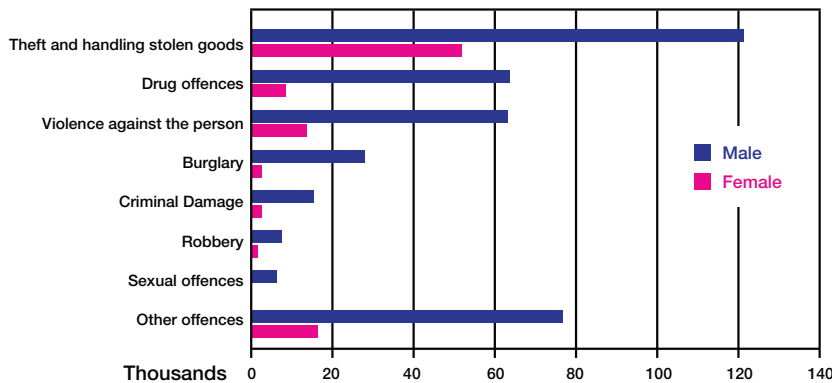


Crime figures

In this unit we look at some of the difficulties involved in working out how much crime takes place in our society.

The statistics



Trends in recorded crime
(Source: Crime in England and Wales 2006/07, Home Office)

Offenders as a percentage of the population: by age, 2004, England and Wales (Source: Home Office)

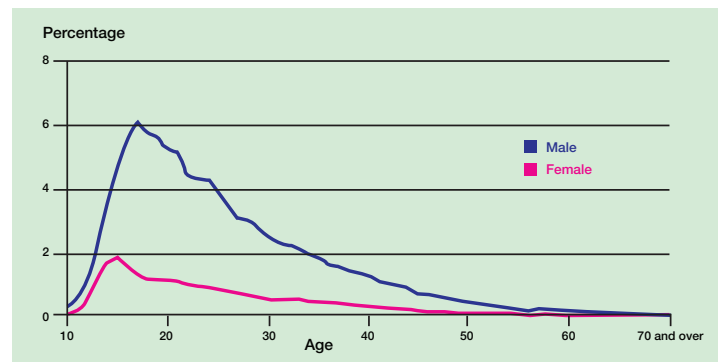
People found guilty or cautioned for indictable offences in 2004

Questions

- 1 Look at the graphs of crime statistics. For each one, write down at least two things that you can see from the figures.
- 2 Do these raise any questions in your mind about patterns of crime in Britain? If so, what are they?

Reporting restrictions

Most of the information that the police have about crime comes from the general public. Without this help, the police could do very little. The police discover relatively little crime entirely by themselves. Out of every five crimes known to the police, four are reported by members of the public.



Sometimes, crime figures are affected by things that have nothing to do with crime itself. During the 1980s many more people had phones installed in their homes, which made crimes easier to report. More people also started to insure their property against loss or theft, which meant that if they wanted to claim for something that was stolen, they had to tell the police.

Crime figures can also be influenced by changes in technology. During the 1990s the police fitted automatic cameras on many more stretches of road. In 1993, the

roadside cameras detected just over 30,000 motoring offences. By 1997, this figure had increased to almost 340,000, and in 2006 it was reported to be more than two million.

But what about the crimes that are not known to the police? How much crime goes unreported?



• **Silent witness:** 'I saw the man just take the book off the shelf, tuck it inside his coat and then leave. I don't suppose the shop will even realise, and the police would never find him.'

• **Home truths:** 'I know he shouldn't hit me, but I couldn't call the police.'



• **Tax free:** 'I do a bit of work on the side. Last year I cleared almost £8,000 in this way. I get the money and the customer gets a good job for half the price. We don't want the taxman involved as well.'

3 Draw up a list of the sort of crimes that you think might not be known to the police.



4 In what kinds of situations might it be difficult for a member of the public to report a crime to the police?



Telling the tale

There are other ways in which crime can be measured, which, experts say, produce a more accurate picture of crime.



One is to ask people to speak privately about the crimes that they themselves have committed. Another is to ask people about crime that has affected them, as victims. A third method is to look at the records of casualty departments in hospitals. Quite often a person goes to hospital for treatment as a result of a crime, without reporting the incident to the police.

