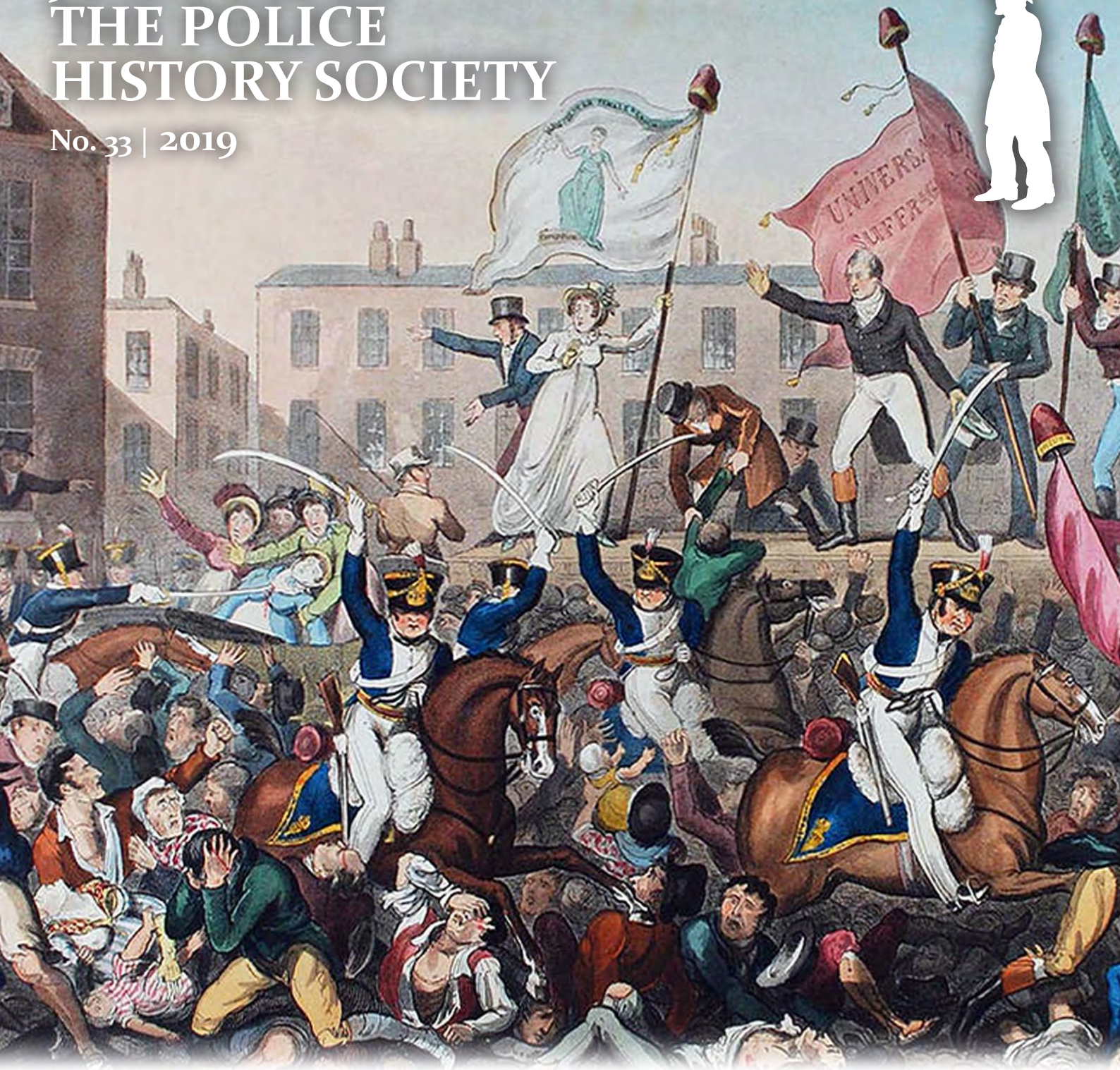


JOURNAL OF THE POLICE HISTORY SOCIETY

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PETERLOO BICENTENARY

MARTIN BAGGOLEY on the deaths of Special Constables
John Ashworth and Robert Campbell of the Borough of Manchester Police

DR DAVID SMALE on the use of Police Spies in the Radical War of 1820

PATRICK ANDERSON * DR TIMOTHY BRAIN * CORINNE BRAZIER & STEVE RICE
PAUL DAVIES * KEITH FOSTER * DR MARY FRASER * PETER HINCHLIFFE
DR PETER MOORE * PATRICIA O'SULLIVAN * ELVYN OAKES
MICK SHAW * JIM SMITH * ANGELA SUTTON-VANE * DR CLIFFORD WILLIAMS



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POLICE.

