmed her safe arrival in New South Wales.[186] It detailed the route taken and a brief account of the 'tiresome' journey and its dangers. The first stop of two days was in Madeira, the next in Rio de Janeiro 'where [convicts] could get one hundred oranges for two shillings' and the 'place [was] illuminated every night'.[187] There was at least one alternative route, however. A letter from the fleet in 1787 reported that its ship had sailed via Tenerife, rather than Madeira.[188]

Susan Wyatt confirmed that 'the worst part of the passage' was round Cape Horn, where she was 'nearly washed over-board, had a bad fall, and was very ill for a fortnight.'[189] She stressed that there had been no disorder on the ship and no one died during the voyage. She also confirmed that Millisent Billiers was 'sent over' on the same ship: Billiers' crimes and previous detention in Ipswich Gaol are discussed in Chapter 2.[190] Wyatt's letter further confirmed that she 'lived as cook' at a hotel 10 miles from Sydney and was paid £10 a year plus perquisites.[191] It also informed *Chronicle* readers about other women who had been transported from Suffolk. Bluntly it stated that Harriet Tyler, who was convicted of theft in Ipswich and transported in 1810, had died. Mary Ann Drake, who was convicted of theft from Mrs Short of Boulge-hall and transported in 1810, had married. Wyatt also said that Margaret Catchpole (who escaped from Ipswich Gaol three years after a capital conviction and subsequent reprieve to transportation, for the theft of John Cobbold's horse) had visited her twice, had a farm of her own and was expecting a free pardon.

Margaret Catchpole's own letters back to Suffolk offer insight into what happened when the transports arrived at the harbour in Port Jackson. Catchpole was transported on the *Nile* with Sarah Barker and Elizabeth Killett from Suffolk.[192] Women were initially taken to the stores (the factory) and many were quickly employed by settlers for domestic duties and left the vicinity of the harbour. She confirmed that she and Killett were 'of[f] the stors' within

[185] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.
[186] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.
[187] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.
[188] *Bury & Norwich Post*, 25 July 1787.
[189] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.
[190] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.
[191] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 16 May 1812.
[192] SRA NSW, Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799 (1150-51).

days, meaning that had quickly been offered employment. Barker on the other hand had struggled during the journey and had been 'very much fritened at the rufness of the sea' but was otherwise 'much the sam as ever'.[193] Catchpole also said that Barker was kept at the factory spinning 'for govment' but could finish by 12 or 1 if she worked hard. This meant she would be free in the afternoons to earn money from other jobs and provide herself with food and lodgings.[194] No further information has been found of Barker's life in New South Wales.

Several convict Suffolk women lived as housekeepers to men with whom they had children and subsequently married; most eventually received pardons. Ann Baker married John Boxley in 1792, had two children and died at the age of 29 in 1804.[195] Baker repeatedly ran away from the workhouse until she was transported for seven years around the age of 17 and may have been by 'considered to be particularly undesirable' by magistrates.[196] But the basic details of her life after transportation suggest that she may have achieved a better life in the new colony than in Suffolk.

This may also have been the case for Susannah Hunt. Parish records in England suggest that Susannah Barnes and John Hunt had married in 1772 and had at least five children between 1774 and 1781; Susannah was probably in her late 30s when she was transported.[197] Australian records indicate that she was sent to Norfolk Island on arrival, married William Mitchell there in 1791 and was appointed to teach at the school in 1794.[198] Hunt and Mitchell later sailed to Van Dieman's land in 1807 with three adopted children.[199] Hunt's life after transportation offers convincing evidence that convict women contributed to the new colonies and refutes claims that they were depraved criminals.[200]

In surviving records of the 15 female convicts from Suffolk who were sentenced to transportation between 1784 and 1810, no evidence has emerged of the depravity and criminality that women were accused of, and to which Deborah Oxley objected.[201] As well as Susannah Hunt, Mary Barber, Ann Briggs, Mary Buckle, Mary Anne Drake, Elizabeth Killett

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[193] State Library of New South Wales, M944, *Papers relating to Margaret Catchpole, 1845-1965*, Letter to Dr Stebbens, 21 January 1802.
[194] M944, Letter to Dr Stebbens, 21 January 1802.
[195] Convict Records, https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/baker/ann/98167 [accessed 17 June 2024].
[196] Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', pp. 115-116.
[197] SA, Suffolk Marriage Index; Suffolk Baptisms Index.
[198] https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/hunt/susannah/129078 [accessed 17 June 2024].
[199] https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/hunt/susannah/129078 [accessed 17 June 2024].
[200] Oxley, *Convict Maids*, pp. 3-8.
[201] Oxley, *Convict Maids*, pp. 3-8.

and Susan Wyatt all married in New South Wales.[202] It is probable that Mary Barber and Susannah Hunt were still married to men in England at the same time. Other women appear to have stayed single. Hannah Williams became a housekeeper, while widowed Martha Killick worked as a shoe binder.[203] No further information about Elizabeth Harvey and Elizabeth Edwards has been found after their arrival in the colony.

Elizabeth Killett took over the position of 'Lessee of the Tolls of the Sydney Market' after her husband, John Gray, died in 1818.[204] Margaret Catchpole remained single and supported herself on a small farm and as a nurse and midwife to free settlers in New South Wales. She maintained contacts with her former employer Elizabeth Cobbold and members of Cobbold's circle and received gifts of cloth and accessories from them. Her life is well documented through her own letters and other accounts of her work.[205]

6.11 CONCLUSION

The first part of this chapter reviewed the sentences handed down to women at Suffolk borough and county quarter sessions courts for property crimes between 1770 and 1820 and highlighted changes over time that seemed to recognise growing anxieties about public and private whipping. The discussion has shown that this unease was recognised by a gradual shift in the penal framework in the 1780s and 1790s that displaced physical punishments with periods of incarceration, sometimes with a fine. Changes in Suffolk did not all coincide exactly with changes traced by Peter King in Essex.[206] The public whipping of women, which King claimed had stopped in Essex by the late 1750s, was still being used to punish women in Suffolk in the 1780s.[207] The last case of public whipping with an adjunct sentence of hard labour in the House of Correction was for obtaining goods by false pretences, was in 1790.[208] The sessions books of the Borough of Sudbury in particular suggest that public whippings were deliberately staged for maximum deterrent effect, although it is unclear if these sentences were in fact carried out. However, whipping might have been preferable to being

[202] Convict Records, https://convictrecords.com.au [accessed 17 June 2024].
[203] HO 10/36; HO 10/2/2.
[204] Laurie Chater Forth, *Margaret Catchpole, her life and her letters: the story of a woman who became a legend* (Richmond, N.S.W.: Laurie Chater Forth, 2012).
[205] M 944 Margaret Catchpole, M 944; National Library of Australia, *Papers of Margaret Catchpole, 1797-1917*, MS 4211; Chater Forth, *Margaret Catchpole*; Daniels, *Convict Women*, pp. 225-226; Caroline Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House and the Rouses* (Nedlands, Western Australia: Caroline Thornton, 1988), pp. 21-29, 51 & 84.
[206] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[207] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 286.
[208] B105/2/49, 1790-1794.

imprisoned in the squalid conditions found by Neild in the gaol in Sudbury.[209] Private whipping with or without adjunct punishment in Suffolk was phased out in the 1790s and eventually ceased in Essex some ten years later.

This chapter also observed from the evidence in Appendices 1 and 2 that several women accused of property crimes at the quarter sessions and assize courts in the 1780s and 1790s were found not guilty, acquitted or 'discharged for want of prosecution'.[210] These verdicts may suggest that discretion towards female defendants was applied by some prosecutors and judges in their decisions not to proceed or convict in this prolonged period of severe winters, crop failures and food shortages. This was particularly evident in the periods of severe weather and escalating wheat prices between 1794 and 1796 and also 1798 and 1801. Peter King found an increase in indictments during the years of severe dearth and high wheat prices in Essex in 1796 and 1801. Even without the survival of indictments as evidence, the increase in prosecutions of women at the quarter sessions courts in Suffolk in the same years appears to corroborate King's evidence.

The 1780s and 1790s also coincided with the decline in work opportunities for Suffolk women in spinning and agriculture as the Norwich weaving industry became more specialist and demand fell for worsted yarn from Suffolk. The hand spinning industry, which had previously employed many hundreds of women and girls in their homes across the county, appears to have slumped in the 1780s in the face of competition from new factories in the northwest of the country. No new work for women was introduced into the county to compensate for these losses and household income may have fallen because of women's decreasing ability to contribute. Single or widowed women of all ages who were not supported by family were even more likely to suffer from these conditions. Furthermore, Suffolk experienced several periods of extreme weather, poor harvests and soaring wheat prices in 1780s and 1790s, while wages were slow to rise. While the resulting poverty, lack of earning potential and simultaneous increase in prices may have forced some women to steal food or other goods to provide an income, it is also possible that victims recognised the poverty of defendants and decided not to proceed against them in acts of prosecutorial discretion.

The chapter has also investigated the experiences of women who were banished to New South Wales, from their conviction to gaol, and then to arrival in the colony. The long wait in

[209] Neild, *State of Prisons*, 1812, p. 546.
[210] For example, B105/2/48, 1786-1789; B105/2/49. 1790-1794.

prison may have given time for family and acquaintances to visit convicts, even though this was formally against regulations. It was usually followed by a sea voyage from the Port of Ipswich to hulks or transports on the south coast which did not leave England for the colony for several months. Written accounts of convicts' first-hand experiences demonstrate that the voyage and conditions were extremely dangerous.[211] But they also suggest that some women achieved better things in New South Wales than they were likely to achieve in England. The experiences of Margaret Catchpole and Elizabeth Killett are pertinent here. Catchpole and Killett appear to confirm Deborah Oxley's research for the period between 1826 and 1840 which placed many convicts above their working-class contemporaries in skills and education.[212]

This chapter has also considered why, after capital conviction, the sentences of some women were commuted to terms of imprisonment, while other women were transported. The cases of the Syret sisters, who were separately reprieved to two years' imprisonment at the assizes (while their mother in each case appears to have been released) strongly suggest their youthful ages may have been the basis for discretion.[213] Discretion based on age was not applied in all cases, however. Ann Baker, who was of a similar age to the Syret sisters and lived in (and ran away from) Cosford workhouse appears to have been sentenced to transportation by the Quarter Sessions in Bury St Edmunds because she was an 'incorrigible' character.[214] Within the framework of the law, this case suggests that personal judgments by magistrates and judges may also have played a part in the application of serious sentences. No evidence has been found, however, to categorically confirm why punishments differed and why some quarter sessions sentenced convicts more harshly than the assize courts.

As an example of judicial discretion, the sentence of transportation for women in the early years of the new colony of New South Wales was still a harsh punishment which banished them from Britain for long periods without making any provision or allowance for their return after completion of the sentence. If they were fortunate enough to be taken away from the spinning factory to work as servants to free settlers, their conditions were likely to

[211] *Suffolk Chronicle*, Letter from Susan Wyatt, 16 May 1812; SL NSW, NK 9685: Catchpole papers M 944, including letter to Dr Stebbens, 21 January 1802.
[212] Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in *Convict Workers*, pp. 85-97.
[213] ASSI 94/1464 1798 L; ASSI 94/1488 1798 L. The Syret sisters' mother, Kezia, was prosecuted with each of her daughters, but appears to have been acquitted and released on each occasion.
[214] B105.2.47, 1781-1786.

be have been far better than women who remained at the factory and had to earn money after factory duties were finished in order to provide themselves with accommodation.

CONCLUSION

The impetus for this study of women's property crime came from the realisation that Margaret Catchpole, whose story is well known in Suffolk, was transported to New South Wales in 1801 with two other female convicts from the county, Sarah Barker and Elizabeth Killett. Little was known about the lives of these other women or their experiences in the judicial system prior to leaving England. This gap in knowledge raised the possibility that a tranche of hitherto untapped evidence of crime in Suffolk lay awaiting investigation. This enquiry set out to retrieve and interpret evidence of criminality in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820, with women's property crimes at the forefront of interest.

Theft is as familiar a problem for contemporary society as it was at the end of the eighteenth century. Then as now, it may have been planned and targeted for lucrative personal benefit, or an unplanned, opportunistic and needy response to items on display in a shop or house in an unguarded moment. Few personal details of how men and women lived between 1770 and 1820 have been uncovered in this study and their individual motivations for theft remain unknown. Nonetheless, the retrieval of information on demographic, socio-economic and political change has enabled their lives and crimes to be positioned against the shifting backdrop of severe winters and poor harvests, particularly at the turn of the eighteenth century. In straitened circumstances, when food resources were inadequate, wheat prices soared and wages failed to keep pace with the basic costs of shelter and sustenance, theft may have been one of few options available to the poor for survival. Endemic poverty may thus have been the direct and driving force behind women's thefts of food, cloth and clothing, with some goods retained for their own use and others sold on to derive an income.

In this enquiry, and to establish the nature and extent of female prosecutions, convictions and sentences, databases were drawn up from cases tried at the petty sessions, quarter sessions and assizes.[1] At the assizes between 1797 and 1804, the evidence has indicated that women accounted for 13% of all male and female prosecutions and convictions (including property crimes); and separately, for 14% of all male and female property crimes.[2] Assize convictions of all crimes committed by men and women were at their highest when wheat prices peaked in the crisis period between 1800 and 1801. In 1800, men accounted

[1] Appendices 1, 2, 3 & 4.
[2] Appendix 2, Parts 1 & 2; Tables 2.1 & 2.2.

for 23 convictions of property crime, women for 5; in 1801 men accounted 7 property crimes, women also for 7.[3]

In this same two year period, quarter sessions records indicate that women were convicted of 24% of all crimes (including property crimes) and 29% of property crimes alone.[4] Here again, women's convictions were far lower than men's. This gendered position is turned on its head, however, by the very high numbers of women convicted of fraudulent reeling in the domestic spinning industry in Suffolk between 1784 and 1792. In the absence of petty sessions records for this period, almost 1,800 convictions of women for this offence were retrieved from reports in local newspapers. This amounted to at least 90% of all convictions for this crime.[5]

Despite shortfalls in the surviving evidence, this study has built up a picture of women's property crimes in Suffolk that adds important detail to the overall picture of female criminality between 1770 and 1820 in East Anglia and other regions. The research undertaken led to the four questions which were set out in the introductory chapter. This concluding chapter draws together the discussions throughout this study and responds to these questions, which are now repeated:

- Question 1: Are the changing socio-economic circumstances of the population in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 reflected in women's property crimes in this period?
- Question 2: Does the study of patterns of women's property crime in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 confirm or challenge the findings of other regional studies?
- Question 3: How were the women convicted of property crime in Suffolk punished and how did sentencing practices change over time?
- Question 4: How does this investigation of prosecution, sentencing and the operation of judicial discretion in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 extend our knowledge of women's experiences in the criminal justice system?

THE IMPACT OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON WOMEN'S SUSCEPTIBILITY TO THEFT

Chapter 1 introduced a framework of socio-economic changes that underpinned hardships in the lives of the populace in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century

[3] Appendix 2, Parts 1 & 2; Tables 2.1 & 2.2.
[4] Appendix 1; Tables 2.3 & 2.4.
[5] Appendices 3 & 4; Tables 3.1 & 3.2.

Suffolk and provided the context in which men and women were prosecuted for theft. The first research question concerns the impact of short and long term demographic, economic and weather-related developments and the susceptibility to theft of women, in particular, to provide for their families and themselves. Causal links between the effects of changing circumstances and theft are difficult to substantiate from the limited evidence retrieved on offenders' lives. But population growth inevitably impacted on the ability of men and women to find reliable work in the changing rural economy. If family income decreased, so would the family's ability to meet the costs of housing, clothing and food. But if wheat prices increased at the same time because of poor harvests caused by bad weather, demand from the growing population would drive prices higher still. This spiral of social and economic changes and events at the turn of the eighteenth century inevitably impacted on the ability of the poor to sustain themselves.

Population expansion in Suffolk in the second half of the eighteenth century placed increasing demands on supplies of wheat, such that local production no longer met demand.[6] This dearth was exacerbated by the prioritisation of food supplies for the troops over local needs during the wars with France between 1793 and 1815, with the result that inadequate supplies were stretched further.[7] In the 1780s and 1790s, several periods of unreliable winter or early spring weather and poor soil quality resulted in serious crop failures and grain shortages.[8] Prolonged, severe frosts followed by thaw and flooding led to reduced wheat harvests and exponential increases in the prices of grain and bread.[9] Walter Stern argued that the dearth of wheat and consequent price increases, between 1795 and 1796 and again between 1800 and 1813, caused the greatest distress to the poorest in society because they still made their own bread.[10] The impact of these price hikes was experienced across East Anglia, despite the fact that large areas of pasture had been ploughed up for wheat production.[11]

For women who relied on their own means, or for whom work provided a supplementary household income, a serious problem lay in the level of wages they could

[6] *Ipswich Journal*, 6 December 1794.
[7] G. E. Fussell, 'Some Land and Produce Prices in Late 18th Century Suffolk', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, 16, 2 (1953), 137-143 (p. 140).
[8] J. H. Brazell, *London Weather* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968), p. 8; *Ipswich Journal*, 6 December 1794.
[9] B. R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 497-498.
[10] Walter M. Stern, 'The Bread Crisis in Britain, 1795-96', *Economica*, New Series, 31, 122 (1964), 168-187 (p. 168).
[11] David Dymond and Peter Northeast, *A History of Suffolk* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985), p. 90.

earn. Opportunities for work in this period in Suffolk were mainly limited to seasonal agricultural work, service and domestic spinning. The few seasonal, agricultural jobs paid women a daily rate of 6d, which was less than half the winter male wage of 1s 4d plus beer.[12] Service offered board, lodging and hard work for little financial reward but introduced girls and young women who now lived away from the restraints of their own families to the enticing material possessions of other households and businesses.

The domestic spinning industry was probably the largest single employer of women in villages and towns across the county in the second half of the eighteenth century but it experienced decline in this period alongside the weaving industry of Norwich. Worsted spinning differed from other forms of employment because it was carried out in spinners' homes, remote from the regulatory gaze of the yarn-makers and wool-combers in Suffolk who employed them. However, the Norwich weaving industry declined sharply between 1761 and 1780, although it remained viable.[13] Significantly, the population of Norwich was stagnant in the second half of the eighteenth century while the populations of the textile towns of Manchester and Leeds increased.[14] As the work of the remaining Norwich weavers became more specialist, their demand for yarn continued. However, the spinners' low wages fluctuated without warning when the yarn-makers and putters-out in Suffolk increased their deductions.[15] It would perhaps have been expected that spinners would continue to embezzle small amounts of raw wool in these circumstances.

When domestic weaving and hand spinning declined in the 1780s and 1790s, the depressed situation of agriculture in Suffolk at this time meant that the women and families who relied on income from spinning were unlikely to find alternative ways of earning a living. This lack of opportunity may have driven some women to steal as part of an 'economy of makeshifts', which included all other forms of income generation, including parish relief and philanthropic support.[16] Furthermore, the long term 'technological unemployment' that resulted from the decline of spinning completely

[12] Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk, 1813* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers), p. 223.
[13] Keith Sugden, 'Clapham revisited: the decline of the Norwich worsted industry (c. 1700-1820)', *Continuity and Change* 33 (2018), 203-222 (p. 215).
[14] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 215.
[15] *Ipswich Journal*, 5 May 1773.
[16] Margaret Hanley, 'The economy of makeshifts and the role of the poor law: a game of chance?', in *The Poor in England, 1700-1800: an Economy of Makeshifts*, ed. by Steven King and Alannah Tomkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 76-99 (pp. 76-77).

removed the ability of large numbers of women and children to contribute supplementary wages to family income.[17]

The county and borough quarter sessions books lack the detail to conclusively support the proposition that increased thefts resulted at points of crisis in the supply and pricing of basic foodstuffs, such as wheat and bread.[18] Goods stolen between 1794 and 1801, were usually identified in the sessions books by category of crime (petty or grand larceny), without further detail; there is little clearcut evidence that food was widely targeted. It is perhaps more likely that thefts of food were prosecuted at the petty sessions, though the dearth of records for these courts means this supposition cannot be verified. A further reason why foodstuffs did not feature more significantly may be that wheat was made widely available to the poor at reduced prices following local subscriptions. This happened in 1795 in Woodbridge and cases of larceny there were low.[19] Alternatively, victims may have refrained from pursuing prosecutions in discretionary acts in times of hardship.