5 Can you see any problems with these alternative ways of recording crime?



6 Do you think that people should be required by law to report a crime?



7 It has been suggested that hospitals could inform the police if they suspect that a patient has been injured as a result of a crime. What would be the effects of this? Do you think that it would be a good or bad thing?



Rich and poor

In this unit we look at ways of trying to reduce the differences between rich and poor countries and ask who has responsibility to do something about this.

Making a difference

School days

Mark Orchard, a builder from Somerset, and his family went on holiday to Kenya. They stayed at the Turtle Bay Beach Club, a large, modern, air-conditioned hotel, with a swimming pool and the most up-to-date facilities.

During his stay, Mark became friendly with Geoffrey Chege, one of the hotel workers. One day, Geoffrey took Mark to visit the school in Dabaso, the village where he lived. There were 90 children in each class, and no proper school building. In Kenya, it is the responsibility of parents and teachers to build new classrooms for their school, but the people of Dabaso were too poor to raise the money required.

Back in England, Mark told his workmates about what he had seen. 'If *we* could get the money and materials,' he said, 'we could construct a new school building for them.'

Mark raised the money through friends and the people he worked with, and later that year went back to Dabaso with four of his mates. Rising at 5a.m. each day, they worked into the night. There was no electricity or running water in the village and the heat was a major problem, but in three weeks they had finished the building.



The villagers repaid the five men by making them tribal elders. It was the highest honour they could give.

Continued fund-raising has helped to provide Dabaso with a library and medical centre. The village is also now twinned with Hutton in Somerset.

Questions

- 1 What do you think was most remarkable about what was done by Mark and his friends?
- 2 Many people from rich countries spend their holidays in parts of the world, like Kenya, where there is a great deal of poverty. What is your opinion of this? Should these holidays be encouraged or discouraged?

Target 2015

In the mid-1990s, many governments throughout the world, including Britain, agreed to try to cut world poverty by a half by the year 2015.

This is a huge task and everyone knows how difficult it will be.

One of the questions that countries have to decide is how they will achieve this. Here are some of the things that could be done.

- **Money**

Raise the amount of money given by richer countries to help with famines and other emergencies.



- **Help with basics**

Help poorer countries to improve their water supply, install electricity and build better roads.

- **Training**

Give free advice and training to introduce new industries and more modern methods of production.

- **Schools and hospitals**

Provide help for the long-term future by giving money for education and health.



- **Trade**

Make it easier for poorer countries to sell their goods in Britain and other wealthy countries.

- **Environment**

Help with the replanting of trees in those areas where forests have been cut down to create farmland and for the sale of timber. This will reverse damage to the land, help stop the extinction of certain species and reduce some of the effects of climate change.

- **Equality for women**

Give women the same rights as men in education, work and politics. This will improve people's health and standard of living, and will make it more likely that people will have smaller families.

3 Look through each of these points. Are there any that you do not agree with and would reject? If there are, try to explain why.

4 Which three suggestions would you put into practice first? Explain why.

5 Is there anything that individuals (rather than governments) should do to reduce the amount of poverty in the world? If so, what do you feel it is?

6 Should we ever attach conditions to money that we give to poorer countries? (For example, that they spend less on their army, that they don't damage the environment, or that undemocratic countries improve the way their country is run?)