GUILDHALL.—A CASE FOR THE DENTIST—On Monday *William Halford*, a fellowship-porter, attended before Mr. Alderman Thompson, to answer the complaint of Charles Howcroft, one of the turnkeys at the Giltspur-street Prison, for biting him. The turnkey stated that the prisoner was brought into the gaol, from Billingsgate-market, as a drunken and riotous person, by one of the officers of the Thames Police, and, for this offence, he was fined at the Mansion House next day; and when he was brought into the prison, witless attempted to search him, according to the rules of the prison. The prisoner, who was not so drunk as not to know what he was doing, crouched down, clung fast to his right leg, and bit a piece out of the upper part of the calf. There was considerable inflammation on the following day, but, under the care of the prison surgeon, the wound was now healing. The prisoner was notorious at Billingsgate for biting when he was offended; he had severely bitten Chulda, the ward-officer.—Mr. Alderman Thompson said, if the prisoner behaved like a mastiff, he must be treated as one, and the prison surgeon must file or draw his teeth. The prisoner burst into tears on hearing this, and said, if the Alderman would forgive him this time, he would never be charged with such an offence again. Mr. Alderman Thompson said, he was afraid there would be no safety

for the public, unless he ordered the doctor to draw his teeth. The prisoner cried louder than before, and protested he would never bite any one again. He was so drunk that he had no recollection of what had occurred, and was astonished when he awoke in the morning and found himself lying handcuffed in a cell. The Alderman said it was such an unmanly thing to bite an opponent, and he had done it so often, that there was a necessity for impressing on his mind that such conduct would be punished. The defendant, still weeping bitterly, begged for mercy, on the ground that he supported two young children of his brother-in-law, having no family of his own. Mr. Alderman Thompson asked the complainant if he chose to take some private compensation for the injury he had received? The complainant said he did not wish for any compensation for the pain he had suffered, but he should like to have reparation for the damage done to his trousers, which the defendant had torn and spoiled; for the harder complainant him, the faster he held on with his teeth, and it required the aid of two men to beat him off. The defendant again cried for mercy, and was permitted to retire and make compensation, the Alderman warning him that he would never escape so easily again.



Aniversaries

EDITORIAL by ADAM WOOD

It's an obvious and inescapable fact of life – and history – that any event must have an anniversary. 2019 has seen the significant anniversaries of the Treaty of Versailles, which signalled the end of the Great War (28th June 1919), the start of World World II (1st September 1939) and the D-Day Normandy landings, which laid the foundations for its end (6th June 1944), as well as marking fifty years since the first Moon landing.

In police history, 2019 is an equally significant date. The Metropolitan Police was formed 190 years ago, on 29th September 1829, and the past twelve months have seen celebrations of one hundred years of Metropolitan Women Police, with the centenary of the first Women Patrols announced in Police Orders on 22nd November 1918.

Several contributions to the 2019 *Journal* also reflect events which have anniversaries this year. While the MWPA may be celebrating 100 years, the death of the first female Metropolitan officer killed in the line of duty 75 years ago seems to have slipped by almost unmentioned. Here, Keith Foster remembers WPC Bertha Massey Gleghorn.

Our cover story on the bicentenary of the Peterloo Massacre sees Martin Baggoley examine the event and the deaths of special constables John Ashworth and Robert Cambell, while Dr. David Smale reveals how Peterloo and events such as the Cato Street Conspiracy led to the Radical War in Scotland in April 1820, and the subsequent extensive use of police spies and informers.

Another 'revolt' in 1919 saw the Second Police strike, and in these pages Corinne Brazier and Steve Rice look at the role of Birmingham Police officers involved in that action.