PATTERNS OF WOMEN'S PROPERTY CRIME IN SUFFOLK AND OTHER REGIONS

The second question focuses attention on the issue of whether patterns of female property crime in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 confirm or challenge the patterns found in other regions. Chapter 2 confirmed that the proportions of female offending brought before the quarter sessions and assizes in this county were broadly similar to findings in other regional studies in similar periods. The 14% of property crimes attributable to women at the Bury assizes between 1797 and 1804 is slightly higher than the 9% of property offenders at the assizes in Essex identified by Peter King in the longer period between 1740 and 1820. However, it is almost identical to the 15.5% attributed to women in Yorkshire by Rhiannon Markless between 1735 and 1775.[20]

The 29% of female property cases at Suffolk county and borough quarter sessions in the crisis years of 1800 and 1801, exceeds King's finding in Essex that women accounted for 20%

[17] Benjamin Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment in the British Industrial Revolution: The Destruction of Hand Spinning', *Past & Present*, *Past & Present*, 270, 1 (2026), 106-149.
[18] Appendix 1.
[19] *Ipswich Journal*, 4 July 1795; Appendix 1.
[20] Appendix 2; Tables 2.1 & 2.2; Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 196-197; Rhiannon Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire, 1735-1775', (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Roehampton, 2013), p. 247.

of the total number of property crimes. But it is, again, almost identical to Markless's finding that women's burglary and theft accounted for 28.8% of all cases at the quarter sessions.[21] In Yorkshire, Markless found that numbers of female cases remained stable as the population increased and this is borne out in cases at Suffolk quarter sessions, which numbered between 30 and 40 per sessions book over the period between 1781 and 1801.[22]

The location and nature of women's thefts in Suffolk appear to support the conclusions about place and meaning in other regional studies. Lynn MacKay's investigation of cases at the Old Bailey between 1779 and 1789 concluded that thefts indicated women's domestic activities and local networks.[23] In early modern Cheshire, Garthine Walker found that women tended to steal goods from the places where they conducted their daily lives.[24] In Suffolk, women were convicted of stealing from houses, shops and businesses which they knew or were familiar with, including their current or previous employers. Their target victims were usually in villages and towns within walking distance of where they lived. Moreover, the kinds of goods women stole were indexical of the needs of everyday lives. In neighbouring Essex between 1730 and 1804 King found that women primarily targeted fuel, clothing and shop goods, which were essential to their lives.[25]

The importance of cloth and clothing in the material culture of poor women's daily lives is indicated by the predominance of these goods in women's thefts in Suffolk. In Ipswich and other smaller places, shops such as draperies were liable to repeated thefts of new items of cloth, accessories and handkerchiefs. Cloth and clothing were centrally important to everyday lives, but it is probable that few thefts were for the offender's own use because of the likelihood they would be recognised by the rightful owner. These items were as likely to have been the means by which income could be generated. Cloth and clothing were easily sold on in the 'networks of lending, barter and exchange' by which poor women sustained themselves in their daily lives.[26]

Thefts such as these acknowledge women's roles as mothers and supplementary breadwinners. Thefts of cloth and clothing also reflect the availability of new fabrics and

[21] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, pp. 196-197; Markless, 'Gender, Crime and Discretion in Yorkshire', p. 247.
[22] Appendix 1; Tables 2.3 & 2.4.
[23] Lynn MacKay, 'Why They Stole: Women in the Old Bailey, 1779-1789', *Journal of Social History*, 32, 3 (1999), p 626.
[24] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 169 & 273.
[25] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, p. 196.
[26] Richard J. Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins: The Yorkshire Worsted Spinners, Policing, and the Transformation of Work in the Early Industrial Revolution', 51 *IRSH* (2006), 217–242 (p. 228).

styles. Soon after the bans on all-cotton fabric production and calico printing were lifted in 1774, cotton became more widely available.[27] This is reflected in thefts of cotton clothing in Suffolk in the 1780s, although linen shirts and shifts continued to be stolen at this time.

Prosecutions for property crime were not limited to the quarter sessions and assizes, however. The investigation of fraudulent reeling in Chapter 3 has shown that a far greater number of women in Suffolk were prosecuted at the petty sessions than at the higher courts. Reports collated from contemporaneous local newspapers between 1784 and 1792 confirm that women accounted for nearly 1,800 convictions in the domestic worsted spinning industry, more than 90% of the total number.[28] Records have not survived to show other crimes that were prosecuted at the petty sessions.

To establish a picture of the proliferation and gradual decline of fraudulent reeling in villages and towns across the county, annual convictions between 1784 and 1792 were represented cartographically on Maps 3.1 to 3.9 in Chapter 3.[29] This visual representation of the dispersal of convictions has enabled annual observations to be made about the locus of fraudulent reeling in different regions and the inspectors' efforts to blitz clusters of neighbouring villages when they examined the yarn returned by spinners to the putters-out. By pinpointing the places where women were convicted of this crime, Maps 3.1 to 3.9 additionally suggest the dispersal of lawful spinning across the county. This includes southwest Suffolk which had previously been part of the cloth producing industry of southwest Suffolk and northeast Essex.

The geographical analysis of fraudulent reeling in this enquiry differs from other studies of criminality in other worsted producing regions before the industrialisation of spinning. Richard J. Soderlund's ideological approach foregrounded the resistance of hand spinners in Yorkshire to the manufacturers' regulation of their employment, which resulted in a new 'industrial police force' of inspectors mandated by the *Worsted Act* of 1777 and, ultimately, galvanised employers to promote technological development.[30] Soderlund confirmed that women accounted for between 80% and 90% of fraudulent reeling in Yorkshire in the 1770s, which is roughly equivalent to the figures in Suffolk between 1784 and 1792.[31] From a similar ideological perspective, John Styles highlighted the proliferation of the *Worsted Acts* in

[27] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 217; Appendix 1.
[28] Appendices 3 & 4; Tables 3.1 & 3.2; *Ipswich Journal*; *Bury Post* and successors; *Suffolk Chronicle.*
[29] Maps 3.1 – 3.9.
[30] Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins', p. 217; 17 Geo. III, c.11 (1777): *The Worsted Act for Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire.*
[31] Soderlund, 'Resistance from the Margins', p. 226.

different regions, including East Anglia, and the appointment of inspectors as the means of regulation within the industry.[32] Differently, Keith Sugden's statistical investigation of decline in the Norwich weaving industry between 1700 and 1820 focused on weavers because they could be traced from wills and other official documents. He did not investigate the position of spinners because 'there were few reliable statistics available to track temporal change' relating to them.[33]

The enquiry into theft in the domestic spinning industry highlighted the difficulties that arose in Suffolk for yarn-makers and spinners who produced yarn for the Norwich weavers. When domestic weaving went into serious decline in the 1790s, the vertically-disintegrated system (whereby worsted yarn was sold to the weavers for cloth production) created serious difficulties for the yarn-makers and spinners who continued to produce the yarn. When cloth production faltered, the yarn-makers were left with large quantities of unsold yarn of little value and spinners across the county were left with little or no work. Further research into spinning convictions in other counties which supplied the Norwich weaving industry might yield a more complete picture of the financial problems faced by the two discrete sides of the spinning and weaving industries.

PUNISHMENTS HANDED DOWN TO SUFFOLK WOMEN CONVICTED OF PROPERTY CRIME AND CHANGES IN SENTENCING PRACTICES

This thesis has explored the sentences handed down to convicted women at all three courts. It has also scrutinized gradual changes in sentencing practice observed in the quarter sessions and assize records over the period between 1770 and 1820. The third research question asks how female property convicts in Suffolk were punished and how sentencing practices changed over time. Across the spectrum of cases studied, Chapter 6 showed that punishments handed down to women in the last two decades of the eighteenth century were in the process of moving away from physical punishments towards the payment of a fine, in each case with or without imprisonment.[34]

An important aspect of change in sentencing policy in the last two decades of eighteenth century Suffolk was the cessation of whipping for women as a punishment in its own right or as a punishment adjunct to imprisonment. This may have resulted from

[32] John Styles, 'Spinners and the Law: Regulating Yarn Standards in the English Worsted Industries, 1550–1800', *Textile History*, 44, 2 (2013), 145–170.
[33] Sugden, 'Clapham revisited', p. 220.
[34] Tables 6.1, 6.2 & 6.3.

a groundswell of feeling against the physical punishment of women. Women's punishments moved towards a custodial term, sometimes with an adjunct fine that was required to be paid before the prisoner's release. In Essex, whippings and fines were considered to be light sentences which were more likely to be handed down to women than men.[35] They may also have been considered appropriate for women who lacked the means to pay a fine. This may be the reason why several Suffolk women were sentenced to be whipped without further punishment at the quarter sessions and Eliz. Harte was ordered at the petty sessions to be whipped for her third conviction of fraudulent reeling.

No public whippings of women were recorded at the county quarter sessions between 1781 and 1801 and the last private whipping of a woman at these courts was in 1790. From this time, the county sessions handed down custodial terms with fines to be paid before the convict was released.[36] Public whippings at Ipswich Borough court ceased in 1779, though private whippings continued until 1784.[37] At Sudbury Borough courts public whippings were recorded until 1783. From the 1780s to 1800 the borough courts also handed down fines with a brief period of custody until payment was received.[38]

The central element of change in the regulation of spinners' work under the *Worsted Act for Suffolk* of 1784 was the introduction of inspectors to verify the quality and quantity of the worsted yarn they produced. If yarn was found to be substandard, the spinners responsible were prosecuted by the inspectors at the petty sessions. The *Worsted Act* thus introduced agents to regulate yarn production who were neither directly involved in the production of yarn, nor of cloth. Styles described these agents as a new 'semi-industrial police force'.[39] The sentences handed down to spinners convicted of fraudulent reeling under the *Worsted Act* remained the same throughout the eight year period between 1784 and 1792 and involved the payment of a fine: 5s for a first offence and 10s for a second. [40] These amounts were somewhat higher than the 6d or 1s 6d fines with imprisonment that were typically handed down at the quarter sessions in the 1790s and were beyond the reach of a small number of convicted spinners who were sentenced to imprisonment for non-payment of their fines.

[35] King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion,* pp. 278-281.
[36] Table 6.2.
[37] Table 6.1.
[38] Table 6.1.
[39] Styles, 'Spinners and the Law', p. 146.
[40] Tables 3.1 & 3.2.

Perhaps the most significant change in sentencing practice occurred with the resumption of transportation in 1787 to the new Australian colonies. Chapter 6 showed that 71 men and 16 women from Suffolk were sentenced to transportation between 1787 and 1810 for terms of seven or fourteen years, or for life, but without any sense of their ability to return to the United Kingdom following completion of their sentence and official pardon by the authorities of New South Wales.[41] The majority of male and female offenders were tried at the assizes, convicted of capital crimes and sentenced to death, their sentences later commuted by the Home Secretary to transportation in acts of judicial discretion. But a further 12 men and 6 women were sentenced direct to transportation for theft by the county and borough quarter sessions, usually for a seven year term.

HOW DOES THIS INVESTIGATION OF PROSECUTION, SENTENCING AND THE OPERATION OF JUDICIAL DISCRETION IN SUFFOLK BETWEEN 1770 AND 1820 EXTEND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?

This thesis began by situating women's crimes in Suffolk, specifically their property crimes, within a context of flux, a 'perfect storm' which challenged their ability to find work, contribute to household income or to maintain themselves. It followed this with an investigation of women's experiences in the criminal justice system, drawing on evidence from a range of official records and newspaper reports of trials and convictions at the petty sessions, quarter sessions and assizes. The enquiry has explored women's access to poor relief and other forms of financial support and considered the means (including theft) by which they could create an informal 'economy of makeshifts' to meet their needs. It has also examined the prosecutions of women for thefts of a variety of goods and the development of mutual prosecution associations to pre-empt thefts of moveable property, particularly horses. Finally, it investigated the sentencing of women, and the application of judicial discretion, particularly in cases where the death sentences handed down for capital convictions were commuted to transportation to the newly opened up Australian colonies.

The final research question asks how the results of this investigation into prosecution, sentencing and the operation of judicial discretion in Suffolk between 1770 and 1820 extend our knowledge of the experiences of women in the criminal justice system. This section responds to the question by referring back to the discussions in earlier chapters. Chapter 1

[41] Appendix 5 accounts for women sentenced to transportation by the assizes and quarter sessions.

examined the impact of socio-economic, demographic and climatic factors, which led to widespread dearth and poverty and may have left men and women susceptible to committing theft. The examination of women's property crimes was informed by the circumstances they faced on a daily basis, over which they had little or no control and which reduced their ability to work and contribute to household income.

The study also investigated women's involvement in the justice system as offenders. Chapters 2 and 3 examined their prosecutions, convictions and sentencing for thefts and embezzlements at the three courts. The investigation of prosecutions at the quarter sessions and assize records in Chapter 2 analysed different aspects of theft, including the goods typically stolen by women and the places in which these thefts were likely to have taken place. It compared the numbers of male and female crimes (and property crimes) that were prosecuted at the assizes (between 1797 and 1804) and at the county and borough quarter sessions in the crisis period between 1800 and 1801. It additionally compared female offending in this county with offending in Cheshire, Yorkshire and Essex. The chapter has shown that women were far less likely than men to be prosecuted and convicted at the quarter sessions and assize courts. It also confirmed that female patterns of crime at these courts were similar to the findings in other counties.

The exploration in Chapter 3 of male and female convictions at the petty sessions for fraudulent reeling in the worsted spinning industry (after the *Worsted Act for Suffolk* of 1784 became law) established that women and girls accounted for at least 90% of spinning convictions of fraudulent reeling between 1784 and 1792. This is far higher than women's participation in cases heard at the quarter sessions and assizes. Maps 3.1 to 3.9 illustrate the annual dispersal of this crime in villages and towns across the county.[42] Although in most instances the annual convictions in each place were small, the maps indicate that this minor offence was widespread. Its dispersal additionally indicates the extensive reach of lawful spinning, which was an important source of income for households across many parts of Suffolk. Comparable data on spinning fraud has not been found in studies of other regions.

Chapter 4 investigated the reasons why women may have been motivated to steal, including as a response to abject poverty when no work could be found and no other funds were forthcoming. Victims' motivation to prosecute and prevent crime were examined in Chapter 5. This included an investigation of prosecution associations that were set up across the county by wealthy property owners in groups of villages to pre-empt theft of their goods,

[42] Appendices 3 & 4; Maps 3.1 – 3.9.

particularly of their horses.[43] The investigation showed that Suffolk property owners were slower to set up these mutual associations in Suffolk than in other parts of the country.

Chapter 6 examined the punishments handed down to women by the courts and changes in sentencing practice at the quarter sessions courts in the 1790s, when the whipping of women was replaced by a fine. Suffolk appears to have been slower than Essex to make these changes. This chapter also sought to find reasons why victims and those acting for them chose to prosecute female offenders, sometimes for trivial offences; or, alternatively, did not turn up in court to prosecute them. The high numbers of cases 'not found' (including acquittals, discharges and cases of 'no true bill') suggest the operation of discretion towards some offenders by victims, magistrates and judges in response to the prevailing situation of dearth and poverty. The chapter also investigated the conditions under which women were incarcerated in gaols and bridewells around the county. The second part of Chapter 6 investigated the transportation of 15 women from Suffolk to New South Wales between 1787 and 1810, including their experiences of the long journey to reach this new colony and aspects of their lives after arrival.

By taking a comprehensive approach towards women's property crimes at the turn of the eighteenth century, this thesis has returned the spotlight onto cases of theft which have not recently been of particular interest to historians. It has uncovered evidence from quarter sessions and assize records to confirm that levels of female criminality in Suffolk were consistently lower than levels of male criminality. It has additionally found evidence that suggests men and women were the equal recipients of discretion during periods of crisis. The fact that 16 women were sentenced to transportation between 1787 and 1810 further suggests the government attempted to redress the gender imbalance in the new colonies by sending troublesome women there: 71 male convicts from Suffolk were transported in this same period.

The examination of fraudulent spinning between 1784 and 1792 contributes a body of evidence to recent research into the impact of industrial expansion in the northwest on the lives of domestic hand spinners in other domestic spinning regions.[44] The identification of the men and women convicted of this crime, and their places of residence, could be replicated in other spinning counties that sold worsted yarn to the Norwich weavers, to establish both the extent of this criminal activity and the dispersal of the spinning industry in those areas.

[43] Tables 5.1 & 5.2.
[44] Table 3.2 & 3.2; Schneider, 'Technological Unemployment', pp. 106-149.

POSTSCRIPT

Olwen Hufton argued that court records 'probably afforded us a greater understanding of women in the past, as individuals, within the family and the community than any other type of material yet examined.'[45] In Suffolk between 1770 and 1820, this thesis has shown that, in most cases, the court records provide scant evidence of women's lives within their family and community. For the majority of female property offenders in Suffolk at the end of the eighteenth century, court records of their trials at the quarter sessions and assizes, and a brief mention in the local newspaper, provide the only evidence of their lives.

However, this surviving evidence has not enabled links between offenders, their families and their socio-economic networks to be substantiated. The indictments and depositions which may have filled in these details are limited to a very small number of women who were convicted of property crimes at the assizes or the Borough of Ipswich or whose crimes were widely reported in the press. These women include Sarah Lloyd, Margaret Catchpole, Elizabeth Killett and Hannah Williams. Lloyd was sentenced to death, while Catchpole, Killett and Williams had their capital sentences reprieved to transportation.

Details of the lives of women who were sentenced to transportation to New South Wales, on the other hand, were recorded in convict transportation records and then annually in subsequent musters. The quantity and quality of these documents has shown that the government at the end of the eighteenth century wished to know exactly who had been transported, the place of their criminal activity, the sentence handed down and what happened to them after they settled in the new colonies and were pardoned. In some cases, particularly where women cannot be traced back to their parish of baptism, a record of their transportation is the only evidence that they ever lived in England.

A review of the research carried out for this study of female property crime shows that when surviving evidence in official documents is limited, understanding the context in which women lived, stole and embezzled goods may offer an explanation for their actions. The context may also help to explain why victims either decided to proceed with prosecution or showed discretion by not turning up in court to do so. This thesis is only part of a long and broad story of criminality in Suffolk and other counties of England and it is hoped that it will prompt others to develop a similar line of research in other places and in other periods.

[45] Olwen Hufton, 'Women and violence in early modern Europe', cited in Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, p. 3.

APPENDIX 1: Women prosecuted for property crime in Suffolk, 1776-1809, at Suffolk and Borough Quarter Sessions

Measurements: lb(s) = pound(s) in weight; yd(s) = yard(s) in length; pc(s) = piece(s), length(s) of fabric required for a garment

Abbreviations: HoC = House of Correction; SC = solitary confinement; HL = hard labour; NTB = No True Bill; n/g = not guilty; M = married

Misdemeanour usually means receiving stolen goods or obtaining goods under false pretences; PL = petty larceny; GL = grand larceny

Coloured cells indicate joint prosecutions, including with men; coloured numbers indicate times defendant has been indicted in QS records.