Wasting away

Throwaway society

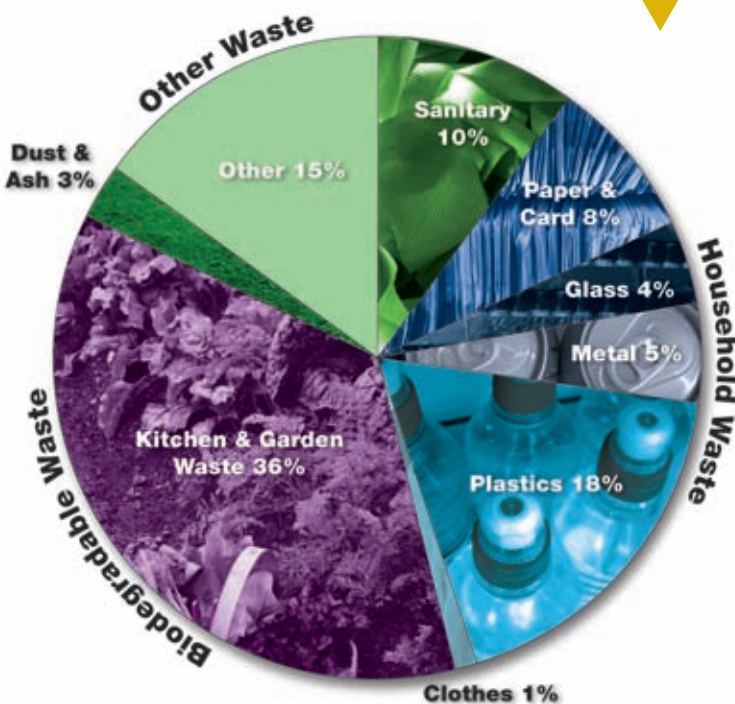
Save!

This book was written on a two-year-old computer. By today's standards it is already out of date, with faster models being developed all the time. Together the computer and screen contain about seven kilos of glass and 35 different metals and elements, some of which are hazardous.

Computers are being so quickly replaced that about 50 million tonnes of old PCs are thrown away each year.

In the bin

Figures from
Open University, 2006



How do we compare?

Recycling rates in Britain have improved greatly in recent years, but we still recycle less of our rubbish than many other European countries.

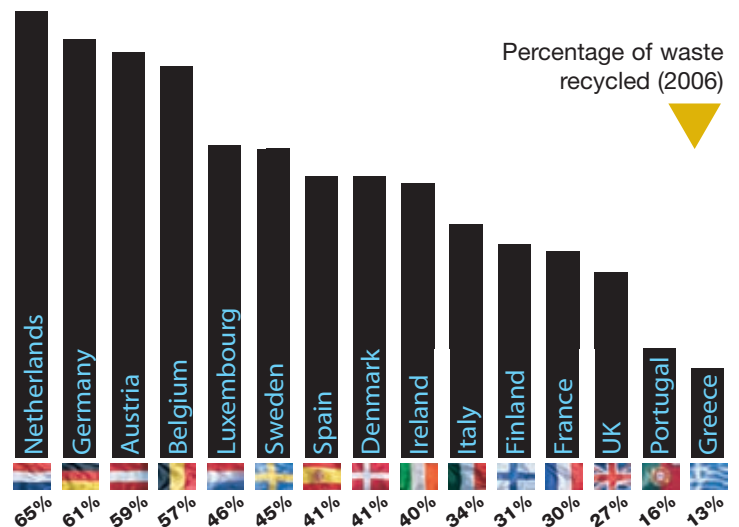


Look at the figures in the pie chart showing the type of waste that we place in our bins at home. Which items would it be possible to a) re-use and b) recycle? Could we cut down on any of this waste?

Difficulties

Until the 1970s in Britain, most of the bottles in which drinks were sold were made of glass and were returnable. However, in 1971, the drinks company Schweppes decided that it would no longer accept returned bottles.

Friends of the Earth, the environmental pressure group, launched a big campaign against this, dumping large numbers of the new non-returnable bottles on the doorstep of Schweppes' headquarters in London.



Over the last 35 years, the situation has become worse, rather than better. Today, almost all the packaging in which we buy things (except glass milk bottles) is non-returnable. Most of it, as we have seen, is thrown away.

Action!

The Government has said that Britain's rate of recycling must improve. It has a target of recycling 50 per cent of household waste by 2020.

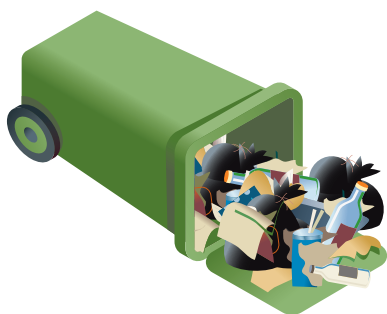


But how can we increase our rate of recycling? Here are some ideas that have been suggested and tried.