Elsewhere, as usual we have articles covering a wide range of subjects, perhaps none so disparate as the problems facing the Hong Kong Police force at the turn of the twentieth century and the life of a rural constable in mid Victorian England. My thanks to all our contributors.

Enjoy the read!



ADAM WOOD has been on the editorial board of *Ripperologist* magazine, the largest circulation journal dedicated to the Jack the Ripper case, since 1997, and has acted as its Executive Editor for eleven years. He is co-author of *Sir Howard Vincent's Police Code, 1889* and the forthcoming official history of the Metropolitan and City Police Orphans Fund. He is finalising a detailed biography of Det. Superintendent Donald Sutherland Swanson, due for publication in January 2020. He runs book publishing house Mango Books, which specialises in non-fiction historical crime and investigation. An imprint of Mango, Blue Lamp Books, was established in 2018 to focus on books on police history. www.MangoBooks.co.uk

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The Society publishes Monographs from time to time. It also offers small grants for original research.

It publishes four Newsletters per year plus an annual *Journal*, and the Annual Conference is usually held in the Autumn at varying locations throughout the country.

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Peterloo and the Immediate Aftermath

The deaths of Special Constables John Ashworth and Robert Campbell of the Borough of Manchester Police

By MARTIN BAGGOLEY

Given my interest in nineteenth century crime and punishment, especially in my home town of Manchester, together with my experience of researching into the deaths of police officers for my own books and the Police Roll of Honour Trust, I had hoped my decision to look into the deaths of the special constable who died on the day of the Peterloo demonstration and the other, who lost his life on the following day, would prove to be relatively straightforward. However, I had not foreseen the difficulties I would face given the absence of official records, such as the transcripts of inquests or any meaningful official inquiries into the day's events and the lack of detailed contemporary press reports covering relevant issues.

Surprisingly, I found this was not because of the passage of time – for after all, the events in question took place two centuries ago – but was due to the deliberate actions of government at both local and national level at the time. Despite the many demonstrators who were injured and killed, there was clearly a determined attempt by the authorities to ensure that everything should be done to limit as much as possible any criticism of the behaviour of the military and civil powers that had been responsible for maintaining order. What follows are the results of my attempts to discover the circumstances surrounding the

deaths of the two special constables from the information that is available.

The Demonstration

16th August 2019 marks the bicentenary of what became known, within days of it taking place, as The Peterloo Massacre. 'Peterloo' was intended to be a derogatory term, to draw a comparison with what was widely regarded as the unnecessarily brutal behaviour shown towards the men, women and children attending what was meant to be a peaceful gathering, to that of the courage of the soldiers who had fought at Waterloo just four years earlier.

The Manchester Patriotic Union, which was calling for parliamentary reform and greater representation for the towns of Lancashire, organised the meeting and invited the radical Henry Hunt and several others to speak. Sixty thousand people from Manchester and the surrounding towns gathered in St. Peter's Field to hear them. However, the authorities had learnt of the meeting and, fearing trouble, arranged for military support to be on hand. Accordingly, on the day detachments of the 15th Hussars, the Royal Artillery, 88th Foot, Cheshire Yeomanry and the Manchester & Salford Yeomanry, which was comprised mainly of local tradesmen and innkeepers, were positioned close to the town centre.

By early afternoon the local



Henry Hunt

magistrates believed a major disturbance was about to take place, and issued a warrant authorising the police, being the civil authority, to arrest Hunt and several other speakers, who were by then on the hustings. However, the police believed this would not be possible without the help of the military. Therefore the chief magistrate, William Hulton, ordered the Manchester & Salford Yeomanry, under the command of local factory owner Captain Hugh Birley, to assist the special constables.

Their sabres drawn, the yeomanry charged into the crowd and the carnage ensued. Estimates vary, but between two hundred and five hundred special constables are said to have been on duty, and when the crowd was attacked these officers also

suffered at the yeomanry's hands.

Shoemaker George Swift was just 19-years-old, but was a leading reformer. He was due to speak at the meeting, and was arrested along with Orator Hunt and held in the New Bailey Gaol at Salford as he awaited trial. Hunt was one of several men convicted and imprisoned for sedition, in that they were said to have been part of a conspiracy to overturn the government by threats and force of arms, but Swift would be found Not Guilty.