Suffolk Quarter Sessions: B105/2/47, 1781-1786

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Eighteen, Mary	? 1782, Bury St Edmunds	Wooden pale	Wm. Chaplin of Hadleigh	Further calendar month in Lavenham Bridewell and then whipped
Moyse, Mary 1	28.4.1783, Beccles	Blankets, shirts & mantel	Guardians of Blything	No indictment presented
Liffen, Mary	28.4.1783, Beccles	Looking glass & kettle	John Crilton	Acquitted
Goodwyn, Ann (M)	30.4.1783, Woodbridge	Piece of Irish cloth	Tho. Thompson	Pleaded guilty; committed for 1 calendar month
Garrod, Elizabeth	2.7.1783, Ipswich	Wheat in the straw	Tho. Slapp	Convicted; privately whipped; committed for 1 calendar month
Cornish, May	2.7.1783, Ipswich	Wheat in the straw	Tho. Slapp	Convicted; privately whipped; committed for 1 calendar month
Jessup, Mary	16.7.1783, Woodbridge	Hat, coat & petticoat	Sam'l. Stannard of Framlingham	Whipped in Bridewell & committed to HL for 1 year
Gooch, Lydia	16.7.1783, Woodbridge	1lb woollen yarn	Rich'd Fisher	Committed to HL for 2 months
Soer, Amy	18.7.1783, Ipswich	Bohea tea	Elizabeth Shulver	Committed for 14 days

Cue, Letitia	18.7.1783, Ipswich	Hemp shirt	No details	Found guilty; privately whipped in presence of 2 females; committed 1 month; whipped again
Wesh, Mary	21.7.1783, Bury St Edmunds	Mop & bucket	Henry Somersett	Ordered to be discharged
Baker, Ann 1 (later cases not of theft)	21.7.1783, Bury St Edmunds	Clothes belonging to Cosford workhouse	Director & Guardians	Committed to Lavenham Bridewell for 3 calendar months; HL
Boon, Elizabeth (M)	8.10.1783, Woodbridge	2 shifts, stocks, handkerchief	Mary Welham of Tunstall	Pleaded guilty; committed to HL 1 Calendar month
Bretton, Sarah (M)	13.10.1783, Bury St Edmunds	Linen shirt & linen shift	Joseph Goodwyn and Susan Newton	Ordered to be discharged
Daniel Bretton	13.10.1783, Bury St Edmunds	Linen shirt & linen shift	Joseph Goodwyn and Susan Newton	Ordered to be discharged
Walker, Ann 1	13.10.1783, Bury St Edmunds	¾lb woollen yarn	Brooke B[ra]nwhite of Lavenham	To be privately whipped in Bridewell in presence of a female, stripped from neck to waist
Calver, Mary	12.1.1784, Beccles	1 small box, 3½ yds & ½ yd lace, pr women's ruffles, pr silk gloves, muslin handkerchief, 1 yd lace, 3 pcs printed cotton, 6 pcs old ribbon, 3 pcs printed cotton, 1 pr cotton stockings	Alexander Woods	Bill returned NTB; ordered to be discharged
Peake, Honor	17.1.1784, Ipswich	Money	Sarah Calthorpe	Ordered to be discharged
Moyse, Mary 2	18.4.1784, Beccles	1 old linen cap	Wm. Eastaugh of Wenhaston	Pleaded guilty; to Bridewell 4 calendar months

Chambers, Susan	18.4.1784, Beccles	1 man's hat, 3 silk bonnets, 3 silk cloaks, 1 girl's coat, 3 aprons, 4prs stockings & other goods	Henry Glasspole of Burgh Castle	Ordered to be sent to the assizes
Walker, Ann 2	19.7.1784, Bury St Edmunds	1 x 2d loaf	Wm. Jones	NTB; ordered to be discharged
Moyse, Mary 3	4.10.1784, Beccles	1 old linen cap	Mary Lidiman of Linstead parva	Pleaded n/g; convicted; to stand committed for 2 calendar months; privately whipped
Bailey, Hannah	11.10.1784, Woodbridge	1 cotton frock	Mary Lenney of Rendham	NTB; ordered to be discharged
Short, Alice (M)	11.10.1784, Bury St Edmunds	Barley in the straw	Wm. Haxall of Exning	Found guilty; ordered to stand committed for 1 calendar month
Bennett, Martha (M)	11.10.1784, Bury St Edmunds	Barley in the straw	Wm. Haxall of Exning	Found guilty; ordered to stand committed for 1 calendar month
Livitt Mary (M)	11.10.1784, Bury St Edmunds	Barley in the straw	Robert Bones of Exning	Found guilty; ordered to be privately whipped in presence of 1 female; to stand committed for 1 calendar month
Bridgeman, Elizabeth	11.10.1784, Bury St Edmunds	Wheat in the straw	Robert Houghton of Exning	Ordered to stand committed for 1 calendar month
Tatum, Elizabeth	17.1.1785, Bury St Edmunds	1 pr pattens, 1 coloured apron, 1 neckcloth, 1lb worsted	Abraham Joslin of Lavenham	Found guilty; ordered to stand committed for a fortnight
Ward, Patience	25.4.1785, Woodbridge	2 cotton handkerchiefs	Sarah Barthorpe Easton, widow	Pleaded guilty; ordered to be privately whipped at rising of the Court
Lowder, Esther	3.10.1785, Beccles	Receiving 3 geese	No details	Ordered to be discharged

Willett, Elizabeth	5.10.1785, Woodbridge	2 prs cotton stockings	John Mayden	Pleaded guilty; ordered to be privately whipped
Barker, Sarah 1	9.1.1786, Beccles	1 red shift, 1 cotton bedgown, 1 pr worsted stockings	No details	Ordered to stand committed for 1 calendar month; privately whipped
Reynolds, E (M)	9.1.1786, Beccles	Indicted for misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Reynolds, E Spinster	9.1.1786, Beccles	Indicted for misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted

Suffolk Quarter Sessions: B105/2/48, 1786-1789

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Reeve, Rachel	10.7.1786, Beccles	2 wooden doors; 2 wooden shutters	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Wells, Margaret	12.7.1786, Woodbridge	Receiving two pcs of packing cloth	John Paxman to prefer Bill of Indictment	Convicted; to HoC for 6 weeks
Kerridge, Francis	12.7.1786, Woodbridge	Theft of above goods	John Paxman to prefer Bill of Indictment	To stand convicted for 1 week
Mills, Bridget	9.10.1786, Bury St Edmunds	1 pr stuff women's shoes	Robert Isaacson	Convicted & ordered to gaol for 1 week
Scarlet, Ann	18.4.1787, Woodbridge	Brass candlestick	James Turtill of Trimley St Mary	Pleaded n/g; convicted & ordered to be discharged

Seagriff, Ann	18.4.1787, Woodbridge	1 linen mantel	Workhouse of Colneis & Carlford	Pleaded guilty; whipped & discharged
Butcher, Elizabeth	20.4.1787, Ipswich	9 bush faggots	John Garrod of Laxfield	Pleaded guilty; ordered to stand committed for 2 weeks
Calver, Elizabeth	20.4.1787, Ipswich	9 bush faggots	John Garrod of Laxfield	Pleaded guilty; ordered to stand committed for 2 weeks
Calver, Ann	20.4.1787, Ipswich	9 bush faggots	John Garrod of Laxfield	Pleaded guilty; ordered to stand committed for 2 weeks
West, Mary	23.4.1787, Bury St Edmunds	1 bushel of coals	John Sarjant of Cockfield	Acquitted
Blandon, Sarah	23.4.1787, Bury St Edmunds	1 bushel of coals	John Sarjant of Cockfield	Acquitted
West, Deborah	23.4.1787, Bury St Edmunds	1 bushel of coals	John Sarjant of Cockfield	Acquitted
Fidgett, Elizabeth	23.4.1787, Bury St Edmunds	1 bushel of coals	John Sarjant of Cockfield	Acquitted
Cornwall, Mary	23.4.1787, Bury St Edmunds	1lb bread & 1lb cheese	John Wiffen of Haverhill	Discharged
Cornwall, Sam'l.	23.4.1787, Bury St Edmunds	1lb bread & 1lb cheese	John Wiffen of Haverhill	Discharged
Sherman, Elizabeth	11.7.1787, Woodbridge	2 pieces of stall wood	Sir John Henniker	Acquitted & discharged
Sadler, Sarah	16.7.1787, Bury St Edmunds	Hay	Wm. Rose of Badwell Ash	Pleaded n/g; convicted; ordered to stand committed 1 week
Lark, Susannah	1.10.1787, Beccles	2 hemp shirts	Samuel Nicholls	Found guilty; to Bridewell for 14 days and kept to HL
Westgate, Mary	1.10.1787, Beccles	2 hemp shirts	Samuel Nicholls	Pleaded guilty; 1 calendar month in HoC; HL & privately whipped

Burrows, Priscilla	3.10.1787, Woodbridge	Felony	No details	NTB by Grand Jury and discharged by proclamation
Buckingham, Mary	3.10.1787, Woodbridge	½ pc white ribbon	Benjamin Brewer	Pleaded n/g; convicted; privately whipped
Rose, Sarah	14.1.1788, Beccles	1 coarse linen cloth	Inhabitants of Parish of Beccles	Discharged
Bezance, Jane	14.1.1788, Beccles	Silver tea spoon	Cammant (?) Money Esq	Pleaded guilty; 1 calendar month in HoC; HL & privately whipped
Bultitude, Sarah	14.1.1788, Beccles	No details	No details	Pleaded n/g; tried and acquitted
Bracey, Susannah	14.1.1788, Beccles	No details	No details	Pleaded n/g; tried and acquitted
Shepherd, Elizabeth	18.8.1788, Ipswich	12 ducks	John Finborough	Pleaded n/g; found guilty; 3 calendar months in HoC & privately whipped
Shepherd, William	18.8.1788, Ipswich	12 ducks	John Finborough	Found n/g
Taylor, Pleasance	14.1.1789, Woodbridge	Misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g & discharged
Taylor, George	14.1.1789, Woodbridge	Misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g & discharged
Baxter, Sarah	14.1.1789, Woodbridge	Misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded guilty; SC in HoC for 3 calendar months
Bent, Elizabeth	16.1.1789, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; to be conveyed to last legal settlement.
Snell, Jane	? 1.1789, Bury St Edmunds	Wearing apparel	Wife of Joshua Grigby Esq	Ordered to be discharged
Upcraft, Prudence	7.4.1789, Bury St Edmunds	Receiving a sack	Jeremiah Matthews	Discharged by proclamation

Upcraft, Wm.	7.4.1789, Bury St Edmunds	½ bushel dried peas & 1 hemp sack	Jeremiah Matthews	Convicted; HL in HoC for 3 weeks & publicly whipped
Smith, Catherine	7.4.1789, Bury St Edmunds	7 pcs muslin & 1 pc cotton	Joseph Kitson	Discharged by proclamation
Porter, Sarah	20.7.1789, Bury St Edmunds	Mantel & pork	No details	Pleaded n/g; discharged
Mills, Elizabeth	9.10.1789, Ipswich	GL	No details	Pleaded n/g; found guilty of PL; kept to HL for 14 days & privately whipped
Carver, Ann	9.10.1789, Ipswich	GL	No details	Pleaded n/g; found guilty of PL; kept to HL for 14 days & privately whipped
Mills, Mary (spinster)	12.10.1789, Bury St Edmunds	Sack	Overseers of poor of Melford	Discharged by proclamation

Suffolk Quarter Sessions: B105/2/49, 1790-1794

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Ling, Elizabeth	15.1.1790, Ipswich	1 cheese	John Seaman of Fressingfield	Convicted; no further details
Bugg, Mary	15.1.1790, Ipswich	Receiving one cheese	John Seaman of Fressingfield	Acquitted
Doe or Buckenham, Esther	15.1.1790, Ipswich	1 cheese	Anthony Deane of Yaxley	Convicted; imprisoned in HoC 1 calendar month
Lloyd, Elizabeth	15.1.1790, Ipswich	1 peck of coals	Mr R Rout of Stowmarket	Convicted; fined 6d, HoC for 7 days - fine pd to the Sheriff

Balls, Mary	12.4.1790, Beccles	1 pr men's leather shoes, 8 skeins hemp yarn	No details	Convicted; HoC and HL 12 calendar months
Bryant or Bryan, Sarah	12.4.1790, Beccles	PL	No details	Convicted; HoC and kept to HL 1 calendar month
Bincks, Mary	19.4.1790, Bury St Edmunds	Goods by false pretences	Mary Pettit	Pleaded n/g; convicted; HoC & HL 1 week & publicly whipped at Haverhill
Branch, Mary	14.7.1790, Woodbridge	Reeling false or short yarn (PL) 5s fine unpaid – to QS	No details	PL at Petty Sessions; pleaded guilty at QS for non-payment of fine; HoC 1 month
Trusson, Mary 1	14.7.1790, Woodbridge	Misdemeanour – receiving stolen goods	No details	Ordered to stand committed in SC for 3 months
Moulton, Ann	16.7.1790, Ipswich	Misdemeanour – receiving bread, cheese & flour	Mr John Catlyn	Acquitted
Oakley, Elizabeth 1	19.7.1790, Bury St Edmunds	No details	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted & discharged
Archer, Elizabeth	19.7.1790, Bury St Edmunds	No details	No details	Ordered to be discharged
Sparrow, Mary	8.10.1790, Ipswich	1 goose	Samuel Malster	Fined 6d; SC in Common Gaol 3 calendar months; further imprisonment until fine paid
Woodroffe, Ann	11.10.1790, Bury St Edmunds	1 pc check	Stealing privately from shop of Mary Wilson	Charges crossed through and 'Assizes' written beside the entry
Bennett, Martha	11.10.1790, Bury St Edmunds	Dried peas	Smith Wilby	Convicted; SC and HL in HoC for 14 days
Kent, Alice	11.10.1790, Bury St Edmunds	Dried peas	Smith Wilby	Convicted; SC and HL in HoC for 14 days
Dearsley, Susan	17.1.1791, Bury St Edmunds	1 pr of worsted stockings; 2 linen handkerchiefs; 1 pc	Samuel Clarke	Pleaded n/g; acquitted & discharged

		woollen stuff, 1 linen handkerchief		
Coleman, Sarah	2.5.1791, Beccles	Pc black silk lace	Richard Mosely Westhro	Convicted; SC and HL in HoC for 6 calendar months
Bailey, Hannah	4.5.1791, Woodbridge	No details	No details	Discharged for want of prosecution
Barker, Sarah 2	3.6.1791, Ipswich	PL	No details	SC and HL in HoC for 6 calendar months
Dowsing, Elizabeth	5.10.1791, Woodbridge	Sundry articles of wearing apparel	Nacton workhouse	Ordered to be discharged
Jeffries, Mary	9.1.1792, Beccles	Barley & hempen [sack]	Robert Robinson	Convicted; HoC for 1 week
Drake, Elizabeth	16.1.1792, Bury St Edmunds	1 muslin shawl	Samuel Bacon	Convicted; fined 6d; HoC 1 week & until fine paid
Cuthbert, Hannah	16.1.1792, Bury St Edmunds	1 x 3d loaf	Benj. Field	Pleaded n/g; convicted; HoC 14 days
Oakley, Elizabeth 2	16.1.1792, Bury St Edmunds	2 sheets & 1 salt bag	Sarah Fitch	Discharged
Clarke, Mary	16.4.1792, Beccles	2 pieces iron	James Chatton	Acquitted
Hardy, Susan	16.7.1792, Ipswich	1 piece of silver coin	Robert Death	Discharged
Trusson, Mary 2	3.10.1792, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Acquitted
White, Elizabeth	8.10.1792, Bury St Edmunds	Paper bag and 6lbs nails	Thomas Chaplin	Pleaded n/g; acquitted

Atkin, Elizabeth	10.1.1793, Ipswich	Felony – a waggon till	Mr Hearn of Stowupland	Acquitted
Harding, Sarah	10.4.1793, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; HoC in SC for 1 calendar month
Coggesham, Elizabeth	10.4.1793, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; HoC in SC for 1 calendar month
Leggett, Elizabeth	13.1.1794, Beccles	Felony	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; HoC in SC for 2 calendar months
Baldrey, Ann	15.1.1794, Woodbridge	2 indictments for misdemeanour - goods by false pretences	No details	Pleaded guilty; fined 6d (?); common gaol for 12 months & until fine paid
Moss, Martha	28.4.1794, Beccles	PL	No details	Convicted; HoC for 1 week
Davy, Hannah	28.4.1794, Beccles	PL	No details	Convicted & fined 6d; imprisoned until rising of Court & said fine paid

Suffolk Quarter Sessions: B105/2/50, 1794-1798

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Pettit, Mary	21.7.1794, Bury St Edmunds	Larceny	No details	Discharged for want of prosecution
Poulson, Mary	21.7.1794, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Convicted; HoC in SC and HL for 14 days
Aldred, Elizabeth	6.10.1794, Beccles	GL – 12 ducks	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted & fined 1s 6d; HoC in SC for 3 months & until fine paid

Clarke, Mary	6.10.1794, Beccles	GL – 12 ducks	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted & fined 1s 6d; HoC in SC for 3 months & until fine paid
Clarke, Sarah	6.10.1794, Beccles	GL – 12 ducks	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted & fined 1s 6d; HoC in SC for 3 months & until fine paid
Young, Sarah	8.10.1794, Woodbridge	Felony	No details	Ordered to be discharged
Trower, Mary	13.10.1794, Bury St Edmunds	2 tablecloths	Wm. Skatchey	Pleaded n/g; convicted; HoC 14 days in SC
Kimmance, Mary	13.10.1794, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Ordered to be discharged
May, Ann	12.1.1795, Beccles	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; ordered to be imprisoned 1 calendar month
Pannisee, Elizabeth	16.1.1795, Ipswich	Larceny	No details	Ordered to be passed to parish of Kersey
Cocksedge, Mary	20.4.1795, Bury St Edmunds	Divers clothes	Parish of Horningsheath workhouse	Ordered to be discharged
Farrow, Elizabeth	20.7.1795, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; HoC in SC for 1 week
Game, Mary	20.7.1795, Bury St Edmunds	Misdemeanour in receiving stolen goods	No details	Convicted; HoC in SC for 14 days
Smith, Ann	11.1.1796, Beccles	GL	No details	Pleaded guilty; fined 6d; HL in HoC in SC for 3 calendar months until fine paid
Watling, Honor	11.1.1796, Beccles	GL	No details	Acquitted
Cooper, Hannah	11.1.1796, Beccles	PL	No details	Convicted; HoC in SC for 4 days & kept to HL

Woolnough, Jane	11.1.1796, Beccles	Misdemeanour	No details	Acquitted
Sharman, Ann	13.1.1796, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Woodbridge bridewell 3 months
Tyler, Sarah	13.1.1796, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Woodbridge bridewell 3 months
Sharman, Elizabeth	13.1.1796, Woodbridge	Receiving stolen goods	No details	Woodbridge bridewell 12 months
Avis, Ann 1	29.7.1796, Ipswich	PL - pork	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Durrant, Susan or Susannah	5.10.1796, Woodbridge	Unspecified goods from the shop of William Notcutt	Wm. Notcutt, draper of Ipswich	Convicted; fined 6d; New Gaol 6 calendar months & until fine paid
Fuller, Elizabeth	10.10.1796, Bury St Edmunds	GL - 18 wheat sheaves	David Walton, farmer of Mkt Weston	NTB; ordered to be discharged
Fulcher, Mary	10.10.1796, Bury St Edmunds	GL - 27 wheat sheaves	David Walton, farmer of Mkt Weston	NTB; ordered to be discharged
Snowling, Mary	24.4.1797, Beccles	PL	Matthew Spilling	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Sadd, Elizabeth	24.4.1797, Beccles	PL	Hannah Woodroffe	Pleaded guilty; SC in HoC 1 calendar month & kept to HL
Barker, Sarah 3	24.4.1797, Beccles	PL	Mary Hague	Pleaded n/g; SC in HoC 3 calendar months & kept to HL
Barker, Sarah 4	8.1.1798, Beccles	Wearing apparel Felony & robbery	John Curtis, Eliz. Curtis the Elder & Younger	Ordered to stand committed to the Common Gaol at Ipswich until discharged by due course of law (referred to the Assizes)
Brereton, Ann	8.1.1798, Beccles	PL	No details	Convicted; 2 months in the Bridewell

Thorsbill, Elizabeth	15.1.1798, Bury St Edmunds	PL	John Kingston	Pleaded guilty; acquitted
Farthing, Mary Ann	20.4.1798, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Lovick, Mary	9.7.1798, Beccles	GL	Susan Crickman	Pleaded n/g; convicted & fined 6d; SC in HoC for 3 calendar months with HL & until fine pd
Avis, Ann 2	29.7.1798, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted

Suffolk Quarter Sessions: B105/2/51, 1798-1801

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Woodward, alias Wood, Sarah	3.10.1798, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; SC in HoC 3 calendar months & HL
Tyler, Sarah	16.1.1799, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Pleading n/g; convicted; Ipswich Common Gaol 9 calendar months & passed to place of legal settlement
Simpson, Susan	16.1.1799, Woodbridge	PL - postponed until next session because of illness	Thomas and Susanna Ellis	Ordered to stand committed until next session
Lord, Sarah	18.1.1799, Ipswich	PL	Thomas Bond	Pleaded n/g; acquitted & ordered to be passed to place of legal settlement at her request
Buss, Mary	21.1.1799, Bury St Edmunds	PL	John Procter & Robt Baker Hunt	Pleaded n/g; convicted; HoC 1 week & HL
Aldred, Sarah	1.4.1799, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; SC in HoC 4 calendar months & HL

Aldred, Robert	1.4.1799, Bury St Edmunds	Misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g; to stand committed until he finds sureties at the next session; to try his Traverse
Simpson, Susan	3.4.1799, Woodbridge	PL - postponed from 16.1.1799	Thomas and Susanna Ellis	Pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC 6 calendar months & HL
Syer, Elizabeth	3.4.1799, Woodbridge	PL	Robert Cutting	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Dunnett, Barnaby	3.4.1799, Woodbridge	PL – takes traverse	Robert Cutting	Indictment found against defendant for misdemeanour; quashed by Court
Annis, Mary	24.7.1799, Woodbridge	GL PL	No details No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; fined 6d; SC in HoC 3 calendar months & HL & until fine paid Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Annis, Ann	24.7.1799, Woodbridge	GL PL	No details No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Taylor, Mary	26.7.1799, Ipswich	Felony	No details	Acquitted
Taylor, Edmund	26.7.1799, Ipswich	Felony	No details	Acquitted
Gowing, Mary	13.1.1800, Beccles	PL	No details	SC in HoC 6 months & HL
Cook, Sarah	15.1.1800, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Crack, Mary	20.1.1800, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Convicted; SC in HoC 3 months & HL
Hewet, Elizabeth	21.4.1800, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; HoC for 3 months
Chaney, Sarah	21.4.1800, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; SC in HoC 1 month & HL
Moulton, Ann	18.7.1800, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; Common Gaol 6 weeks