- Charge householders for the amount of non-recyclable rubbish they put out for collection. The more they leave, the more they pay. *This system has been introduced in Ireland.*



- Fine householders who do not sort out all their recyclable rubbish.



- Have stricter laws preventing companies from selling products with excessive packaging.



- Either ban the sale of plastic bags or require shops to charge 20p for each one a customer uses. *A tax on plastic carriers was introduced in Ireland in 2002. Plastic bags are banned in a number of African and Asian countries, e.g. Bangladesh.*



- Place a charge of 15–20p on all drinks sold in cans, plastic or glass bottles, which can be reclaimed when the container is returned. *This kind of system has been run for some time in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.*



Questions

- 1 Look at each idea for improving recycling and draw up a list of advantages and disadvantages for each one.
- 2 Do you have any other ideas yourself? Again, write down what you think would be the advantages and disadvantages.
- 3 Now put yourself in the position of the Government. Which three, out of all the ideas you have considered, would be most effective?

KeyWords

Biodegradable

Can decompose naturally into a harmless substance.

Recycle

Breaking something down to its raw materials and using this to make the same or a new product. Books and magazines are often made from recycled paper.

Re-use

Using something again for the same purpose.

Influencing the future

Heathrow Airport

Just not big enough

Heathrow Airport is situated on the outskirts of London. It is the busiest international airport in the world. Almost 70 million passengers use the airport each year – a large number travelling for work or business.

However, the popularity of air travel means that Heathrow is now working at full capacity. The British Airports Authority (BAA), which owns Heathrow, believes that Heathrow must become larger and argues that it cannot do so unless it has a third runway. This, says BAA, is the only way to make sure that Heathrow remains a world-class airport and that London continues to be the business and financial centre of Europe.

Questions

- 1 A new runway at London Heathrow would allow the airport to handle up to 50 per cent more aircraft. What do you think are likely to be the advantages and disadvantages of this idea?

Support

It is planned that the new runway will be situated to the north of the existing airport, where the villages of Harmondsworth, Sipson and Harlington are now located. If the runway is built, around 700 houses and a school will need to be demolished. However, BAA argues that these losses will be offset by an extra £7 billion that will be brought to the area each year in jobs and commerce, rising to £30 billion by 2030.

The proposal also has the approval of the government, as long as the new development does not exceed set limits for air pollution and noise.

Objection

When the plans for the third runway were announced many local people were upset and angry. 'It's very demoralising,' said one resident, 'to think that a community is going to be wiped off the map.' Another said, 'How can it improve our life? Nobody considers the people involved.'

John Stewart, a member of a **pressure group** campaigning for quieter and safer conditions for those living near Heathrow, said the new runway would bring more noise and pollution. He added that many people living in London and the Home Counties would be affected by the new flight paths.

Others have objected to BAA's plan on grounds of the damage that they believe it would cause to the wider environment. Aviation, they argue, is the fastest-growing source of carbon emissions, and we should therefore be looking for ways to cut flights, not to increase them.



Action

When the plans for the new runway were announced, they were strongly criticised by local councils and residents' groups. At first each council was working on its own, but they soon decided that they would be more effective if they worked together. The 12 councils called themselves the 2M Group, representing two million Londoners, and decided to fight the plans in three ways:



- **Through the media** Using newspapers, radio, television and the internet, the councils try to influence local public opinion against airport expansion.
- **Influencing MPs** Arranging meetings with senior government figures and politicians to persuade them that existing plans should be changed.
- **Court action** Challenging the airport expansion in court, hoping that a judge will decide that certain parts of the plan are illegal.

Against the law

Not everyone, however, believes that this is enough. Some people, who have fought airport expansion for years without success, say that they plan to take part in direct action, even if it means breaking the law. This might include holding marches and demonstrations without police permission and preventing airport workers from going to work.

- 2 Draw up a list of what could be done by people who oppose the further expansion of Heathrow Airport.
- 3 Now list the strengths and weaknesses of each idea.
- 4 Is it ever right for protestors to break the law? Try to give reasons for your answer.

KeyWords

Pressure group

A group of people, or an organisation, formed to defend a particular interest or to campaign for change and to influence official policy.