While waiting for his trial to open the young man wrote to his brother, informing him: "I saw several of those fellows showing their staves and begging them [the military] to observe they were constables, but they slashed among them and they squealed out like your Irish pigs".

Indeed, many special constables sustained serious injuries. James Chesworth, a confectioner, suffered extensive bruising to the whole of his body, as did victualler Henry Froggatt, who was also treated for a sabre wound. John Routledge, a stone and marble mason, suffered similar injuries as the cavalry rushed towards the platform from which Hunt was addressing the crowd.

Further confirmation of this was provided in the *Morning Chronicle* of 19th August:

A cordon of Special Constables was drawn from the house occupied by the Magistrates towards the stage and these fared as ill from the attacks of the soldiers as the people at large. A body, led by officers who had never had any experience in military affairs and probably all under the influence both of personal fear and considerable feelings of hostility, could not be expected to act with either coolness or discrimination; accordingly, men women and children, constables and reformers were all equally exposed to their attacks. Numbers were trampled down and numbers were cut down.



William Evans

Many were seriously injured, and upwards of twenty lost their lives. Among the dead was William Evans, who was trampled on by the military. He was said to have been a special constable but he was not a member of the Borough of Manchester Police. He was employed by Pickfords, the carriers, in whose yard a detachment of soldiers was waiting, before being ordered to charge into the crowd.

John Ashworth

The one special constable of the Borough of Manchester Police who died at the hands of the military was John Ashworth, landlord of the Bull's Head in the Market Place. He died instantly after being ridden over and suffering a serious sabre wound. An inquest was held three days later before Coroner John Milne and a jury. Reporters were not admitted, and despite the nature of his injuries the verdict was returned as accidental death, resulting from the confusion which took place during what was referred to as 'Monday's lamentable riot'. The coroner added: "This verdict means that no blame whatsoever could be attached to the yeomanry for their actions, which it was their painful duty to perform on the day."

Robert Campbell

Unfortunately, the behaviour of some of the special constables was not beyond reproach. Witnesses reported seeing a number of them acting aggressively towards the demonstrators, and it is believed that as many as seventy men and women were badly injured due to having been beaten with truncheons.

One of these was Mary Fildes, President of the Manchester Female Reform Society, who was standing with Hunt as he addressed the crowd. She was forced to leap from the platform when he was being detained, only to be very badly beaten by a group of constables as she did so.

Another was John Foster who was set upon by a group of ten constables; several witnesses said they were all drunk. Another to suffer was Ann Scott, who was thumped and kicked by a constable as he took her into custody, and she subsequently spent nine weeks imprisoned in the New Bailey Gaol.

The special constables were believed to have been responsible for at least one death, that of Sarah Jones, a mother of seven, who was struck about the head with great brutality by an unidentified officer. It was inevitable, therefore, that a great deal

of anger was felt towards these officers. This came to a head the following day, when troops were called to a serious disturbance on Newton Lane in the town centre. As they approached the scene a large number of men fled, leaving a very badly-beaten man lying on the ground. He was carried to the infirmary, where he remained until 30th August, when he died of his injuries. He was Robert Campbell, a retired soldier, who had been a special constable.

By this time, two men had been arrested on suspicion of causing his death and were being held in the New Bailey Gaol. They were James Taylor, landlord of the Angel Inn on Newton Lane, and his brewer. It was possible to identify Taylor for the purposes of this article from the limited information published about the pair, but the brewer's name appears not to have been released, and despite extensive enquiries his identity remains unknown.

An inquest was opened formally two days after Campbell died, but was adjourned by the coroner until 16th September, ostensibly to enable further enquiries to be made.

However, it soon became clear that the authorities would continue to prevent as much information as possible about the behaviour of the military and civil forces from emerging, and it was feared this might happen at the inquest, such as an attempt being made to uncover the reason behind the attack on the deceased. Therefore, 26 of those who witnessed the attack on Campbell did not testify before the coroner, but instead were asked to prepare written statements beforehand.