Berry, Susan	18.7.1800, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; Common Gaol 6 weeks
Bloomfield, Elizabeth	21.7.1800, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Pleading n/g; acquitted
Jacob, Maria	21.7.1800, Bury St Edmunds	GL - pieces of pork & meal	Wm. Button of Thurston	Pleaded n/g; convicted; fined 6d; SC in HoC 1 month & kept to HL & until fine paid
Bruce, Elizabeth	21.7.1800, Bury St Edmunds	GL – 5 ducks	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; fined 6d; SC in HoC 3 weeks & HL & until fine paid
Plumb, Susan	21.7.1800, Bury St Edmunds	GL – 5 ducks	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; fined 6d; SC in HoC 3 weeks & HL & until fine paid
Secret, Susan	21.7.1800, Bury St Edmunds	Receiving said ducks, knowing them to be stolen	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Wells, Elizabeth	21.7.1800, Bury St Edmunds	1lb worsted yarn PL	Shop of John Kemp in Cavendish	Pleaded n/g; acquitted (Wm. Wells Snr & Jnr also charged for breaking into house of John Dakin of Cavendish)
Mullender, Maria	6.10.1800, Beccles	Felony	No details	NTB; discharged
Bryanton, Susan	8.10.1800, Woodbridge	GL	No details	Pleaded n/g; quashed by the Court
Hoy, Sarah	13.10.1800,Bury St Edmunds	GL	No details	NTB; discharged
Barley, Ann	14.1.1801, Woodbridge	PL	No details	Pleaded guilty; SC in HoC for 1 month
Partridge, James	14.1.1801, Woodbridge	PL	No details	To be imprisoned for 3 months
Last, Mary	16.1.1801, Ipswich	GL - quantity of wheat	John Ling of Debenham	Bill returned NTB; discharged
Argent, Rebecca	19.1.1801, Bury St Edmunds	GL	No details	Bill returned NTB; discharged

Thomas jun.	19.1.1801, Bury St Edmunds	GL	No details	Bill returned NTB; discharged
Mison, Ann	19.1.1801, Bury St Edmunds	Obtaining money under false pretences	No details	Bill returned NTB; discharged
Neave, Susan	13.4.1801, Beccles	No further information	No details	Imprisoned in SC in HoC & kept to HL for 1 month

Suffolk Quarter Sessions: B105/2/52.1, 1801-1803 (to end of 1801)

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Beels, Mary	13.7.1801, Beccles	PL	No details	Unable to stand trial because of illness - postponed
Lacey, Elizabeth	13.7.1801, Beccles	GL	No details	Bill returned NTB; discharged
Blake, Diana	17.7.1801 Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted & discharged
Browne, Elizabeth	20.7.1801, Bury St Edmunds	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL for 3 months
Thornton, Ann, alias Jones	20.7.1801, Bury St Edmunds	GL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; fined 6d; SC in HoC & kept to HL for 6 months & until fine paid
Beels, Mary	5.10.1801, Beccles	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL for 3 weeks
Hessle, Sarah	7.10.1801, Woodbridge	Misdemeanour	No details	No Bill of Indictment preferred; ordered to be discharged
Blake, Mary	7.10.1801, Woodbridge	Misdemeanour	No details	No Bill of Indictment preferred; ordered to be discharged

Wright, Amelia	9.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Sutton, Mary	9.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Ames, Deborah	9.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Clarke, Mary	9.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
Perry, Lucy	9.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; acquitted
How, Elizabeth	12.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Severally pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL 1 week
How, Susan	12.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Severally pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL 1 week
Foreman, Mary	12.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Severally pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL 1 week
Foreman, Sarah	12.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Severally pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL 1 month
Langham, Alice	12.10.1801, Ipswich	PL	No details	Pleaded n/g; convicted; SC in HoC & kept to HL 1 month

Ipswich Borough Sessions: C2/9/1/1/8/11, 1776-1815 & C2/9/1/1/1/148, 18.3.1794-17.3.1800

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Woods, Mary (alias Spurgeon)	? 4.1777, Ipswich	Robbery	Mrs Flatt	Pleaded guilty; publicly whipped next Saturday, between 12 and 1; removed to place of last legal settlement

Lockwood, Mary	17.1.1778, Ipswich	Threepence halfpenny	Master, Walter Bacon	Convicted; publicly whipped and discharged
Baldrey, Prudence	17.1.1778, Ipswich	Linen gown	Mary Blaseby	Convicted; privately whipped; passed to place of last legal settlement
Clubbe, Sarah	? 3.1779, Ipswich	Lace	Miss Harwood, Milliner	Confined in the Common Gaol; publicly whipped on Saturday next between 12 & 2, & discharged
Mitchell, Jane, wife of James	15.3.1780, Ipswich	Misdemeanour - Money by false pretences	No details	Ordered to be privately whipped & discharged
Wolfe, Elizabeth	14.3.1781, Ipswich	1 silver table spoon	Samuel Ribband	Pleaded guilty; ordered to be privately whipped & discharged
Ablett, Mary	19.9.1781, Ipswich	Traverse – 4 cases Handkerchief Nightcap Muslin Silver teaspoon	Separate properties of: Mary Trusson Sukey Ann Bulmer Sarah King Martha Tokely	 Pleaded n/g; found n/g Pleaded n/g; found n/g Pleaded n/g; found n/g Pleaded n/g; found n/g
Parker, Mary, wife of William	19.9.1781, Ipswich	Traverse - misdemeanour, 7 yds cotton, under false pretences	Mary Folkard	Pleaded n/g; found guilty of misdemeanour; fined 6s.8d; to stand convicted to the Borough Gaol for 1 month & until fine paid
Ward, Patience	? 5.1784, Ipswich	Linen handkerchief	Susannah Notcutt	Pleaded guilty; ordered to be privately whipped at the rising of the Court & discharged
Penning, Mary	? 1784, Ipswich	Muslin apron	Sarah Bagley	Pleaded guilty; HoC 1 month & HL & privately whipped
Harvey, Elizabeth	? 1784, Ipswich	Misdemeanour - goods under false pretences	James Garrod	Pleaded guilty; HoC 6 weeks & HL, then removed to place of settlement
Coe, Ann	? 7.1786, Ipswich	Stuff gown, petticoat, handkerchief, shoes, worsted stockings, mantle	Parishioners of St Matthews	Pleaded guilty; HoC 1 calendar month & kept to HL

Hunt, Susannah	17.3.1789, Ipswich	8 yds muslin, value 30s	William Notcutt	Found guilty; ordered to be transported for 7 years; left Ipswich 1789
Blackshall, Susan	? Ipswich	Bread, pork & beef	John Orford	Pleaded n/g; found guilty; Town Bridewell 1 week
Dynes Susannah	? Ipswich	1 pair of leather shoes	Richard Hart	Pleaded guilty; HoC 1 week & passed to place of legal settlement
Newman, Jemima, wife of John	? Ipswich	Pc printed calico	Samuel King	Pleaded n/g; found guilty; Common Gaol of Ipswich 12 months, to be discharged on payment of 1s fine
Reeve, Mary	? Ipswich	5½ yds dark printed cotton	John Miller	Pleaded n/g; found n/g & discharged
Withers, Esther	? Ipswich	5½ yds dark printed cotton	John Miller	Pleaded n/g; found n/g & discharged
Ellis, Ann	3.1791, Ipswich	Drab coloured cloth coat	Elizabeth Smith	Pleaded n/g; found guilty; fined 1s; Common Gaol 1 calendar month & until fine paid
Sullen, Jane	3.1791, Ipswich	Sheets	Thomas Button	Found not guilty & discharged
West, Choyce	3.1791, Ipswich	Misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g; prosecutor 'not appearing' is ordered to be discharged
Lord, Mary, wife of John	24.6.1799, Ipswich	5 yds ribbon, 1½ yds Scotch cloth, 4 checked handk'chiefs Total value 10d	William Notcutt	Pleaded n/g; found guilty; to be imprisoned 1 month
Simper, Lydia	19.12.1799, Ipswich	Cloth & leather shoes under false pretences	John Miller	Pleaded n/g; found guilty; Common Gaol 6 calendar months
Askew, Eleanor	? Ipswich	Misdemeanour	No details	Pleaded n/g; prosecutor 'not appearing' is ordered to be discharged

Sudbury Borough Sessions: EE501/2/18, 1781-1836 (to 1809)

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Gentry, Mary, wife of Daniel	9.1.1781, Sudbury	Black satin cloak	Sarah Segger, widow	Back to gaol until Saturday next; taken to Public Whipping Post between 2 & 4 in the afternoon, stripped naked from the waist upwards, and publicly whipped
French, Lydia, wife of William	15.1.1782, Sudbury	Part of chain and woof to be worked up - purloining and embezzling	Andrew Burton of Sudbury, Manufacturer	Conviction affiled
Green, Sarah	10.4.1782, Sudbury	2 cotton & 1 calico shawl handkerchiefs – under false pretences	Mary Elliston, Milliner, wife of Samuel	Found guilty. Back to Common Gaol; Saturday next stripped naked from the waist upwards; put in an open cart and publicly whipped from gaol round St Peter's church in the Borough between 3 & 4 in the afternoon and to receive 15 stripes, until blood be thereby drawn
Everett, Elizabeth	10.4.1782, Sudbury	Feloniously stealing about 7lbs of flour and a quarter peck of barley meal	James Groom of the Borough, Baker	Pleaded n/g; found n/g & acquitted
Hale, Grace single of Ballingden (then Essex)	10.4.1782, Sudbury	Returning a crepe chain & woof unworked; received same to work up	Andrew Burton, Manufacturer	Conviction entered and affiled
Baxwell, Grace, wife of John	17.1.1783, Sudbury	1¾ yds calico	Sarah, wife of Bartholomew Norden	Discharged by proclamation in open court
James Sarjent	17.1.1783, Sudbury	Suspicion of felony with Grace Baxwell	Sarah Norden, wife of Bartholomew Norden	Discharged by proclamation in open court

Bexwell, Elizabeth	Midsummer 1783, Sudbury	Feloniously stealing 1 earthen pan	George Hayward	Pleaded guilty; to the Common Gaol; Saturday next put in a cart and publicly whipped from public whipping post in the Borough round St Peter's Church and back again to the said whipping post bet hours of 4 and 6 in the afternoon and discharged.
Rolfe, Frances	4.6.1795, Sudbury	Muslin apron	Ruth Moulton	Found guilty; committed to the Common Gaol until Saturday 25 July and discharged
Wright, Jude, wife of Isaac, Weaver	14.7.1797, Sudbury	Receiving 4 skeins of woollen yarn purloined by John Wells	Wm Musgrave	Convicted of buying, receiving and taking four skeins of yarn from John Wells of the Borough, weaver, knowing same to have been purloined.
Hibble, Mary	25.4.1800, Sudbury	Stealing flour	James Grom	Did not appear to prosecute; discharged by proclamation
Collins, Sarah	6.10.1809, Sudbury	Felony	No details	No one appeared to prosecute; discharged by proclamation

Borough of Bury St Edmunds Sessions Rolls: SA (B) DA/1/1786

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Elizabeth Edwards, wife of Samual	26.1.1786	1 cloth cloak with silk trim, value 10d, with force & arms 1 tablecloth, 4 aprons, 2 stocks, 4 handkerchiefs, value 1s 6d, with force & arms	Hannah Martin, wife of John; Elizabeth Jellit, wife of Thomas	Found guilty; sentenced to transportation for 7 years.

APPENDIX 2, Part 1: Women prosecuted for property crime at Suffolk Assizes, L 1784 (ASSI 94/1249) and L 1796 – S 1800 (ASSI 94/1421 – ASSI 94/1513)

L = Lent Assizes; S = Summer Assizes
Measurements: lb(s) = pound(s) in weight; yd(s) = yard(s) in length; pc(s) = piece(s), length(s) of fabric required for a garment
Abbreviations: HoC = House of Correction; SC = solitary confinement; HL = hard labour; NTB = No True Bill; n/g = not guilty; M = married
Misdemeanour usually means receiving stolen goods or obtaining goods under false pretences
Coloured cells indicate joint prosecutions, including with men; coloured numbers indicate times defendant has been tried at Assizes

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Harvey, Elizabeth	ASSI 94/1249 1784 L	Burglary	Wm. Firman of Bungay	Found guilty; sentenced to death but reprieved to 14 years' transportation to America (transported 1787 to NSW)
No evidence of women tried at these assizes	ASSI 94/1421 1796 S	No evidence	No evidence	No evidence
Catchpole, Margaret, late of Ipswich, aged 35 1	ASSI 94/1441 1797 L&S	Roan coach gelding Value £30	John Cobbold Esq of Ipswich	Found guilty; sentenced to death but reprieved to 7 years' transportation
Parker, Diana, late of Ixworth 25	ASSI 94/1441 1797 L&S	Case 1: Cotton gown & calimanco petticoat Value 19s 6d Case 2: Black satin cloak & sundry other articles Value not known Total value (both cases) in excess of 19s 6d	Case 1: Charles Mason, labourer of Mellis Case 2: Susan Howes of Ixworth, widow	Case 1: Found guilty; sentenced to death; reprieved to 7 years' transportation; later received second reprieve & released Case 2: Case not heard

Fisher, Elizabeth Spinster, of Rendlesham	ASSI 94/1441 1797 L&S	10 geese Value 10s	John Gross	Found guilty: to be imprisoned & kept to HL for six calendar months
Butcher, Nathan of Rendlesham	ASSI 94/1441 1797 L&S	10 geese Value 10s	John Gross	Found guilty: to be transported for 7 years
Tillet, Sarah of Middleton	ASSI 94/1441 1797 L&S	50lbs pork; 6lbs pork suet; earthenware pot; 2 pecks wheatmeal; 2lbs 8oz butter Total value £1 12s 4d	Philip Richbell	Found not guilty & acquitted
Lacey (Leacy), Elizabeth, of Herringfleet, 19	ASSI 94/1464 1798 L	6 yds camlet; 3 yds Wolsey; 3 yds linen; 3 yds hemp; 2 cotton stockings, 1 pr woollen buskins; 2 cotton handkerchiefs; cheese; soap; 2 yds flannel; ½ yd striped woollen stuff; 20 yds worsted binding; 40 skeins thread; 30 yds linen tape Total value £1 2s 2d	Ann Ellis of Herringfleet	Found guilty; sentenced to death but reprieved to 2 years' imprisonment
Barker, Sarah of Benhall	ASSI 94/1464 1798 L, referred from QS	1 petticoat; 1 pr bone stays; 2 linen shifts; 1 blue & white checked apron; 1 short cotton gown; 2 prs women's leather shoes; 1 pr worsted stockings Total value £1 3s 3d	John Curtis of Benhall; Elizabeth Curtis assaulted	Found guilty; sentenced to death but reprieved to 7 years' transportation
Syret, Mary of Beccles	ASSI 94/1464 1798 L	Bank draft £30; Bank notes £15 & 5 guineas; 3 or 4 crowns Total value ≈ £51 5s	Owen Holmes	Found guilty; sentenced to death but reprieved to 2 years' imprisonment
Syret, Kezia, 1 wife of William	ASSI 94/1464 1798 L	Inciting Mary Syret to commit above crime; harbouring her	Owen Holmes	No further details; appears to have been acquitted
Bulbrook, Hannah	ASSI 94/1465 1798 S	Coins Total value £1 15s 6d	Samuel Pryor of Chevington	Found not guilty; acquitted
Syret, Phoebe of Beccles	ASSI 94/1488 1799 L	2 linen sheets; 2 cotton gowns; 1 muslin shawl; 1 silk cloak, trimmed; 1 pc of cotton; 2 yds ribbon; 2 prs cotton stockings; 3 linen	Thomas Cavanagh	Found guilty; sentenced to death but reprieved to 2 years' imprisonment with HL

		shifts; 1 silk hood, 2 pcs linen cloth; 1 flannel petticoat; 1 cotton bag Value £3 12s 3d 1 diaper table cloth; 2 linen shifts; 3 cotton gowns; 1 pr worsted stockings; 1 silk handkerchief; 1 cotton handkerchief; 1 hempen sack; 1 check apron Value £1 7s 1d Total value £4 19s 4d	Elizabeth Slight	
Syret, Kezia, 2 wife of William	ASSI 94/1488 1799 L	Receiving stolen goods (above)	Thomas Cavanagh and Elizabeth Slight	Acquitted
Bull, Frances of St Mary's, Bury St Eds, single	ASSI 94/1488 1799 L	730 copper ½ pence Value £1 10s 5d	Poor of the Burgh of Bury St Edmunds	Found guilty; HL in HoC, 1 calendar month
Osborne, Susan, also of St Mary's, single	ASSI 94/1488 1799 L	730 copper ½ pence Value £1 10s 5d	Poor of the Burgh of Bury St Edmunds	Found guilty; HL in HoC, 1 calendar month
Scrutton, Dinah, of Stutton	ASSI 94/1489 1799 S	1 silver spoon Value 8s	Robert Collins	Found guilty; HL in HoC at Woodbridge, 6 calendar months
Lambgerre, Barbara, of Southwold	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	3 cotton gowns; 1 silk petticoat; 1 stuff petticoat, 1 woollen petticoat; 1 stuff petticoat mixed with silk; 1 linen petticoat; 1 cloak cloth; 2 cotton shawls; 1 handkerchief; 3 linen handkerchiefs; 2 pairs shoes; 6 gold half guineas Total value £7 18s	Jane Birkett	Found guilty; reprieved
Lloyd (Lord) Sarah, of Hadleigh, single, 21	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	1. Breaking and entering house at 1 am & 'consuming the same' 2. stealing divers goods and monies Value 40s	Sarah Syer	Sarah Lloyd found not guilty of burglary but guilty of stealing in the dwelling house to value of 40s; capitally convicted and executed after appeal refused

Clarke, Joseph the younger, of Hadleigh, labourer	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	1. Breaking and entering house at 1 am & 'consuming the same' 2. Stealing divers goods and monies Value 40s	Sarah Syer	No evidence against Clarke; found not guilty by jury
Howell, Mary of Stonham	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	1 cotton bedgown; 1 pair leather shoes Value 5s 1 pair cotton pockets Value 1s Total Value 6s	Robert Goymour; Mary Lewis	2 years' imprisonment
Hails, Sarah (Mary), of Stonham Aspall	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	Receiving cotton pockets above	Mary Lewis	Acquitted
Talbot, China of St Mary's Bury St Eds, single	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	Leather gloves & purse Value 7d Money & notes Value £100 Total Value £100 7d	Thomas Tricker	Found guilty of stealing goods, but not of stealing privily from the person; fined 12s; HL in HoC 2 years
Webber, Mary of St Mary's Bury St Eds, single	ASSI 94/1512 1800 L	Leather gloves & purse Value 7d Money & notes Value £100 Total Value £100 7d	Thomas Tricker	Found guilty of stealing goods, but not of stealing privily from the person; fined 12s; HL in HoC 2 years
Killett, Elizabeth of Bradwell, single, 18	ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	Bank notes Value £164	John Crow of Bradwell (Killett's employer)	Found guilty; sentenced to 7 years' transportation
Catchpole, 2 Margaret, of St Margaret's Ipswich, single, 39	ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	Prosecuted for 'being at large' after escaping from gaol		Returned to prison; found guilty of being at large; sentenced to transportation for life

Ely, Sarah of Ipswich, single, 17	ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	2 rings (including a mourning ring); pair of paste buckles; outside gold watch case; 2 keys	Mrs Ffrances Trotman, widow of Ipswich	Found guilty; 2 years in HoC with HL
Fuller, Elizabeth, 30	ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	Quantity of linen cloth	Shop of William James Mingay of Wattisfield	Found guilty; 2 years' in HoC with HL
Sutton, Alice, 19	ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	Quantity of linen cloth	Shop of William James Mingay of Wattisfield	Found guilty; 2 years' in HoC with HL
Sutton, Elizabeth, 25	ASSI 94/1513 1800 S	Quantity of linen cloth, 'in company with Elizabeth Fuller and Sarah Sutton'	Shop of William James Mingay of Wattisfield	Found guilty; 2 years' in HoC with HL

APPENDIX 2, Part 2: Women prosecuted for property crime at Suffolk Assizes, L 1801- L 1807
(SA, Assize Calendars, 966/7/1, inside Lackford Petty Sessions books)

Measurements: lb(s) = pound(s) in weight; yd(s) = yard(s) in length; pc(s) = piece(s), length(s) of fabric required for a garment
Abbreviations: HoC = House of Correction; SC = solitary confinement; HL = hard labour; NTB = No True Bill; n/g = not guilty; M = married
Misdemeanour usually means receiving stolen goods or obtaining goods under false pretences
Coloured cells indicate joint prosecutions, including with men; coloured numbers indicate times defendant has been indicted at Assizes