Furthermore, despite being allowed to attend the inquest, journalists were prevented from taking notes. Nevertheless, it is possible to at least gain some idea of what occurred from what was later published in the press.

The first witness to appear in person before the coroner was Campbell's widow. She recalled a visit she had made to the infirmary, when her husband told her that James Taylor and his brewer had beaten him, and that statement was the reason for their arrests.

The other witnesses to appear told of a large threatening crowd gathering at the special constable's door, apparently intent on revenge as they accused him of killing a woman and a child the previous day. He was seen by others to fire a pistol from his bedroom window, although this did not seem to be aimed at those in the street below. As this particular evidence was being heard, two jurors intervened and said they knew Campbell and this was something he did occasionally. This led the coroner to declare that Campbell did not discharge the weapon to provoke, warn off or threaten anyone, and had no bearing on subsequent events.

Many of the crowd forced their way into the house, from which Campbell ran, pistol in hand, pursued by his assailants who were throwing stones and other objects at him. He reached the Angel Inn, and after he entered the door was slammed shut behind him. However, this was broken down and he was dragged out into the street, forced to the ground and beaten. The two murder suspects were seen by several people, who claimed that, rather than participating in the assault, they attempted unsuccessfully to protect him. The soldiers were now seen to be approaching and the attackers made off, although three remained for a little while longer to kick Campbell as he lay on the ground, now barely conscious. Several witnesses admitted that they had been too afraid to intervene and attempt to rescue the victim.

The coroner's jury believed that Campbell was confused when he

told his wife that the landlord and his brewer had attacked him, and therefore cleared them of murder. They added that the two men had in fact rushed to his aid at great risk to themselves. Nobody was able to identify any of the attackers, and the jury found that he had been murdered by person or persons unknown. Nobody was ever charged with the crime. No official account of the inquest was kept or published except for this brief note, which was issued to the press:

On Wednesday last an adjourned Inquest on the body of Robert Campbell was concluded, when the jury, after a long and patient investigation, brought in a verdict of "Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown". This being the case we think it our duty to abstain from any observations, as the party or parties when apprehended will be put upon their trial, and it is but right the minds of a Jury should be wholly unprejudiced.

The murdered man was buried with military honours on 2nd September in the cemetery of St John's Church. A company of the 31st Regiment attended together with many of the town's inhabitants.

Further Reading

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MARTIN BAGGOLEY is a retired probation officer, who has written extensively on the history of crime and punishment for magazines in the UK and USA. He is also the author of several books on historical murders including the murder of police officers during the Victorian era. He and his wife Claire live in Ramsbottom.

The Use of Police Spies in the Radical War of 1820

By DR. DAVID SMALE

The Radical War was a week of unrest and widespread strikes in the west of Scotland during the first week of April 1820. It was the death rattle of the movement for radical reform that had grown in the decade from 1810 to 1820. It also lies firmly in the shadow of the Peterloo massacre eight months earlier.

The radicals had tried petitioning parliament to express their grievances with no result; they now demanded annual parliaments and universal suffrage. The government addressed the radical movement with robust methods, fearing that the malaise of revolution, which had recently gripped France, may break out in Britain: Luddite rioting, the assassination of the Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, Peterloo and the Cato Street Conspiracy; all seemed to show a society spiralling towards open revolt. All of these episodes were dealt with severely, and involved the extensive use of police spies and informers.

British historians seldom mention the Radical War, and Scottish writers often dismiss it as 'a brief and inglorious episode'.¹ Allan Massie, writing in 2016, considered that although the Radical War was 'full of human interest, some of it painful, it was not very important'.²

This work seeks to consider if this view is correct, and further, to try and shed light on the activities of police spies and informers to understand how effective they were in thwarting the ambitions of the radicals. It is also important to reveal the extent

to which the spies were agents provocateurs who encouraged or steered the events of 1820.

In order to understand the rise of radicalism in Scotland it is important to reveal the background that allowed it to grow. The economic depression following the Napoleonic Wars struck the west of Scotland and those in the textile trade particularly severely.