Defendant	Date & place of hearing	Main goods stolen	Victim	Verdict & punishment
Howlett, Susan, 37	19.3.1801 L	1 muslin apron	John Golden, Bury St Edmunds, linen draper	Acquitted
Howlett, John, 40	19.3.1801 L	2 prs cotton stockings & 'various other things'	John Golden, Bury St Edmunds, linen draper	Found guilty; 7 years' transportation
Risbrocke, Elizabeth	19.3.1801 L	Receiving stolen goods	John Golden, Bury St Edmunds, linen draper	Admitted evidence
Challice, Emma, 21	19.3.1801 L	1 sheet, 1 pillow case, 1 apron, 1 pc lace	Robert Wakeling of Withersfield	Found guilty; 2 years' imprisonment
Farrant, John, 36	19.3.1801 L	Buying & receiving above goods, known to be stolen	Robert Wakeling of Withersfield	Indictment quashed
Farrant, Dorothy, wife, 25	19.3.1801 L	Buying & receiving above goods, known to be stolen	Robert Wakeling of Withersfield	Indictment quashed
Gooch, Sarah	19.3.1801 L	2 prs leather breeches & stuff petticoat	George Goodwyn of Bury St Edmunds	Discharged, prosecutor not appearing
Gooch, Mary	19.3.1801 L	2 prs leather breeches & stuff petticoat	George Goodwyn of Bury St Edmunds	Discharged, prosecutor not appearing

Smith, Sarah, 17	19.3.1801 L	Bank notes Total value £70	James Aldhouse	Acquitted
Burton, Susan, 33	25.3.1802 L	1 ewe sheep	Thomas Danby of Risby out of field in Bury St Edmunds	True Bill; acquitted
Root, Hannah	25.3.1802 L	1 coverlet, 1 sheet, flocks, feathers & bed-ticking	Hawkedon parish workhouse	Found guilty; 1 year's imprisonment in HoC
Pain, Sarah	25.3.1802 L	Receiving above	Hawkedon parish workhouse	Found guilty; 2 years in same prison
Beales, Elizabeth	5.8.1802 S	1 cheese	Robert Nunn of Hepworth	NTB
Wink, Dinah 15	24.3.1803 L	Pc of patchwork, ½ yd black silk, partly made dimity pocket	Robert Barber of Fressingfield	NTB
Brown, Richard	24.3.1803 L	Pcs cambric, cottons, nankeen, laces etc £100+; burglary	From house of Thomas Jolly of Wickhambrook; goods property of John and Charles Hammond	Sentenced to death; executed
Williams, Hannah 18	24.3.1803 L	Pcs cambric, cottons, nankeen, laces etc £100+; burglary	From house of Thomas Jolly of Wickhambrook; goods property of John and Charles Hammond	Sentenced to death; reprieved and transported for life
Pettit, Elizabeth (alias Brown), 25	24.3.1803 L	Canvas bag containing £13 3s in notes and coins	Joseph Peachey of Burwell, at Fox and Goose, St Mary's, Newmarket	NTB
Buckley, Mary 1 (alias Olley), 28	24.3.1803 L	Selling & exchanging wearing apparel provided by the parish	Parish of Stanton	Acquitted
Spooner, Lucy, 13	20.3.1806 L	3 metal weights	George Wells, shopkeeper, Hadleigh	Acquitted

Everitt, Susan, 30	20.3.1806 L	Uttering & tendering counterfeit coin	Edward Mines, shopkeeper, Bury St Edmunds	Found guilty; 1 years' imprisonment; to find sureties for 2 years
Carter, Susannah, 21	18.3.1807 L	Handkerchiefs, muslins, laces & calicoes & other articles of considerable value Total Value £29 4s. 6d	From house of William Parsonson of Sudbury, hatter, her employer	Found guilty; 7 years' transportation (no evidence of being transported)
Killick, Martha, widow, 40	18.3.1807 L	Household stores & other items	Samuel Mure of Herringswell, her master	Found guilty; 7 years' transportation
Parmenter, Fanny, 65	18.3.1807 L	Stole or received 'some old iron'	Richard Crown the elder of Hundon	Acquitted
* Buckle, Mary 2 (alias Olley), 33	18.3.1807 L	Fraudulently obtained 3 sums of 5s for relief of Robert & Ann Lucas (living in Stanton)	Parish of Bardwell	Found guilty; 7 years' transportation

*Mary Buckle(r) (alias Olley), aged 28, was also committed 12 January 1803 'charged on suspicion of felony in stealing one cheque apron, of the value of 12 pences, the property of Elizabeth Carver of Stanton.' Case went before Bury Quarter Sessions on 17 January 1803 and she was sentenced to one month's imprisonment.[1]

[1] Suffolk Archives (B), D 8/1/3, No. 8; *Bury & Norwich Post*, 19 January 1803.

APPENDIX 3: Suffolk spinners and putters-out convicted of false and short reeling, 1784-1790.[1]

Date conviction reported in newspaper	Names of defendants and home villages or towns	Crime, fine or punishment
Ipswich Journal 30.10.1784 and *Bury Post & Universal Advertiser* 4.11.1784	Mary Frost, Eliz. Keary, Phoebe Clarke, Eliz. Gosling & Ann Garrod - Ipswich Ruth Pender – Bury St Edmunds Sarah Dutton – Nowton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 6.11.1784	Elizabeth Bentrip & Sarah Stratrey – Bruiseyard Elizabeth Harling – Stratford Susanna Smith – Saxmundham Elizabeth Canham [village unknown]	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 13.11.1784	Sarah Dawson – Walton Sarah Nock, Catherine Whiteacre, Abigail Daldy and Sarah Blythe – Hintlesham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 20.11.1784	Mary Robartson – Creeting All Saints	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 27.11.1784	(Unnamed) Servant of James Marlinger & Mary Gooch – Great Thornham James Parker & Eliz. Smye – Little Stonham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Reeling short yarn Fined 5s

[1] British Newspaper Archive, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/ [accessed 10.7.2025] & Suffolk Archives: *Ipswich Journal*, 1770-1790; *Bury Post and Universal Advertiser*, from July 1782, becoming *Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser* between March and December 1785 & *Bury and Norwich Post* from January 1786. The *Bury and Norwich Post* is not available between 1795 and 1800. Spellings are recorded as transcribed in relevant newspapers.

Bury Post & Universal Advertiser 1.12.1784	Martha Bantock & Elizabeth Knights – Bacton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 4.12.1784	Sarah Williamson – Badwell Ash Ann Alger, Mary Green, […], Mary Tillet, Jane Roots, Mary Newman & Michael Grimley – Hadleigh Elizabeth Sharman & Ann Shuster – Eye Ann Whymark – Raydon Elizabeth East & Elizabeth Bruce – Lavenham Mary Pettit – Capel Martha Hagar, Servant to Mr Wright – Akenham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 11.12.1784	Mary James – Tostock Catherine Howlet & Elizabeth Rice – Drinkston Ann Cockerell, Mary Skinner, Frances Percy, Mary Watson & Mary Burroughs – Bury St Edmunds Elizabeth Th[…] & Mary Everson – Occold Harriet Taylor – Redingfield Susannah Jinks – Mendlesham Margaret Chandler – Burgh Mary Cooper, servant to Benjamin Starn – Elmset Elizabeth […] – Belstead Mary Ollis – Copdock Ann Driver – Barham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 18.12.1784	Mary Manning, Eliz. Cooke & Eliz. Broome – Rattlesden Susannah Reed & Ann Wright – Combs Ann Webb – Stowmarket Tabitha Quinton, Charity Howard & Elizabeth Randel – Wetheringsett Sarah Murlinger & Mary Warner – Kenton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Wyet – Holbrook Sarah Hines & Mary Pain – Bramford Ann Catt – Hemingstone	
Ipswich Journal 24.12.1784	Ann Burrows, Mary King, Mary Hayward, Sarah Bridges & Hannah Gosling – Framlingham Sarah Mudtock & Sarah Hadman – Melton Susannah Flower – Bawdsey Sarah Crosby & Frances Thurkittle – Butley Sarah Clarke & Sarah Mosley – Eyke Mary Barnes – Iken Elizabeth Prior – Stowmarket Mary Stoneyball & Eunice Stutton – Old Newton Martha Lord - Stowupland	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 1.1.1785	Sarah Fitch, Elizabeth Ringe, Mary Snell & Stephen Hearne – Tuddenham Susannah Mill – Worlingworth Sarah Gooch & Batthias Eagle – Cransford	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 15.1.1785	Jane Mott – Capel St Mary Judith Rich – Woolverstone Eliz. Stannard & Mary Burrows – Orford Eliz. Hutton – Tunstall Hannah Frost, Jane Cullum, Susannah Burham, Eliz. Gorbold & Mary Booth – Eyke Ann Eldridge & Sarah Harvey – Ufford Eliz. Waller – Woodbridge Ann Roundacre – Mickfield Sarah Lambert - Stonham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Lambert committed to Ipswich bridewell for refusing to pay penalty & having no goods to distrain

Ipswich Journal 29.1.1785	Sarah Freeman – Felixstowe Elizabeth Fuller – Great Bealings William Weaby (for his servant) - Bredfield Bridget Waller – Boulge Mary Mason – Wherstead	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 5.2.1785	Mary Scott, Eliz. Johnson, Sarah Fairweather, Eliz. Gordon, Ann Bennet - Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 12.2.1785	Eliz. Lucas – Woolverstone Hannah Giles & Catharine Howlett – Holbrook Sarah Woolard – Brantham Mary Smith & Mary Honeywood – Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 19.2.1785	Mary Marston (?) – Bacton Leonard Schofield – Finningham Elizabeth Threader – Dalham Mary Challis – Denham Cassia Redford & Jemima Webb – Bradley Magna Eliz. Woodward & Hannah Woolard – Weston Hannah Sketton – Thurlow Magna Ann Smith – Bradley Eliz. Lambert, Sarah Taylor, Mary Hayward, Susan Reynolds & Eliz. Doe - Mendlesham Eleanor Shippings, Widow Moyse & E. Sheldrack – Wetheringsett Elizabeth Barnard – Winston Thos. Moss – Ashfield Eliz. Hammond & Eliz. Pallford - Debenham Mary Cook & Ann Manning – Pettaugh	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Mary Cook committed to Woodbridge bridewell

Ipswich Journal 26.2.1785	Penelope Game, Susannah Diaper & Jane Flach - Ipswich Eliz. Green & Jemima Summers – Battisford Sarah Garwood – Needham Ann Witman – Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Fined 10s
Ipswich Journal 1.3.1785	Mathew Hines – Henley Eleanor Coping – Helmingham Mary Wright – Otley Frances Mallet & Mary Bonnet – Grundisburgh Mary Copper - Barham Mary Blase - Helmingham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 12.3 1785	Mary Orsborn - Gosbeck Mary Smy – Hemingston Mary Robartson – Otley	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 26.3.1785	Mary Lewis – Sutton ? Lucock, for his daughter Elizabeth – Hollesley Eliz. Edge – Sudbourn Ann Balby (servant to Mr Thomas Shippard) –Tunstal Mary Jessup – Ramsholt Sarah Day & Eliz. Turril - Hollesley	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 31.3.1785	Mary Flack – Brockley Susan King – Bury Sarah Boreham, Elizabeth Floyd, Francis Dyson & Ann Pariot – Newmarket Mary Plaice & Hester Hicks – Mildenhall Elizabeth Gouldson & Honor King – Walsham Esther Douse – Wattisfield Sarah Doulston – Rickinghall	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Alderton – Thurston Ursula Bennett, Mary Hows & James Key – Mellis Ann Thompson – Little Welnetham Elizabeth Prince – Palgrave Dorothy Cutter – Bradfield Combust	
Ipswich Journal 2.4.1785 Framlingham District	Esther Copping – Great Thornham [Priscilla Flatt & Rebecca Elmer – Gillingham, Norfolk] Ann Brown & Mary Ruffels (servant to Edmund Nunn) - Wickham Skeith Ann Foulger – Westhorpe Sarah Algar, Mary Keeling, Mary Oakes, Lydia Goss (servant to Mr A. Dean) – Yaxley Mary Nickolds & Eliz. Hayward – Kettleborough Frances Colthorp & Mary Reeve – Easton Sarah Hart, Sarah Hill & Philip Peck – Framlingham Eliz. Nickolds, Sarah Herring, Mary Pemberton, Mary Turrell & Jeffery Hirn – Monk Soham Mary Bennett, Rachael Johnson & Sarah Gostling – Worlingworth Frances Read – Southolt Eliz. Pipe – Wilby Mary Plant & Eliz. Smith – Bedingfield Eliz. Shipp, Margaret Harvey & Hanworth Southgate - Occold Sarah Mullinger – Kenton Mary Everton - Occold	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Mullinger - for second offence of false reeling, convicted & sent to bridewell Everton - for second offence, paid the penalty of 40s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 6.4.1785	Elizabeth Thompson – Cockfield Elizabeth East – Lavenham Eliz. Howlett – Melford	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s

	Ann Everard – Hartest Alice Osborne – Cavendish Sarah Payne – Sudbury Susan Sarjeant – Waldingfield Eliz. Steward & Eliz. Woolege – Lawshall Eliz. Page – Stanningfield Susan Andrews & Alice Smith – Melford Eliz. Garwood – Glemsford Susan Brockell, Susan Blackshire, Lydia Norman, Elizabeth Hartly & Eliz. Ambrose – Cavendish Margaret Barnard & Ann Martin - Clare Mary Allen - Hadleigh	 Reeling short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 9.4.1785	Susan Sturgeon – Creeting Mary Goldsmith, Eliz. Shippard, Tabitha Shippard, Eliz. Daves & Eliz. Syllit – Stonham Ann Barrill & Ann Wethers – Ipswich Eliz. Curtis – Witnesham Mary Butcher – Melton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 16.4.1785	Edney Rumsbe – Horham Ann Martton – Redlingfield Ann Flower & Jane Woods – Parham Ann Barleyman – Little Glemham Eliz. Mann – Athelington Margaret Day – village unclear	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Mann committed to Botesdale bridewell Day committed to Bury Gaol
Ipswich Journal 23.4.1785	Hannah Sharman – Flowton Mary Lows – Washbrook Elizabeth Wilkin – Ipswich	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s

	Mary Drane, Susan Pizzy & Sarah Abbot – Trimley Rose Study – Bucklesham Elizabeth Harte – Ipswich	 Harte committed to bridewell for one month, 'not having any goods to distrain'
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 27.4.1785	Elizabeth Buckle – Ingham Sarah Cornbyn – Bardwell Sarah Cowell & Christian Whitehead – Honington Sarah Cluttering – Timworth Elizabeth Pawsey – Stanningfield Susan Bugg - Hawsted	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 7.5.1785	Sarah Harding – Tannington Mary Lanham – Worlingworth Susan Mills – Dennington M? Newson – Hacheston Esther Brentick – Blaxhall Eliz. Swann – North Glemham Sarah Pipe – Parham Deborah Barker – Sweffling Susan Smith – Saxmundham Eliz. Hanah – Farnham Eliz. Briggs – Oakley Mary Clark – Southold Bridget Low – Carlton	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Reeling short yarn and 'paid the penalty inflicted by parliament'
Ipswich Journal 14.5.1785	Lidia Dave – Otley Adam Rilby – Ipswich Alice Gibbs & Ann Randall – Bealings Susannah Cracklane – Hasketon	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s

	Rebecca Haslewood – Clopton Mary Starne – Witnesham Frances Lockard - Woodbridge Sarah Fairweather – Ipswich Sarah Smith – Great Bealings	 Fairweather, fined 40s for second offence [usually 10s] Smith, convicted of short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 25.5.1785	Jane Wilson – Kentford Mary Lemon & Elizabeth Payne – Moulton Martha Levett – Gazely Mary Turner, Sarah Mucking & Martha Wilkinson – Lidgate Eleanor Parsons – Ousden Jane Wyborough – Dalham Martha Prick – Debden Elizabeth & Sarah Worner, Alice Taylor & Sarah Sparkes – Cockfield Francis Flower - Stansfield	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 1.6.1785	Isabella Holden, Ann Brown, Susan Bird, Ann Smith, ? Siely – Bury Pamela Lilly & Mary Mulley – Whepstead Mary Rampley – Pakenham Mary Twichet – Brockley Jane Gooday - Barrow	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 4.6.1785	Eliz. Hammond - Ashbocking Susan Tyler, & Eliz. Lewis - Gosbeck Sarah Robertson - Hemingstone Mary Johnson - Freston Amy Perr, Mary Sage & Sarah Rolfe - Offton Eliz. Able - Elmsett Sarah Jacques - Bredfield Sarah Perr & Daniel Hall ('for his daughter') - Ringshall Mary Andrews - Wattisham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s

	Ann Rivett - Needham Rose County, Alice Basket, Alice Rodgers, Sarah May & Sarah Welham - Needham	 Short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 8.6.1785	Elizabeth Finch – Cavendish Nathaniel Manning – Waldingfield Parva Ann Crisp & Sarah Green – Monks Illeigh Elizabeth Spring – Sudbury Elizabeth Lomax - Shimpling	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 11.6.1785	Susan Hubbard – Brockford Martha Harvey – Stoke Ash Mary Baldwin – Thwaite Hannah Ashmanail ? – South[??]eld Ann Broom – Peasenhall M. Clark – Dennington Mary Garnham – Letheringham Rachael Noble – North Glemham Susan Nunn & M. Holmes – Mendlesham M. Youngman - Brockford	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 15.6.1785	Prior Wing, Jane Bauldwin, Elizabeth Langham, Mary Hall, Elizabeth Ramsay, Susan Johnson, Sarah Fowler & Eliz. Rolph – Lakenheath Mary Potch – Brandon	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 18.6.1785	Mary Hines & Eliz. Wolfe – Ipswich Sarah Bloomfield – Bealings Adam Risby – Ipswich (see 14 May 1785) Mary Scott – Ipswich Rachael Ramplin & Mary Syer – Coddenham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Risby - Committed to bridewell for one month Scott – Fined 40s for 2nd offence Short reeling

	Ann Lydgate – Barham	Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 22.6.1785	Sarah Whiting – Hitcham Christian Rampling – Chelsfield Widow Webb – Brettenham Widow Powlding & Susan Foulcher – Bildeston Mary Balding – Lavenham Elizabeth Vince – Kersey Susan Woods – Semer Jemima Green - Ofton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 25.6.1785	Sarah Brundell – Ufford Eliz. Clarke & Sarah Dammant – Hollesley Mary Clarke – Orford Mary Lucock – Grundisburgh Mary Warner – Ipswich Hannah Scate – Ipswich Eliz. Ransby - Sudbourn	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 29.6.1785	Mary Page – Culford Margaret Elder – Hessett Mary Mee – Norton Elizabeth Bowers & Mary Cooper – Hawsted Abigail Emerson – Fornham All Saints Mary Houghton – Timworth Hannah Linsdale, Elizabeth Bullet & Hannah Anston – Bradfield St George	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 2.7.1785	Sarah Race - Earl Stonham Sarah Copper – Stonham Aspal Martin Lee – Mickfield Eliz. Parry – Willisham Jane Parish - Shottisham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 6.7.1785	Sarah Philips – Monks Illeigh Hannah Durrant – Lindsey Susan Pattle & Sarah Gladen - Elmset	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 13.7.1785	Jasey Lovell – Mellis Letitia Spurdent – Thrandiston Martha Woolsey – Bacton Rachael Witeroad – Cotton Mary Bullet – Elmswell	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 16.7.1785	Mary Taylor – Hintlesham Mary Bartlet, Esther Plumbe & Mary Stow – Bramford Eliz. Gostling – Ipswich Ann Spooner – Burstall Sarah Brame & Mary Witman - Westerfield	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 23.7.1785	Elizabeth Minter – Kettleborough Mary Edward – Walberswick Charlotte Cappec – Yoxford A[…]na Ama[…] – Theberton Predence Eagle & Ann Haward - Sibton Mary Copthorpe - Blythburgh Hann[…] Shimman & ? – Leiston Ann Snipp - Snape Eliz. Legatt – Wickham Market Lydia Garnham – Charsfield Eliz. Barnard – Petistree Margaret Taylor - Westleton	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling, 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 27.7.1785	Elizabeth Molt, Frances Bennett, Ruth Bowers & Alice Hardy – Lawshall Elizabeth Reeve – Little Welnetham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Ipswich Journal 30.7.1785	Christian Lucas – Arwarton Margaret Bugg – Walton Mary Hails – Little Bealings Amy Turner, Hannah Woolener & Eliz. Mallet – Grundisburgh Mary Scott – Ipswich Sarah Mays, late of Needham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Scott - Committed to gaol for second offence Mays - Committed to bridewell for one month
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 3.8.1785	Sarah Barker – Nayland Elizabeth Proir – Stratford Elizabeth Burroughs – Haughley Ann Osborn – Great Finborough Mary Whiting – Hitcham Mary Clark – Earl Stonham Ann Still - Denston Elizabeth Rutter – Wickhambrook Rowland Sizer – Haverhill Mary Harland - Nayland Susan Lawrance – Stowmarket Ann Gooch – Thorp Grace Sanderson – Little Thurlow	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 13.8.1785	Bridget Lambird – Snape Eliz. Adams – Letheringham Elizabeth Cook & Margaret Kerridge – Benhall Mary Sawer – Wickham-market Eliz. Newson & Ann Cross – Framlingham Elizabeth Fortkin - Occold Eliz. Dorling, Alice Martin & Sarah Ellis - Aldborough	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s