The population of Glasgow relied on the textile industry, with 40% of the city's population employed in the trade. In 1780 there were approximately 25,000 hand loom weavers in Scotland; by 1820 this figure had more than tripled to 78,000.³ Peace did not bring the expected boom years; instead, there were serious recessions in textiles in 1816-1817 and 1819-1820.⁴

Another element that contributed to the depression was the sudden appearance into the labour market of men discharged from the army and navy. These men tramped backed to their homes with little in the way of firm prospects for employment. It has been estimated that by 1819, 279,000 men had been discharged from the military.⁵

At the end of the war Glasgow was the centre for social tensions as it had never been before; a large percentage of the population was idle and sliding into extreme poverty, and the hopelessness and inability to alter their circumstances acted as a recruiting sergeant for the radical cause. The authorities in Glasgow and the surrounding counties tried to alleviate the situation by employing men building roads and repairing

bridges, and voluntary subscription schemes provided some of the people with coal, meal, soup and blankets.⁶ However, these patchy and uncoordinated schemes barely scratched the surface of poverty in the west of Scotland, and certainly did little to counter support for reform.

Local government in the city of Glasgow and the county of Lanark made some attempts to alleviate the condition of the poor. Their meagre efforts were in stark contrast to the inactivity of Lord Liverpool's Tory government. These 'children of the older world' had little idea of the conditions of the rapidly-expanding industrial towns and cities, and cared little for the people crammed into them.⁷

The Tory administration chose to interpret the reform movement as an insurrectionary conspiracy, and met it with everything the state could muster in an unremitting campaign of

- 1 Michael Fry, *Glasgow: A History of a City* (London; Head of Zeus, 2017), p. 128.
- 2 *The Scotsman*, Saturday 9th April 2016.
- 3 Norman Murray, *The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers 1790-1850, A Social History* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1978), p. 23.
- 4 T.M. Devine, 'The Urban Crisis' in *Glasgow, Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1830*, Eds., T.M. Devine and Gordon Jackson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 410.
- 5 W.D. Rubinstein, *Britain's Century: A Political and Social History 1815-1905* (London: Hodder, 1998), p. 7.
- 6 *Glasgow Herald*, Friday 17th December 1819, p. 4 and Friday 7th January 1820, p. 2.
- 7 R.J. White, *Waterloo to Peterloo* (London: William Heinemann, 1957), p. 14.

repression. The Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, collected evidence from the good and the great in the towns and counties to try and ascertain the extent of the radical movement. The information received provided a distorted and exaggerated picture of seditious activity; the government saw treason everywhere. Sidmouth turned to a traditional tool: the spy.

In Manchester on 16th August 1819, the Peterloo massacre resulted in a butcher's bill of around 15 people killed and over 400 wounded.

Sidmouth's policy of constant repression continued, and in December 1819 the 'Six Acts' restricted public meetings, suppressed the pamphlet press and introduced new penalties for the publication of blasphemous and seditious libels.⁸

Despite Peterloo, the situation in Glasgow continued to deteriorate and by the end of 1819 a state of open war existed between working class communities and the authorities in the city.⁹

The Police and the Army

Historians have postulated that in Manchester there were no police and so they had to use spies.¹⁰ This was not the case in Glasgow; a new police system had been formed in 1800 and by 1820 the force numbered 168 men. However, this included 134 watchmen and 25 police officers.¹¹ From its inception, many attempts were made to improve the new force. Nevertheless, in 1816 Lord Advocate Alexander Maconochie was of the opinion that it was 'utterly defective and inefficient', particularly because there was a 'want of information on the radical movement in the city.'¹²

As the radical threat increased,



Home Secretary Lord Sidmouth

the police were able to augment their number with Special Constables, drawn from the middle classes of the city, those with a stake in maintaining order for business; over 300 in 1816.¹³ As the radical agitation increased the police were armed with cutlasses, and in December 1819 the Police Committee authorised officers who had been in the army to be provided with arms 'for the protection of the peace.'¹⁴

When this new force was ten years old in 1810, the Police Committee decided that a special committee on 'Secret Service', should be formed. This shadowy organisation, which left few records, was formed to provide money for information on serious crimes and by 1818 it was paying out around £100 per month.¹⁵

Allied to this, in September 1817 another committee was appointed to look into employing Criminal Constables who would devote all their time to the detection of crime, and two constables were appointed.¹⁶

The work of the Secret Service

Committee and the Criminal Officers involved monitoring the activities of the radicals. Both central and local government believed that the Glasgow City police and the older policing arrangements in the surrounding counties would not be sufficient to address the radical movement, and they turned to the army to support the civil powers. Various units of the army, infantry, cavalry and artillery, were drafted to the west of Scotland under Major General Bradford. He reported to Sidmouth that in January 1820, there were 1,940 troops in the area.¹⁷

Liverpool's government had the police and the army in place as a visible deterrent to radical activity, but still relied upon spies and informants.

The Radical War

The Radical War consisted of events over the first week of April 1820 which were to be in concert with uprisings in the north of England. On the morning of 2nd April people in the west of Scotland woke up to find an 'Address' had been posted up in prominent places. It was a call for the people to rise up and to go on strike. This was followed by a march of around 50 armed men to the Carron Iron Works at Falkirk to try and obtain a canon. The march was halted at Bonnymuir, where a troop of Hussars and Yeomanry confronted the group and in the ensuing skirmish most of the radicals were arrested.

On 6th April a group of around 25 armed men were prompted by a spy to march from Strathaven to join up with a radical army that was forming on the Cathkin Brae with a view to taking over Glasgow. On reaching Cathkin they found it deserted, and

eventually they drifted home.

The final incident was on 8th April at Greenock. A party of the Port Glasgow Volunteers had marched into the town with radical prisoners destined for the jail. Believing the reformers to be defeated, and in triumphal mood, they entered the town with fifes and drums playing. This antagonised the locals, who jostled the soldiers and pelted them with stones. This in turn was met with volleys of musket fire into the crowd, which killed six people and wounded eleven. With this action the uprising petered out. However, the authorities then set about hunting down active radicals and with the attention of settling old scores. In trials for treason, three men were hung and then decapitated, and 19 were transported to Australia. There were no significant uprisings in England.

The Radical War had been defeated by information obtained by spies and informers, which allowed the police and military to react promptly.

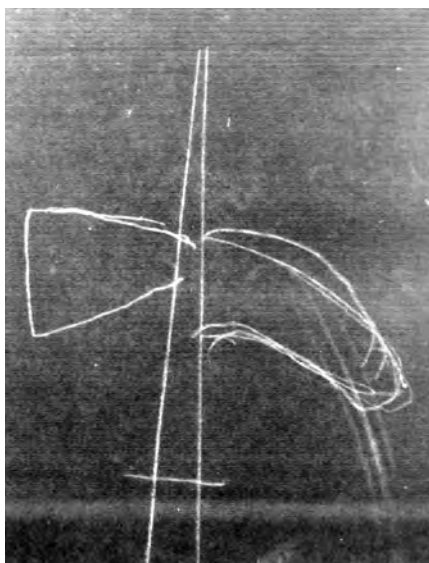
The nature of spying means that records are patchy, oblique and confusing, however it is possible to detect at least five different spy groups.

The Lord Advocate and his Police Spies

As early as November 1816, Maconochie had informants on the radicals' committees in Glasgow, and was also receiving intelligence from the Head Constable of Linlithgow, McKay.¹⁸ The following month McKay reported that large amounts of swords and pikes being produced. McKay had been introduced to the secret committee of the radicals, and he also met Tait, a blacksmith, who had been making pikes. McKay persuaded him to draw a picture of the pike heads he had been constructing.¹⁹

Maconochie also sent Captain James Brown, the head of the

Edinburgh police and 'an officer of great intelligence', to assess the situation in Glasgow.²⁰ Brown compiled a list of the names and occupations of 15 men who were particularly active in the radical movement and sent it to Maconochie.²¹ In an attempt to protect the identity of his spies, Maconochie used a code; Brown was 'CD', McKay 'AB', and for two men we shall hear more about later, George Biggar, 'GH' and Alexander Richmond, 'EF'.²²



Picture of a pike head drawn by the blacksmith Tait for Lord Advocate Maconochie's police spy McKay. National Archives, HO 102/26, f. 637.