	Mary Pulham – Wickham-market Eliz. Harling – Aldborough	Short reeling Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 20.8.1785	Elizabeth Read – Willisham Mary Ager – Nettlestead Mary Clarke – Bailham Mary Harvey & Eliz. Bartlett – Offton Sarah Taylor – Combs Sarah Beaumont – Battisford Susannah Tampin - Bailham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 31.8.1785	Sarah Plummer & John Lord – Langham Elizabeth Sharman – Tostock Mary Durrant – Pakenham Vardy Clark – Bardwell Margaret Brundett – Ixworth	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 3.9.1785	Mary Waterman, Eliz. Tampin, Mary Whitaker & Lydia Howe – Hintlesham Susan Child – Claydon Mary Hines – Coddenham Eliz. F[…]dick – Henley Mary Wright & Elizabeth F[…] – Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 7.9.1785	Hannah Bowle, Ann Dale, Sarah Carter, Jane Pawsey, Sarah Arbone, Mary Johnstone – Lawshall Sarah Maxam, Elizabeth Lomax, Elizabeth Bird, Sarah Bruce – Shimpling Sarah Glover, Widow Cocksedge – Cockfield Hannah Cudberd, Sarah Ranson – Lavenham Hannah Moss – Waldingfield Parva Mary Cason – Glemsford Sarah Goodell & Hannah Butcher - Clare	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Butcher, a putter-out of wool, found guilty of 'having false yarn in her

		possession that she could not swear to'
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 14.9.1785	Vart Hunt – Wattisfield Mary Nunn – Burgate Susan Elmer & Sarah Steggals – Hopton Mary Game & Susan Hunt – Walsham Elizabeth Andrews – Barningham Mary Pulser – Badwell-Ash Ann James - Wortham Mary Simons – Westhorp Ann Streaton & Mary Webb – Newmarket Elizabeth Jobson - Exning	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 17.9.1785	Jane Welham – Needham Magdalen Burrows – Swilland Sarah Coats – Stonham Aspal Eliz. Norman – Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 28.9.1785	Alice Feakes, Elizabeth Shelver, Unice Huggins, Elizabeth Barker & Lydia Mills - Bury	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal, 1.10.1785 Framlingham District	Eliz. Coaca – Saxmundham Mary Chandler – Worlingworth Jane Folkard – Thebberton Mary Spall, widow – Westleton Sarah Johnson, Catharine Brown & B. Barley – Leiston M. Allod – Wetheringsett M. Barker – Ashfield	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 12.10.1785	Ann Schofield – Bury Elizabeth Perkins – Tostock Elizabeth Howe – Wattisfield Elizabeth Halls – Euston	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Elizabeth Hammond, for her servant – Market Weston	
Ipswich Journal 15.10.1785	Sarah King – Orford Hannah Cross – Chillesford Hannah Miller – Iken Hannah Baker - Playford Susan Folger – Bealings Sarah Welham – Needham Hannah Pannise – Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Pannise – Fined 40s and committed to bridewell for one month for a second offence
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 9.11.1785	Margaret Hayward – Stanstead Sarah Ungless & Mary Pawsey – Lawshall Mary Wollage - Brettenham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 16.11.1785	Ann Shorter – Bradfield St George Ann Ellis – Whepstead Elizabeth Saunders – Wyverstone Martha Harnton - Westhorp	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 26.11.1785	Martha Vince – Chattisham Wm. Brame – Holbrook Sarah Hearne – Tattingston Ann Wakelyn & Phoebe Nunn – Ipswich Joseph Smith – Melton Abraham Kersey – Akenham, 'for his servant' Sarah Hailer – Bailham Esther Nunn – Bramford Rebecca Harding – Stonham Sarah Adams – Hemingston Martha Clarke – Somersham – putter-out of wool	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s 'Could not swear to the reeler of 1lb of false yarn found in her custody' [penalty unknown]

Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 14.12.1785	Mary Isaacson – Exning Susan Canham – Upper Rickinghall Lucy Cocksedge - Wortham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 17.12.1785	Mary Andrews – Kenton Eliz. Shipp – Occold Susan More – Redingfield Susan Haward – Middleton Rachael Andrews – Yoxford Mary Mills & Sarah Ebbs – Benhall Amy Shelldale? – Easton Bales Starn – Stradbrook Eliz. Chiddock – Wilby Mary Cousins – Marlesford Eliz. Horn – Framsden Elizabeth Ward & Ann Brows – Oakley	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s Short reeling Fined 5s
Bury Post, or Suffolk and Norfolk Advertiser 21.12.1785	Ann Basset & Susan Neele – Beck-row, Mildenhall Susannah Dillamore – Barton-Mills Sarah Cook – Hengrave Sarah Burroughs - Bury	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 31.12.1785	Robert Warner – Bucklesham Rebecca Harding – Stonham Aspal Rose Ellis – Ash-Bocking Sarah Flurry – Clopton Eliz. Whistlecroft, Martha Wilkin & L. Durrant – Ipswich Esther Gammage & Martha Lawrence – Alderton Margaret Brigg – Walton Sarah Harte, late of Tattingstone	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Brigg & Harte committed to bridewell for one month for not paying the penalty

Ipswich Journal 14.1.1786	Eliz. Horn – Framsden Sarah Beekers – Debenham Ann Duel – Helmingham Mary Begg – Benhall Eliz. Sheldrick – Saxmundham Ann Ratlar – Sweffling Eliz. Collthorpe – Kelsale Eliz. Osbourn – Rendham Sarah Vincent – Framlingham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 18.1.1786 Lavenham District	Bridget Edwards – Onehouse Elizabeth Bird – Thorp Elizabeth Bugg – Elmswell Elizabeth Burroughs – Haughley Sarah Welham – Wattisham John Archer, Sen. – Great Finborough Ann Syer – Hitcham Rebecca Game & Elizabeth Ford – Waldingfield Parva Ann Smith – Brent Illeigh	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 28.1.1786	Eliz. Arnton – Brantham Lydia Pitt, Ann Segger, Sarah Girling & Sarah Crouch – Ipswich Sarah Wright – Walton Margaret Ely – Tuddenham Bridget Crisp – Woodbridge Mary Bird & Ann Pulford – Needham Susan Cole – Belstead Susan Bloomfield – Ashbocking John Denington (for his grand-daughter) – Great Bealings	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 1.2.1786	Elizabeth Clark – Risby Judith Adams & Mary Golston – Walsham Sarah Nunn – Pakenham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Mary English – Thurston Ann Canham & Ann Abbot – Fornham All Saints Mary Thorpe – Great Livermere Mary Coe & Elizabeth Rushbrook – Rickinghall Mary Nunn – Horningsheath Ann Harding – Fornham All Saints, putter-out of wool	 Fined 10s
Ipswich Journal 18.2.1786	Ann Farthing, Hannah Clarke, Hannah Green, Margaret Kennel & Mary Harris – Ipswich Margaret Syer – Newbourn Susan King, Lydia Coats & Sarah Woolener – Grundisburgh Hannah Welham – Woodbridge Wm. Bartlett – Bramford	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s 'Fined 10s for his daughters, they being old offenders'
Bury & Norwich Post 1.3.1786 Lavenham District	Mary Salter – Long Melford Elizabeth Swallow, Ann Kestrich & Mary Clark - Hadleigh Sarah Porter & Sarah Salisbury – Polstead Sarah Pettit & Isaac Horne – Stowmarket Mary Williams – Lavenham Elizabeth East – Lavenham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Fined 40s for second offence
Ipswich Journal 4.3.1786 Framlingham District	Eliz. Horne – Framsden Eliz. Newton – Framsden Eliz. Chidwick – Wilby	Committed to Ho. of Correction for non-payment of fine Newton fined 20s for second offence Chidwick fined 40s for second offence, 'having no goods to distrain' committed to the House of Correction for one month

	Lydia Moss – Ashfield cum Thorpe Sarah Mills - Dennington Sarah Dallister – Wetheringsett Elizabeth Wayman – Framlingham Sarah Watts - Easton	Moss fined 40s for second offence, 'having no goods to distrain' & committed to the House of Correction for one month' Mills, Dallister, Wayman and Easton convicted of false reeling Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 8.3.1786	Mary Sutton, Sarah Last, Jemima Banham & Elizabeth Frost – Rougham Christian Clark & Mary Lofts – Whepstead Elizabeth Norman - Bury	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 22.3.1786	Elizabeth Banham – Risby Hannah Billum & Elizabeth Peacock – Langham Elizabeth Fawcutt – Walsham Alice Sturgeon - Barton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 1.4.1786	Amie Lawrence – Earl Stonham Sarah Durrant, Eliz. Armiger, Rose Woods & Mary Clarke – Ipswich Mary Battle – Ringshall Grace Gillson & Jemima Mash – Barking Eliz. Harte – Ipswich – 'being an old offender, was committed to Bridewell'.	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 19.4.1786	Mary Scarfe & Mary Kibble - Buxhall Sarah Burman – Old Newton Sarah Reason & Sarah Briton – Shimpling Mary Archer – Nedging	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Cooper (Old Newton) & Elizabeth East (Lavenham) Whepster Adams - Stowmarket	Cooper & East committed to Bridewell for non-payment of fines. (East, 40s fine – see above, *Bury & Norwich* Post, 1.3.1786) Adams, putter-out of wool, fined for not ticketing his yarn
Ipswich Journal 22.4.1786 Framlingham District	Sarah Hayward – Thorndon Eliz. Barker – Debenham Eliz. Carver & Ann Carver – Laxfield Ann Flower & Mary Read – Parham Robert Hayward – Framlingham – a receiver of yarn Eliz. Goldsmith – Marlesford Ann Barnaby – Dennington Mary Harrold & Ann Potkin – Great Glemham	Reeling false or short yarn Fined 5s
Bury and Norwich Post 26.4.1786	Elizabeth Reeve – Little Welnetham Thomas Alton – Bradfield St Clare Thomas Beart – Palgrave Sarah Elden – Chedburgh Ruth Cage – Thurston Mary Stearn – Rattlesden Alice Hinds – New Market Robert Steggals – Hesset Elizabeth Garrard – Bury Nathaniel Strutt – Hopton	Reeling false or short yarn Fined 5s A collector of yarn, fined 3l (£3)
Bury and Norwich Post 17.5.1786	Elizabeth Shorten & Ann Burtle - Tuddenham Mary Thrumble – Freckenham Mary Nailor – Icklingham Mary Johnson, Mary Meale & Mary Brightwell – Mildenhall	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Ann Gee, Elizabeth Bishop & Susan Gill – Worlington Elizabeth Mitchell - Woolpit	
Bury and Norwich Post 14.6.1786	Susan Quinton – Bacton Alice Ablett – Reed Mary Elsden – Bradfield St Clare Elizabeth Foreman & Esther Hicks – Mildenhall Elizabeth Duffield – Cavenham Mary Foreman - Culford	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 17.6.1786	Mary Robertson & Mary Osborn – Otley Ann Thorpe – Needham Eliz. Sutter – West Creeting Lydia Woods – Creeting All Saints Martha Stanton – Orford Martha King – Eyke Jane Mayhew – Tunstal Eliz. How – Ipswich Eliz. Hackfield – Shotley Sarah Markham – Clopton Grace Scarlet – Levington	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 1.7.1786	Mary Brown & Eliz. Larter – Stratford Martha Mills – Rishangles Mary Kemp – Wickham-Skeith Sarah Hill – Framlingham Eliz. Bowles – Leiston Eliz. Porter – Hacheston Mary Canham – Benhall Rebecca Newson – Wickham Market Ann Allam – Horham Ann Ratlar – Swilland	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Adam Sewell – Laxfield	Sewell, convicted for refusing to give evidence of 3lb of false yarn in his possession [penalty not stated]
Bury and Norwich Post 19.7.1786	Ann Fenton – Hargrave Elizabeth Huckam – Brandon Mary Jackson – Elden Mary Macro – Woolpit Elizabeth Vater – Little Saxham Ann Jarvies - Heigham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 5.8.1786	Eliz. Fuller & Ann Lilly – Ipswich Sarah Dorling – Washbrook Sarah Leach – Clopton Martha Harrod – Shotley Sarah Granger – Barham Ann Platts – Woodbridge Sarah Harding – Hasketon Mary Battel – Ringshall Mary Baker – Ipswich - a putter-out of wool	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Fined 5s for refusing to give evidence to 1lb of false-reeled wool found in her possession
Bury and Norwich Post 16.8.1786	Grace Moore – Stratford Margaret Culf – East Bergholt Sarah Gun – Higham Mary Ringe – Elmset Susan Barton – Polstead Mary Nice – Layham Elizabeth Webb, John Baker, Elizabeth Game, Ann Frost, Sarah Spooner, Ann Sedan, Susan Baker, Elizabeth Saunders, Sarah Kilburn, Ann Kestrick, Mrs Skeen, Mary Rouse & Elizabeth Green – Hadleigh	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah King – Boxford Sarah Clark – Groton Widow Packsman & Rachael Game – Stoke Sarah Gosling, Susan Baker & Deborah Clark – Nayland Mary Evered, Mary Dor, Sarah Wright, Elizabeth Butcher Sen, Elizabeth Butcher Jun, Elizabeth Wisby, Mary Webb & Sarah Randall – Assington Mary Aston - Wisington Robert Doughty, Sarah Gates & Elizabeth White – Monks Illeigh Robert Pegg – Waldingfield Mary Hollecks – Hitcham Nathaniel Manning – Waldingfield Martha Grimes & William Hill – East Bergholt Elizabeth Finch – Kersey John Rouse – Layham	Grimes and Hill sent to prison for one month Finch and Rouse, putters-out of wool, fined 5s for refusing to give evidence of false yarn in their possession
Ipswich Journal 27.8.1786 Framlingham District	Eliz. Boughter – Wetheringsett Barbary Potter & Mary Brewer – Hacheston Eliz. Cook – Benhall Eliz. Keedy – Troston Lydia Catchpole – Halesworth Elizabeth Sheldall, Mary Woolnough & Martha Smith – Easton Ann Taylor – Sizewell Sasan [sic] Kardey & M. Downing – Thorp Eliz. Mayes – servant to Mr Wright – Framlingham Mary Girling - Dennington	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Bury and Norwich Post 6.9.1786	Elizabeth Foreman & Mary Rolfe – Mildenhall Mary Brewster – Hawstead Elizabeth Balls & Penelope True – Stanton Mary Houching - Barningham Elizabeth Fairweather & Elizabeth Shepherd – Finningham Esther Rainer – Troston Mary Robinson – Bury Sarah Hailes - Cotton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 16.9.1786	Mary Gladwin, Hannah Hayward, Hannah Mowton, Susan Balls - Ipswich Rose Garrod, Eliz. Gentrey – Washbrook Mary Fenn, Mary Sporle – Copdock Mary Weavers, Sarah Carryer, Sarah Dale – Holbrook Easter Woollener – Grundisburgh Sarah Bruce – Barking Maria Giles - Belstead	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 7.10.1786 Lavenham District	Bridget Barker – Haughley Mary Boggis – Combs Hannah Woodgate – Lavenham Eliz. Crick & Sarah Maxwell – Cockfield Martha Allen, Ann Lee, Ann Sargeant – Melford Mary Newman & Eliz. King – Cavendish [Rose Carter – Pentlow, Essex] Eliz. Smith – Glemsford [Sarah Plumb – Ovington, Essex] Ann Barrow & Ann Fordham – Wickhambrook Mary Digby – Stradishall Silvia Baker - Cooling [?] Mary Minet – Lidgate Mary Parsley & Mary Cornwell – Hockdon Sarah Roote & Sarah Hazle – Thurlow Parva	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Mary Free – Thurlow Magna Eliz. Wright & Ann Revel – Bradley Magna Hannah Mizen – Gazeley Mary Boyden – Shimpling Ann Theobald – Boxted Ann Pamerton – Alpheton Susan Harper & Eliz. Sams – Sudbury Mary Boggis & Eliz. Whymark – Little Cornard Phillis Euston, Mary Wolledge, Lettice How & Eliz. Farrow – Lawshall S. Head - Newton	
Bury and Norwich Post 1.11.1786	Elizabeth Brewster – Horningsheath Sarah Smith – Bury Vardy Clark – Bardwell Margaret Day – Hinderclay Jane Goldsmith, Elizabeth Mackender & Ann Underwood – Lakenheath Ann Payne – Fornham All Saints	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 11.11.1786	Mary Whitaker – Hintlesham James Barnes - Iken Eliz. Sharman – Ufford Jane Wilkinson – Trimley Ann Cottingham – Woodbridge Sarah Pain – Playford Martha Kell & Eliz. Banyard – Bredfield Martha Chinery – Ipswich Abraham Kersey – Akenham – 'for his servant' Grace Scarlett – Levington Hannah Hayward – Ipswich	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Scarlett & Hayward committed to bridewell one month (for non-payment of fine)

Ipswich Journal 25.11.1786	Mary Day – Rishangles Susan Balaam & Sarah Hubbard – Aspall Mary Poatcher – Yaxley Eliz. More – Eye Rebecca Everson – Occold Eliz. Pepper – Wetheringsett – for her servant Ann Susan & Ann Legon – Great Glemham Eliz. Smith & Mary Clow – Stratford Eliz. Ling – Thorndon Sarah Wright – Walpole Eliz. Cook – Easton Mary Utting, Esther Burleigh & Mary Kerrison - Yoxford	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 2.12.1786 Lavenham District	Eliz. Farrar – Shimpling Sarah Moore, Mary Farrow & Hannah Bruce – Lawshall Jane Frost, Margaret Thompson, Sarah Gooder & Mary Nethergate – Cockfield Ann Batraham – Lavenham Mary Worrel – Kersey Mary Pearle & Eliz. Roper – Chelsworth Mary Southgate – Combs Hannah Diaper – Stowmarket Mary Atkins – Stowupland Susan Annas – Wetherden Eliz. Horley, Mary Jacobs – Groton Sarah Ward - Bildeston	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal, 30.12.1786	Elizabeth Buxton – Stonham Amy Osborn, Susannah Taylor, Catherine Beaumont & Sarah King – Ipswich Mary Ollis – Copdock Eliz. Wilson – Somersham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Dunn & Diana Charity – Orford Eliz. Moss – Westerfield Eliz. Caley – Needham Rachael Ramplin – Coddenham Hannah Cooper & Sarah Marjoram – Rendlesham Sarah Smith – Blaxhall Wm Smith – Walton Sarah Horn – Felixstowe Mary Waterman & Sarah Beneworth - Burstall	
Bury and Norwich Post 3.1.1787	Elizabeth Rodwell – Wortham Siely Goddard – Hesset Mary Steward – Rattlesden Ann Brown, Elizabeth Elsegood, Sarah Minard, Ann Sterry & Ann Dorling – Bury Elizabeth Shorter – Barrow Susan Canham & Mary Silver – Upper Rickinghall Mary Jaggard & Susan Hammond – Horningsheath Elizabeth Gapp – Icklingham Mary Fuller & Rose Fincham – Mildenhall Dorothy Cutler – Bradfield Combust Saray Haywood – Hepworth	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 13.1.1787	Mr Wm Kerry of Thorndon, for his servant Eliz. Ling Mary Barney & Eliz. Wayman - Framlingham E. Harvey & A. Nunn – Debenham Mary Page – Ashfield S. Durrant – Charsfield	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 20.1.1787	Mary Stow - Polstead Ann Shepherd, Eliz. Ost, Mary Plumb, Sarah Robinson, Hannah Clark, Sarah Jarmin - Glemsford Susan Flail, Elizabeth Mason - Stanstead	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Eliz. Smith, Ann Husk, Margaret Ashman, Eliz. Garrett, Honnor Brewster – Wickhambook Eliz. Tuffin – Hargrave Mary Hollex – Kettlebaston Sarah Barrett, Sarah Burrough – Stansfield Sarah Baker, Sarah Raynor – Hawkedon [Ann Westly – Catling, Cambs] Sarah Sparke – Thurlow Magna Rebecca Osborn, Jane Snazel, Frances Lawrence, E. Burrough, Eliz. Howard, Ann Turner, Sarah Osborne, Margaret Savage, Esther Hempsted, Mary Moor, Phoebe Ive, Ann Sarjeant – Hundon Eleanor Hicks, Ann Finch – Barnadiston Precely Candler - Hartest	 Fined 10s as a putter-out of yarn, for refusing to give evidence of 2lb of false yarn.
Ipswich Journal 3.2.1787	Eliz. Hart – Ipswich	Committed to bridewell for one month, to be whipped for false reeling, 'it being her third offence'
Bury and Norwich Post 14.2.1787	Mary Nunn – Hargrave Sarah Hubbard - Walsham Elizabeth Pole & Charlotte Wright – Elmswell Jane Hawes – Stanton Susan Markin – Reed Elizabeth Marshall – Elden Harry Hagreen - Chevington	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s A putter-out of wool, penalty of 5l for refusing the inspector entrance
Ipswich Journal 17.2.1787	Mary Podd – Bramford Martha Linstead – Martlesham Susan Blyth – Bentley Sarah Hews – Capel St Mary	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Martha Gowling – Tattingstone Elizabeth Lee – Mickfield Elizabeth Shippard – Stonham Samuel Baker – Offton	 A putter-out of wood, fined 5s for not giving evidence to 1lb of yarn in his possession
Ipswich Journal 3.3.1787	Cath Crook – Thorndon Jas Ives & John Aldous – Worlingworth, for their servants John and Hannah Calver Martha China – Rishangles Fanny Wright - Monk Soham Mary Jackson, servant to Wm. Burch, Bedingfield Mary Canham – Benhall Hannah Sewell – Marlesford Mary Barker – Ashfield cum Thorpe Elenor Copping – Helmingham Susan Wallege – Debenham Ab. Aldous – Earl Soham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 10.3.1787	Franc. Ransome – Brettenham Sarah King – Waldingfield Magna Esther Motlock – Hartest Sarah Cooper – Old Newton Ann Mayes – Stowmarket E. Hughes - Layham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 7.4.1787	Sarah Bird – Creeting Susan Chimney – Clopton Mary Keeble – Nettlestead Margaret Turner – Witnesham Jane Hammond – Henley	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Eliz. Rye – Barham Ann Brigg – Somersham Robt. Warner – Bucklesham Sarah Fiske & J. Tuskitt – Woodbridge Sarah Goodwin - Wantisden Martha Brown – Chillesford Mary Woolener – Sudbourn Mary Chatton – Tunstall Mary King – Ufford Sarah Ward, Mary Mickelfield, Philip Parker & Jemima Newman – Ipswich Maria Nunn & Christian Lambart – Holbrook	
Ipswich Journal 21.4.1787	Sarah Nunn – Debenham Ann Hill – Saxmundham S. Hill – Kelsale M. Fillby, M. Gooden, Eliz. Mann, M. Block, Mary Plumly – Aldbro' Martha Alling and Mar. Smith – Melford Han. Maxam – Glemsford Eliz. Chinery – Newton Mary Cutter – Edwardstone Eliz. Rash & Eliz. Glazen – Clare Ann Thoroughgood – Thurlow Parva R. Mills – Bradley Magna Judith Hazel – Cornard Magna Ann Bowel – Shimpling R. Wiseman – Lidgate Mary Kidby – Waldingfield Parva Ambrose Wright – governor of Assington workhouse Mary King - Lavenham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	B. Osborn – Aldbro'	Being unable to pay the fine, committed to the House of Correction for one month
Ipswich Journal 19.5.1787	Eliz. Goodwin – Kirkton Francis Parish – Falkenham Eliz. Farthing – Trimley Js. Skelton & Frances Beaumont – Bramford Mary Archer & Eliz. Smith – Needham Jane Garnham – Bredfield Ann Sherman – Copdock Ann Barton – Chattisham Eliz. Mathew – Crowfield Mary Skeete, Esther Hailer, Eliz. Keary, Jane Cleveland, M. Blazeby, Sarah Crick & Jane Hawkins – Ipswich Robert Warner – Bucklesham S. Fisk - Woodbridge	Reeling false or short yarn Fined 5s Committed to bridewell for one month
Ipswich Journal 26.5.1787	Martha Ong – Lavenham Ann Barrel – Kettlebaston Jane Pawsey – Lawshall Eliz. Bacon & S. Goslin – Nayland Eliz. Simpson – Hadleigh Mary Man – Hadleigh Hamblet Mary Worral & Mary Couzins – Kersey Eliz. Prior – Stratford Susan Jewel & Susan Danzie – Hitcham	Reeling false or short yarn Fines 5s
Bury and Norwich Post 20.6.1787	Elizabeth Wright – Mildenhall Rose Curry – Horningsheath Sarah Tailor – Fornham St Martin Martha Fuller – Watisfield	Reeling false or short yarn Fines 5s

	Susan Prick – Ixworth Sarah Billermer – Whepstead Esther Rout – Brandon Robert Torrington & Martha Wing – Lakenheath	
Ipswich Journal 23.6.1787	Eliz. Mathew – Crowfield Deborah Willson & Julian Burmund – Creeting J. Welham – Stonham Marg. Steward – Alderton Frances Thurkittel – Butley S. Mays – Melton Susannah Tayloar, Ann Horn, Mary Wright & Eliz. Haxell – Ipswich Mary Witman – Westerfield Mary Pemberton – Butley Eliz. Ely – Tuddenham Susan Brightwell – Tunstall Eliz. Simmons – Chelmondiston M. Clarke, Sarah Stanton, Susan Ellot – Blakenham Parva John Garnham, for his servant – Grundisburgh Mary Harne – late of Stonham Mary Chatton – Tunstall Philip Parker - Ipswich	Reeling false or short yarn Fines 5s Chatton committed to Woodbridge bridewell Parker committed to Ipswich bridewell
Ipswich Journal 30.6.1787 Framlingham District	Eliz. Smith, M. Pipe & M. Masterson – Badingham Sarah Aldiss – Hoxne Ann Moultan – Denham Mary Leggitt – Framlingham Alice Roberson – Mendlesham A. Buckingham – Monk-Soham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Rebec. Clark – Cransford M. Fletcher – Wickham-Market Barb. Clark - Campsey-Ash Susan Smith, jun. & Eliz. Sheldrick - Saxmundham	
Ipswich Journal 7.7.1787 Lavenham District	Mary Loft & Mary Scott – Melford Hannah Risby, Mary Orsburn, Mary Farrow – Cockfield Mary Howard – Stansted Ann Crask – Thorpe Susan Bouvett – Ratling Magna Martha Bridge – Glemsford Eliz. Cobbold – Rattlesden Ann Holder & Eliz. Webb - Polstead Rachael Deekes – Alpheton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s 'The last a taker-in for not giving evidence against false yarn'.
Bury and Norwich Post 8.8.1787	Ann Canham & Susan Barrell – Fornham All Saints Mary Marston & Susan Frind – Bacton Mary Fowker & Mary Turner – Walsham Sarah Frost & Eliz. Turner – Newmarket Ann Serjeant & Mary Butcher – Exning Eliz. Nunn – Whepstead Mary Carter – Wortham Esther Wix – Thelnetham Susan Frind – Gislingham Rose Page – Wattisfield	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 18.8.1787	Eliz. Marjoram – Middleton Amy Eade – Yoxford Eliz. Barber – Laxfield Mary Peck – Earl Soham Ann Rattlar, Eliz. Colthorpe, Mary Crane & Sarah Hammond - Kelsale	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Eliz. Porter – Hacheston A. Frost – Thornham Magna Eliz. Sheldrake – Winston Eliz. Watts - Wingfield	
Ipswich Journal 25.8.1787	Mary Pawsey – Lawshall Eliz. Stripling & Martha Bailey – Lavenham Han. Frost – Stoke Isaac Stapleton – Cornard Parva T. Chapman, John Ling – Barnadiston Sarah Abbot – Nayland Mary Fowler – Assington Hannah Simpsom – Elmset Eliz. Everet & Ruth Place – Sudbury Hannah Durrant, Rebecca Totman & Eliz. Dove – Melford Mary Purckas & Ann Purckas – Hitcham Eliz. Humphry – Boxted Sarah Cooper – Old Newton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Cooper imprisoned one month
Ipswich Journal 15.9.1787	A. Prime – Brantham Mary Pain & Mary Rix – Stutton Mary Grimwood – Battisford Mary Catchpole – Otley M. Marham – Woodbridge Eliz. Bradbrook – Kirkton S. Walker – Ipswich Lydia Dave – Witnesham M. Beaumont & Deborah Gooding – Bramford John Paddle – Coddenham Eliz. Broomly – Darmsden Eliz. Clarke, Han. Woolener – Grundisburgh	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Mary Boughton – Sutton Sarah Goodwin – Wantisden Sarah Clarke – Eyke Mary Hines - Belstead	
Ipswich Journal 13.10.1787	Susan Rosbrook – Melford Mary Bird – Hadleigh Mary Huggins – Wickham-Brook Martha Reed – East Bergholt Mary Boggis – Cornard Parva Han. Garrad & Eliz. Filer – Stowmarket Martha Dearsley – Dalham Susan Lambart – Lavenham Rachel Griggs – Hartest Mary Holle - Kettlebaston	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 27.10.1787	Sarah Dale – servant to Mr Churchman – Brundish Eliz. Soar & Eliz. Smith – Wickham Skeith Mary Cock, Mary Warrin & Mrs Seaman – Occold Mary Barker - Ashfield Eliz. Watts – Winkfield	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Watts committed to House of Correction one month for non-payment of fine
Bury and Norwich Post 14.11.1787	Alice Reeder & Rachel Stebbens – Lakenheath Mary Self – Westhorp Sarah Chickard – Freckenham Susan Wiseman – Mildenhall Mary Crow & Elizabeth Chesson – Bury Elizabeth Booty – Walsham Susan Saunders – Rickinghall Elizabeth Locke – Saxham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Elizabeth Willingham – West Stow Susan Coe – Hargrave	
Ipswich Journal 22.12.87	Mary Giles & Mary Steggel – Ipswich Sarah Jordan – Foxhall Mary Wood – Needham Eliz. Webb – Stonham Sarah Morlding – Coddenham R. Clarke – Copdock Margaret Glanfield – Woodbridge Ann Fox – Boyton Mary Collins – Melton Hannah Witman – Westerfield Sarah Farthing – Somersham A. Catt - Witnesham Phebe Turner – Witnesham – a putter-out of wool	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s 'Fined 5s for not giving evidence to a pound of short reeled yarn, found in her possession'
Ipswich Journal 8.3.1788	Eliz. Broom – Clopton R. Plumley – Melton M. Ellis – Grundisburgh M. Sperle – Bucklesham M. Podd – Barking M. Smith, M. Belman, M. Button, E. Witman, E. Naunton the younger, M. Giles, an old offender – Ipswich John Francis – Shotley Barbara Rand – Capel St Mary	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 29.3.1788	Sarah Alderich & Sarah Crowfoot – Framlingham Honor Peak – Tannington	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Framlingham District	Mary Midows – Framsden Ann Catchpool – Leatheringham Eliz. King, Sarah Johnson – Leiston Sarah Clark – Aldingham S. Vale – Knodishall Eliz. Cook, S. Knights & E. Scarlett – Glemham Parva	
Ipswich Journal 19.4.88 Lavenham District	S. Pawsay – Wickam-brook M. Webb – Brettenham M. Wright, E. Lambird & Amey Tricker – Stowmarket [E. Hullyard & D. Reeve – Carlton, Cambs] B. Gormer & E. Codd – Old Newton E. King – Lavenham Eliz. Webb – Preston M. Ballard - Layham S. Wells – Stowupland	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 7.5.1788	Sarah Johnson, Frances Black, Mary Strand & Isabella Mays - Bury Workhouse Hannah Ashton – Bradfield St George Elizabeth Auburn & Elizabeth Sparks – Hawsted Susan Warren – Horningsheath Susan Parr – Ixworth Elizabeth Pollard – Walsham Sarah Howlett – Pakenham Elizabeth Reynolds – Thelnetham Elizabeth Buck & Ellis Finbow – Wortham Susan East, Ann Edhouse & Mary Gurney – Bury Vardy Clark – Bardwell	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s each Clark, ‘an old offender, was committed to the house of correction, not having goods sufficient to pay her fine of 10s’.
Ipswich Journal	Mary Woods – Needham	Reeling false and short yarn

21.6.1788	Sarah Bruce & Rachael Edgely – Barking Hannah Cracknal – Kirton Jemima Galleon – Hintlesham Ann Woodgate – Orford Mary Casson (or Caffon), the younger – Sudbourn Susan Cracknal, an old offender – Hasketon E. Hammond – Otley Margaret Kennal, an old offender, S. Bird and Eliz. Badham – Ipswich Deborah Bird, for her servant - Bailham	Fined 5s Cracknal may be Susannah Clacklane of Hasketon – see *IJ* 14.5.1785 above
Ipswich Journal 12.7.1788	Sarah Noy – Hacheston Gra. Mills – Wilby Eliza. Beddal – Horham Mary White – Debenham Honour Pallant – Knodishall Eliz. Skinner, M. Redgrave – Westleton Susan Haward, Mary Wicks – Mendlesham Sarah Skinner – Marlesford Eliz. Barker – Laxfield Barbara Clark - Campsey Ash	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Clark committed to Woodbridge bridewell for non-payment
Ipswich Journal 26.7.1788	Eliz. Carter - Lavenham Eliz. Foster – Great Waldingfield Eliz. Steward – Buxhall Sarah Flemon – Semer Margaret Chandler, Sen. & Margaret Chandler, Jnr – Combs Frances Baker & Susan Mayes – Stowmarket Ann Byworth – Brockley Rachael Gault – Wickhambrook Sarah Golding – Stansfield Rebecca Waller – Bradfield St Clare	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	John Ponder – Lawshall Mary Ives - Stanstead S. Garrard - Haughley	
Bury & Norwich Post 6.8.1788	Susan Hammond – Hargrave Mary Horne – Drinkstone Esther Nice – Stanton Susan Matthews – Ashfield Mary Palfrey – Risby Mary Cross – Norton Sarah Fordham – Fornham All Saints Elizabeth Wales – Little Saxham Ann Erit – Hargrave Martha Ambrose – Brockley Elizabeth Cawston – Stanningfield Jane Bailham – Gt Livermere Elizabeth Haunton – Westhorpe Deborah Aston – Bradfield St George Sarah Mayhew - Bardwell Sarah Howlett – Pakenham Elizabeth Reynolds – Thelnetham Ann Edhouse & Mary Gurney – Bury Elizabeth Buck & Alice Finbow - Wortham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 4.10.1788	Martha Page – Felixstowe Susan Meeking – Somersham Susan Ramsay & Susan Chaplin – Burstall Mary Chisnal – Chattisham Sarah Mather – Arwerton Mary Beaumont – Ringshall Susan Maning – Ufford Eliz. Kiddle – Woodbridge	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Mar. Nice & Han. Hammond – Westerfield Sam. Hamblin, governor of the Bridewell - Ipswich	
Ipswich Post 18.10.1788	Mary Partridge & Sarah Willis – Kersey Ann Durrant – Buxhall Eliz. Everett, Ann Saul, Susan Bird – Lavenham Ann Whistle – Great Finborough S Street – Monks Ely M. Pung, M. Story – Shimpling M. Armstrong, M Pawsey, M Rook – Lawshall M. Soar – Haughley M. Man & Joseph Smith – Edwardstone Sarah Carnhal - Hitcham	Reeling false yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 1.11.1788	Martha Carter – Debenham S. Bradstreet – Charsfield Sarah Wade – Monewden Eliz. Peck – Earlsoham Mary Chapman - Framsden Mary Rivers – Worlingworth Mary Balderstone - Tannington	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 19.11.1788	Ann Wayman – Gislingham Rachel Petchey – Mildenhall Sarah Brown & Mary Stebbings – Worlington Ann Cocksedge – Hesset Jane Spalding – Flempton Ann Hunt – Bradfield St George Elizabeth Drake – Elmswell Elizabeth Roper – Thrandeston Abigail Lawrence & Mary Otley - Moulton Ann Saunders – Redgrave Elizabeth Winde[l?] – Rickinghall	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Howlet – Fakenham Mary Nunn – Cotton Ann Rednall - Finningham Ann Stevens – Bardwell & Hannay Hitching – Cotton	 Stevens & Hitching, putters-out of wool, each fined 5s for not ticketing their yarns
Ipswich Journal 20.12.1788	Sarah Stannard – Clopton Sarah Bull – Battisford Jane Barrill – Woodbridge Eliz. York – Iken Martha Alderton – Shotley Jemima Abbot – Trimley Cath Ham – Ipswich Ann Cooke - place unknown Mary Gooch - Henley	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Cooke, committed to Ipswich bridewell for one month. Gooch, putter-out of wool, fined 5s 'for not given evidence to 1lb short reeled yarn in her possession'
Bury and Norwich Post 8.4.1789	Mary Spalding – Moulton Samuel Edhouse & Sarah Twight – Bury Esther Roult – Brandon Sarah Lister – Elden Frances Bennet – Lakenheath Sarah Smith – Honington Elizabeth Tyrwitt – Ixworth Sarah Rolfe – Hawsted Elizabeth Sturgeon & Mary Sharpe – Fornham All Saints Elizabeth Sparrow – Horningsheath Mary Butcher - Exning	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Ipswich Journal 9.5.1789	Eliz. Badham & Cath Girling – Ipswich Eliz. Smith & Priscilla Leech – Eyke Marg. Clowton – Iken Hannah Hoby – Sutton Mary Roseyear – Chelmondiston Margaret Loves – Felixstowe Rachael Whiting – Westerfield Jane Lanham – Shottisham Sarah Mirrel – Alderton Eliz. Pulham – Capel St Andrew Charlotte Gross – Broomswell Mary Bumstead & Sarah Eastwick – Somersham Ann King – Burstall Jane Taylor – Hentlesham Eliz. Gillingham – Levington ? Sharman – Freston Lydia Knights - Woodbridge	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Knights committed to Bridewell
Ipswich Journal 16.5.1789	Elizabeth Spencer - Battesford	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Bury & Norwich Post 8.7.1789	Elizabeth Shadelow – Barton Mills Elizabeth Westhorp & Ann Smear – Elmswell Elizabeth Sturgeon – Hesset Hannah Ottley – Tostock Hannah Ruddick – Norton Frances Hubbard – Stanton Frances Cooper – Wyverstone Matthew Kemp & Mary Copping – Wortham Ann Dade – Burgate Mary Maidewell – Lackford Mary Robinson – Bury Mary Trigger – Barrow Margaret Pain – Whepstead Ann Argent – Rougham William Argent – Bury ?	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Argent – to House of Correction

Ipswich Journal 25.7.1789	Mary Fulcher – Wickham Skeith Andra Bales – Horham Eliz. Jay – Bredfield E. Ward – Thorpe Jane Coates, servant to John Hill – Easton Alice Starn – Stradbrook Martha Cattermole – Farnham M. Packard – Glemham Parva Eliz. Syer – Haselwood Eliz. Fellingham & Eliz. Hubbard – Mendlesham M. Lambird & Sarah Last – Wetheringsett M. Howard & Eliz. How – Aldeburgh	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 19.8.1789	Elizabeth Death – Hawstead Elizabeth Tabraham – Mildenhall Hannah Talbott & Elizabeth Smith – Rickinghall Ann Avey & Elizabeth Sutton – Stanton Margaret Flackman – Wortham Elizabeth Moss – Freckenham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Moss sent to the House of Correction

Ipswich Journal 24.10.1789	Sarah Cutmore – Poslingford Eliz. Sucker – Layham Mary Howchin – Bildeston Ann Willis – Shelly Ann Theobald & Susan Roberts – Hadleigh Ann Alborn – Brockley John Wheeler – Stansfield Lucy Wake – Gazely Ann Flower & Jane Wyboro – Dalham Ann Pitches – Cowlinge Alice King – Lavenham Ann Harne – Sudbury Susan Green – Melford Rose Ive – Glemsford Judith Brown – Old Newton Sarah Miller – Gipping Elizabeth Wallage – Lowestoft Mary Playle – Somerton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Bury & Norwich Post 18.11.1789	Elizabeth Purkiss – Bury Sarah Norton – Horningsheath Elizabeth Richer – Drinkstone Eliz. Broome – Rattlesdon Mary Dowsing – Tuddenham Eliz. Fellingham & Martha Shepherd – Botesdale Ann Baker – Barningham Mary Butcher – Hawstead Ann Self – Mellis Martha Wood – Higham Mary Catterson – Norton Sarah Shekell – Pakenham Ann Holt – Elmswell Adam Rose - place unknown	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Rose committed to the House of Correction
Ipswich Journal 19.12.1789	Mary List – Barking Rachael Whiting, Sen – Westerfield Susan Jasper – Earl Soham Mary Walton & Sarah Wright – Ufford Ann Lawrence – Woodbridge Mary Minns – Offton Ann Windsor – Capel St Mary Sarah Faiers – Bricet Hannah Rainbird – Badley Mary Armstrong, Mary Hall, Mary Parker – Needham Rachael Ling, Martha Arbrose – Alderton Audrey Cooper – Tuddenham Susan Barker – Hasketon Sarah Sorrel – Walton	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Fox – Clopton Sarah Simpson – Sproughton Esther Parish – Whitton Eliz. Broomley, Marg. Leary – Ipswich	
Ipswich Journal 19.6.1790	Rachel Whiting jun - Westerfield Ann Holmes – Stonam Aspal John Hagger – Coddenham Sarah Dorling – Washbrook Jane Wilkerson & George Ashkittle – Trimley Mary Davis – Bentley Cath. Kitchin & Sarah Pikeland – Ipswich Joyce Fell – Rushmere Sarah Scops – Needham Sarah Sharman – Sproughton Eliz. Rush jun – place unknown	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 13.11.1790 Lavenham District	Sarah Britton – Alpheton Abigail Maxam & Mary Oakley – Shimpling Mary Loft, Rebecca Stead, Susan Rampling, Eliz. Jarvis, Marg. Weales – Melford Eliz. Gunn, Ann Good, Mary Crake, Han. Gunn – Lavenham Sarah Sharman, Abigail Eighteen, Mary Howlet, Francis Clark & Martha Hayward - Hadleigh Mary Garnham, Eliz. Thompson, Eliz. How, Han. Maxam, Sarah Goodey – Glemsford Penelope Paine – Ousden Lucy Malwood & Martha Hurrell – Lawshall Alice Bragg & Elizabeth Barrell – Brantham Sarah Pett – Kettlebaston	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Jarvis & Weales sent to prison for non-payment

	Rose Gowers – Kedington Mary Clark & Christ. Rampling – Chelsworth Mary Cusins – Kersey Mary Pitchers – Cowling Ann Cranfield – Thurlow par. Alice Newman & Marg. Sneazwell – Thurlow mag. Susan Williams & Susan Mayes – Stowmarket Sarah Upson – Acton Eliz. Smith - Hundon	
Ipswich Journal 29.1.1791	John Turner – Hemingstone Susan Holden – Crowfield Lydia Borlg – Flowton Mary Burch – Kirkton Christian Hill – Trimley Mar. Lambert – Hasketon Mary Rush – Bealings Parva Mary Oxer – Stonham Aspal Deborah Boone, Hannah Knights & Nice Ward – Tunstall Marg. Persons – Butley Rose Wallice, Sarah Last, Rob Garnham & Mary Fenn – Gosbeck	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Bury & Norwich Post 4.5.1791	Mary Folks & Elizabeth Price – Mildenhall Sarah Jolly – Wortham Sarah Davies – Burgate Mary Skopel – Botesdale Susan Levell – Rickinghall Sarah Smith, Elizabeth Yardley, Martha Wright, Mary Hogg, Lucy Stocking & Mary Elsegood – Bury Sarah Pawsey – Hargrave	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Sarah Betts – Mellis Sarah Palmer - Walsham Mary Fincham – Icklington (probably Icklingham) Elizabeth Balls – Stanton Barbara Butcher -Fakenham Sarah Dixon – Wangford Susan Warren – Horringer Eliz. Lyes - Barrow	Balls sent to House of Correction 'being an old offender'
Ipswich Journal 14.5.1791	Ann Walker, Rebecca Bart & Isaac Hickford – Clare Elizabeth Gridley, Eliz. Farna Stoake, Mary Jones, Sarah Francis & H. Fairs – Preston Mary Horles – Cockfield Sarah Read, Eliz. Wilkinson, Abigail Warren & S Spooner – Hadleigh Mary Armstrong – Lawshall Ann Smith - Glemsford Ann Wales & Eliz. Bullock – Somerton Mary Tatt – Whithersfield Sus. Harper, Tryphany Orsborn & Tryphany Parish – Sudbury Eliz. Warren – Cornard Mary Crake & Han. Gunn – Lavenham Sus. Smith – East Bergholt Ann Stebbing – Mendlesham Mary Jeffer – Finbro' Magna Mary Minett - Lidgate	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Ann Smith to prison for non-payment
Ipswich Journal 25.6.1791	Ann Crisp, Eliz. Jay - Bedfield Eliz. Mills, Mary Allis – Stradbrook Mary Pateridge – Middleton Eliz. Churchyard – Darsham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Deb. Folkard, Mary Branch & Eliz. Crutton – Aldborough Susan Mole, Mary Baldwin – Southold Reb. Clark & Susan Ashkittle – Cransford Lydia Niccolds - Bredfield Sarah Bird, Sarah Hill, Mary Farrow, Han. Sewell – Hacheston Eliz. Wattling – Horham Mary Chittock – Wilby Mary Emmerson – Framsden Eliz. Sutton & Bridget Brown – Glemham Magna Sarah Buckle – Dallinghoe Ann Todd, Mary Cusins – Parham Mary Coats - Cretingham	Folkard & Branch sent to prison for non-payment Chittock 'very false' – fined 10s Coats – fined 10s
Bury & Norwich Post 24.8.1791	Ann Crack – Woolpit Elizabeth Adkin – Barrow Susan Bugg – Hawsted Elizabeth Challice – Lakenheath Constance May - Mildenhall Ann Hagreen & Elizabeth Sarjeant – Hargreave Elizabeth Butcher – Horningsheath Sarah Newman – Exning Martha Middleton – Stanton John Baker – Bacton Elizabeth Howlett – Tuddenham Rachel Pryke, James Andrews, Sarah Smith, Ann Huggins, Elizabeth Smith & C. Talbot – Bury	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s
Ipswich Journal 12.11.1791	Ann Humphrey, Sarah Rush, Mary Taylor, Ann Heffer – Ipswich S. King – Tunstall Eliz. Cooper – Little Bealings	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Judith Pratt, Martha Cole – Tattingstone Mary Cooper, Edw. Blanden, Alice Rattels – Capel St Mary Eliz. Cooper – Capel St Andrew Jane Day – Bucklesham Mary Reynolds, Lydia Avis, Mary Wayman – Stonham Aspal Hannah Culfe – Chattisham Ellis Wilden – Darmsden Sar. Brown – Bailham M. Hawes – Creeting Bridget Dammant – Waldringfield Mary Tragit – Walton Dinah Holden – Gosbeck Mary Ager – Nettlestead Dinah Dives – Stutton Mary Pain – Felixstow Mary Fulcher, Martha Woods – Clopton Eliz. Button – Trimley St Mary Mary Brumley – Playford Susan Fellows – Bently Mary Baskit, Mary Game - Needham	
Bury & Norwich Post 25.4.1792	Susan Sargeant – Bacton Sarah Burrows – Cotton Mary Mingay – Hawstead Susan Harrington – Flempton Mary Rogers – Icklingham Mary Nunn – Hessett Charlotte Gooch – Bayton Sarah Lott, Mary Turner, Mary Webb & Mary Folkes – Mildenhall Martha Hutson – Lakenheath	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

	Hannah Bull – Bury Sarah Pursley - Westhorp Ann Wright - Newmarket	 Pursley – sent to the House of Correction Wright – putter-out of wool, for not ticketing her yarn
Ipswich Journal 25.8.1792	Sarah King, Eliz. Busheby, Susan Pain & Eliz. Simpson – Ipswich Mary Kittle – Wherstead Frances Sherman – Kirton Ann Thompson – Felixstowe Mary Forsdick – Grundisburgh Mary Sheldrick, Frances Fox – Woodbridge Martha Bond & John Hood – Bricet Ann Napitt – Kesgrave Lydia Gilingham – Nacton Rich. Granger – Flowton Jemima Clarke – Eyke Susan Cooke – Belstead E. Munnings – Caple St Mary Ann Jesup - Hintlesham Hannah Osborn – Blakenham Parva Eliz. Cuthbert – Swilland Mary Benyard – Witnesham Eliz. Tumner – Gedgrave Martha Woods – Iken Sarah Pinner – Burgh S. Bickmore – Copdock S. Durrant & M. Howard – Chelmondiston H. Jackson – Pettistree	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s

Ipswich Journal Lavenham District 10.11.1792	Sarah Blize & Sarah Cooper – Melford Hannah Jeffery – Felsham Martha Bird, Eliz. Tatem & Mary Wallidge – Thorpe [Morieux] Mary Buckle – Hitcham Eliz. Howchin – Bildeston Mary Johnson, Sophia Pawsey & Mary Wallidge – Lawshall Eliz. Steggall – Stowupland Martha Bridge & Phoebe Thompson – Glemsford Mary Elliott, Ann Martin & Eliz. Mott – Clare Susan Brittan – Alpheton Hannah Brackwell – Cavendish Mary Hasell & Mary Roberts – Sudbury Lydia Arston – Kettlebaston Eliz. Smith & Eliz. Gordon – Brent Illeigh Ann Fitch – Thurlow Mag. H. Moss – Stanstead D. Ling – Chevington J. Lofts & E Shop – Dalham E. Livett - Denham	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Steggall sent to prison for non-payment
Bury & Norwich Post 14.11.1792	Ann Abbott, Elizabeth Palmer, Mary Hagreen & Mary Evered – Hargrave Elizabeth Lyes – Barrow Hannah Musket & Elizabeth Jackson – Lawshall Mary Carter – Raydon Ann Leney & Rebecca Shepherd – Finningham Martha Harnton, Susan Harnton (her daughter) & Susan Ribbons – Westhorp Mary Page – Stanningfield Sarah Willingham – Horningsheath Susan Clark & Mary Ann Cooke – Mildenhall	Reeling false and short yarn Fined 5s Willingham - a putter out of yarn, for not ticketing her yarn Cooke – Fined 15s, for not ticketing her yarn

	Elizabeth Mann, Susan Talbot & Mary Wiffen – Bury Deborah Long – Hinderclay Sarah Sadler – Bayton Mary Tyler – Tuddenham Mary Blomfield – Weston Market Lydia Brett – Stowlangtoft Mary Sneezewell – Whepstead	Brett & Sneezewell both putters-out of wool

APPENDIX 4: Suffolk spinners and putters-out convicted of false and short reeling by Norfolk inspectors, 1785-1792[1]

Date conviction reported in newspaper	Names of defendants and home villages or towns	Crime, fine or punishment Fines were not stated in the *Norfolk Chronicle*
Norfolk Chronicle 4 February 1786	? Steward & Sarah Maleham - Gorleston	Reeling false and short yarn
Norfolk Chronicle 9 September 1786	Kysia Root – Bungay Lidia Ward, Ann Crawfoot, Esther Foulsham & Sarah Johnson – Beccles Elizabeth Salhouse – Lowestoft Barbara Prior – Hopton [probably in Norfolk – not included in totals]	Reeling false and short yarn
Norfolk Chronicle 23 September 1786	Sarah Cornish & Abigail Goldspink – Bungay	Reeling false and short yarn Confined to the bridewell
Norfolk Chronicle 26 May 1787	Mary Press, Elizabeth Baxter, Ann Clay & Elizabeth Davey – Beccles Jane Ingate – Henstead Mary Browne – Weston Margaret Allen & Ann Franklin – Wrentham Mary Blandell – Hulver-street Elizabeth Worlidge & Sarah Moore – Beccles	Reeling false and short yarn Blandell, Worlidge & Moore to bridewell for non-payment of fines
Norfolk Chronicle 11 August 1787	Sarah Nollarth, Susannah Clarke & Elizabeth Jolly – Eye	Committed for embezzling wool
Norfolk Chronicle 14 January 1792	Jemima Bales – Framlingham [probably in Norfolk – not included in totals]	'Refusing the inspectors to see the yarn and reel'

[1] British Newspaper Archive, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/ [accessed 10.7.2025], *Norfolk Chronicle*, 1785-1795. Spellings as transcribed in the newspaper.

APPENDIX 5: Female convicts transported from Suffolk to NSW, 1787-1810: selected documentary evidence

State Library of NSW: Convict Guides, https://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/convicts-bound-for-australia/first_fleet#:~:text=The%20First%20Fleet%20sailed%20from,there%20on%2026%20January%201788 [accessed 16.3.2024]
State Library of NSW: First Fleet convicts: http://firstfleet.uow.edu.au/details.aspx?surname=Harvey&gender=F&term=&ship=&age=&notes=&-recid=32965 [accessed 16.4.2024]
State Records Authority of New South Wales: Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799 (1150-51)

HO 10, 1-4, 1787-1859, *Settlers and Convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania, General Muster*
HO 11, 1-3, 1787-1870, *Convict Transportation Registers*
HO 13, 1782-1871, *Criminal Entry Books, out-letters, warrants and pardons (Correspondence and Warrants)*
HO 47, 1784-1830, *Judges' Reports on Criminals*
HO 77, 1780-1853, *Newgate Prison Calendar & Commitment book & 'Prisoners upon Orders' for removal*

* The *Death Fleet* (see Susannah Hunt below) included approximately 1,250 male convicts of whom more than 25% died *en route*. Many others died within 12 months and approximately 80 died within three weeks of arrival. The *Lady Juliana* was the first all-female convict ship.

Convict & approximate age	Date & place of hearing	Crime & length of sentence	Date left Suffolk	Convict ship	Date ship left England	Selected documentary evidence	Date of arrival in NSW
Harvey, Elizabeth 30 Single	21.3.1784 Bury Assizes	Burglary from Wm. Firman of Bungay; 14 years' transportation to America	4?11.1786	*Dunkirk* hulk in Plymouth-Dock; sailed on *Friendship*, 1st Fleet. Total of 11 ships. 750-780 convicts & approx. 550 crew, soldiers & family	13.5.1787	State Records Authority of New South Wales: Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799 (1150-51) (Indents list Bury incorrectly as Lancs, not Suffolk); HO 47; HO 13; *Derby Mercury* 8.4.1784; *Ipswich Journal* 4.11.1786	26.1.1788

Baker, Ann 17 Single	10.10.1785 Suffolk QS, Bury St Edmunds	(3 previous appearances for running away from Cosford workhouse; first also for 'embezzil[ment'); 'Incorrigible rogue': 7 years' transportation		*Neptune*, *2nd *'Death Fleet'* with *Guardian* (hit iceberg & sank), *Scarborough* and *Surprize)*.	12.1789	SRA NSW: Convict Indents, 1788-1842; Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799 (1150-51);State Library of NSW, Dictionary of Sidney; HO 11/1; *Ipswich Journal* 15.10.1785; *Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford Mercury* 18.1.1789; *Cumberland Pacquet* 20.1.1790	28.6.1790
Edwards, Elizabeth, wife of Samual	26.1.1786 Borough of Bury St Edmunds Sessions Rolls	Theft of cloak from Hannah, wife of John Martin; Theft of clothing from Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Jellit; both with 'force and arms'; 7 years' transportation		*Neptune*, *2nd *'Death Fleet'*, as previous entry	12.1789	Convict Indents, 1788-1842; Indents from Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799 (1150-51); SA Bury Borough QS Rolls, D8/1/1786; HO 13; *Bury & Norwich Post* 1.2.1786; *The Kentish Gazette* 15.12.1789; *Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford Mercury* 18.1.1789; *Cumberland Pacquet* 20.1.1790.	28.6.1790
Hunt, Susannah (Susan), wife of John 35+	17.3.1789 Borough of Ipswich QS	Grand larceny - stole 8 yards of muslin, value 30s, from Wm. Notcutt; 7 years' transportation	2.4.1789	*Lady Juliana* (first women-only vessel), in *2nd *'Death Fleet'*, as above; *Juliana* departed ahead of other fleet ships.	29.7.1789	HO 10/4, Women of Hobart Town (noted as Susan Hunt, on the Julian); SA C/2/9/1/1/11/5; SA C/2/9/1/2/6/2/24; *Bury & Norwich Post* 25.2.1789;	

						Ipswich Journal, 25.2.1789; *Bury & Norwich Post* 12.11.1791; *Ipswich Journal*, 26.11.1791	
Catchpole, Margaret 35 when arrested Single	27.5.1797, Worship-street police office, Shoreditch; to Newgate; 19.8.1797	Stealing John Cobbold's horse; held in Newgate, then removed to Ipswich New Gaol; 7 years' transportation	Remained in Ipswich Gaol until 4.1800 – see below		See entry below	HO 26/5 1797, Middlesex Commitments to Newgate; HO 77; National Library of Australia, MS 4211/4-8, Papers of Margaret Catchpole, 1797-1917, (inc. MC's statement, brief for prosecution & witnesses); ASSI 94/1441 L&S, 1797; SA, Papers of the late Stanley Frederick Lindley, HD1295/3/1, Margaret Catchpole File, Ipswich Gaol, Assize Calendar 1798 L; *Ipswich Journal* 3.6.1797; *Ipswich Journal* 8.7.1797; *The Times* 21.8.1797.	
Barker, Sarah 25 when arrested Single	21.3.1798 Bury Assizes	(Previous history) House breaking and theft of 'cloth' goods, value £1 3s; 7 years' transportation	27.5.1801	*Nile* (convoy with *Minorca* & *Canada*)	6.1801	Indents From Early Fleet Ships, 1786-1799 (1150-51); HO 11/1; ASSI 94/1464; *Ipswich Journal* 31.3.1798; *Bury & Norwich Post* 11.8.1885; *Ipswich Journal* 30.5.1801	14.12.1801

Catchpole, Margaret 38 when transported Single	31.7.1800 Bury Assizes	Being at large from Ipswich Gaol; Transportation for life	27.5.1801	*Nile* (convoy with *Minorca* & *Canada*)	6.1801	Indents From Early Fleet Ships 1786-1799 (1150-51); ASSI 94/1513, S, 1800; HO 11/1; *Ipswich Journal* 29.3.1800; *Ipswich Journal* 5.4.1800; *The Times* 8.4.1800; *Ipswich Journal* 30.5.1801; *Bury & Norwich Post* 3.6.1801; *Suffolk Chronicle* 16.5.1812	14.12.1801
Killett, Elizabeth 18 when tried Single	31.7.1800 Bury Assizes	Theft from house, Bank notes, value £164; 7 years' transportation	27.5.1801	*Nile* (convoy with *Minorca* & *Canada*)	6.1801	Indents From Early Fleet Ships 1786-1799 (1150-51); ASSI 94/1513; S, 1800 HO 11/1; *Cambridge Chronicle & Journal* 9.8.1800; *Ipswich Journal* 30.5.1801	14.12.1801
Williams, Hannah 19 when tried Single	30.3.1803 Bury Assizes	Burglary (with Richard Brown - executed), divers 'cloth' goods, £100+; Transportation for life	6.11.1803	*Experiment*, with *Coromandel*	11.1803	SA Lackford Petty Sessions, 966/7/1, Assize Calendars; *Bury & Norwich Post* 30.3.1803, 6.4.1803, 13.4.1803, 20.04.1803, 9.11.1803; *Ipswich Journal* 2.4.1803	24.6.1804
Buckle (Olley), Mary Aged 33 when tried	18.3.1807 Bury Assizes	(Previous history) Fraudulently obtaining money, 3 x 5s;		*Speke*	3.1808	Convict Indents, 1788-1842; Musters & other papers on convict ships, 1790-1849; Assize Calendar, 966/7/1, 18.3.1807;	16.11.1808

		7 years' transportation				HO 11/1	
Killick, Martha, widow of late Wm. Killick Aged 40 when tried	18.3.1807 Bury Assizes	Stealing household items from employer; 7 years' transportation	5.1808	*Aeolus*	7.1808	*Bury & Norwich Post* 25.5.1808; *Norfolk Chronicle* 28.8.1808	26.1.1809
Barber, Mary, wife of Edward Aged 40 when tried	3.4.1807 Borough of Ipswich QS	Stealing a silk handkerchief; 7 years' transportation		*Speke*	3.1808	Convict Indents, 1788-1842; Musters & other papers relating to convict ships, 1790-1849; HO 11/1; SA C/2/9/1/2/5/1	16.11.1808
Briggs, Ann Aged 32?	13.4.1807 Suffolk QS, Bury St Edmunds	Obtaining silver spoons & tongs under false pretences from Alice Macro of Worlington; 7 years' transportation	13.4.1807	*Speke*	3.1808	Convict Indents, 1788-1842; Musters & other papers relating to convict ships, 1790-1849; Australian Convict Ships, 1786-1849 HO 11/1; *Bury & Norwich Post* 22.4.1807	16.11.1808
Kell, Ann Not known	1806? Suffolk QS, Bury St Edmunds?	No further details	No further details	*Indispensible*	2.3.1809	HO 11/2 No further details	18.8.1809
Tyler, Harriet Not known	Bury Assizes 23.3.1809	Stealing pelisses and wearing apparel from	20.10.1810	*Canada*	3.1810	Convict Indents, 1788-1842; Australian Convict Ships, 1786-1849	8.9.1810

		Moses Samuel of Ipswich; 7 years' transportation				HO 11/2; *Bury & Norwich Post* 24.3.1809; *Norfolk Chronicle* 8.4.1809; *Ipswich Journal* 24.2.1810; *Suffolk Chronicle* 18.10.1810; *Suffolk Chronicle* 16.5.1812	
Drake, Mary Anne Aged approx. 26 when tried	Suffolk QS, Woodbridge 12.7.1809	Stealing sundry items from Mrs Short of Boulge-hall - 7 years' transportation	20.10.1810	*Canada*	3.1810	Convict Indents, 1788-1842; HO 11/2; *Bury & Norwich Post* 19.7.1809 *Ipswich Journal* 24.2.1810; *Suffolk Chronicle* 16.5.1812	8.9.1810
Wyatt, Susan Aged approx. 36 when tried	Bury Assizes 16.10.1810	3 x £1 Bank of England notes from the house of John Garrod of Leiston; 7 years' transportation	19.2.1811	*Friends*	4.1811	*Ipswich Journal* 18.8.1810; *Bury & Norwich Post* 22.8.1810; *Ipswich Journal* 23.2.1811. *Suffolk Chronicle* 23.2.1811 *Suffolk Chronicle* 16.5.1812	10.10.1811

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