On 9th January 1817 Brown returned to Edinburgh, having spent seven nights in various districts mixing with radicals. He could only report that there was no evidence of stores of arms, secret oaths or a central committee.²³

In October 1819 the new Lord Advocate, William Rae, assessed the situation and agreed with his predecessor that the police in Glasgow was in a poor state. He continued to employ Brown to keep surveillance on the reformers to the extent that he spent 71 days in Glasgow between August and December 1819.²⁴ Brown brought two Edinburgh officers, Bryson and McGraw, who were 'of Glasgow origin' to the city. They were

quickly accepted by the radicals and even served on their committees from August 1819 until January 1820.²⁵

Through this channel of information, from Bryson and McGraw to Brown, then Rae and ultimately Sidmouth, the activities and plans of the radicals could be accurately monitored.

- 8 Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe* (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 115-116.
- 9 Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 316.
- 10 White, *Waterloo to Peterloo*, p. 12.
- 11 David Smale, 'Glasgow Police: The First Twenty Years, 1800-1820', *Journal of Police History Society*, No.31, 2017, p. 46.
- 12 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 14th December 1816, National Archives (hereafter NA), HO 102/26, f. 653.
- 13 James Reddie to Lord Sidmouth, 10th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 631.
- 14 E1/1/11, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (hereafter ML), Minutes of Glasgow Police Commissioners, 9th December 1819.
- 15 E1/1/6, ML, Minutes of Glasgow Police Commissioners, 13th December 1810.
- 16 E1/1/9, ML, Minutes of Glasgow Police Commissioners, 18th September 1817.
- 17 Bradford to Lord Sidmouth, 21st January 1820, NA, HO 102/32, f. 88.
- 18 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 26th November 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 569.
- 19 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 13th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 637.
- 20 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 13th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 639.
- 21 Sheriff Substitute of Renfrewshire to Alexander Maconochie, 22nd December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 721.
- 22 James Reddie to Lord Sidmouth, 15th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 803.
- 23 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 10th January 1817, NA, HO 102/27, f. 39.
- 24 Gordon Pentland, *The Spirit of the Union* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), p. 91.
- 25 James Brown to William Rae, 25th August 1820, NA, HO 102/33, f. 288.

The intelligence that Bryson and McGraw had gathered contributed to the arrest, on 22nd February 1820, of 27 people 'stiling [sic] themselves Radical Reformers who met in a small tavern in this city... a central committee'.

This action, which netted delegates from Glasgow, Lanarkshire and neighbouring counties and Dumfriesshire, effectively cut the head off of the radical movement and disrupted their plans for the weeks leading up to 1st April and the uprising.²⁶

Glasgow Police and their 'Secret Men'

Another spy group consisting of police officers were Glasgow's 'secret men'. In August 1816 the Officers' Committee and the Secret Service Committee met in conjunction and decided that they should employ undercover officers; 'three persons of intelligence and activity and who can write a fair hand'. In January 1817 McGregor, Paterson and Lothian were employed.²⁷ They went to work, trying to infiltrate the radical movement, attempting to discover what the radical oath was and who administered it.²⁸

A close examination of the police minute books reveals that it was very likely that other members of the city's police were used as spies.

When the radical threat had been subdued another figure emerged in the records as an important spy-master; Mathew Legat, the Senior Criminal Officer in the Glasgow Police. His undercover work, which had put him in 'considerable danger', had provided accurate information that had enabled the magistrates to 'defeat the insurrectionary designs of the disaffected'.²⁹ The exact nature of his secret work is again not noted, but it is likely have been running a number of paid informants. The



Provost of Glasgow c.1820



Glasgow Police Officer c.1820.

commissioners must have held him in high esteem because he was rewarded with the sum of £100.³⁰

The Sheriff and his Spy

Sheriff Robert Hamilton of Lanarkshire employed his own spy, George Biggar. This was probably because he mistrusted other paid informants who may have been exaggerating the extent of the radical movement to extend their pay-days. By the end of January 1817, Biggar had been admitted into the inner organisation of the radicals and provided more intelligence than most other spies; information about the oath of secrecy, the signs, handshakes, and passwords that identified the radicals.³¹ He also confirmed the identity of the men who formed the central committee.³²

The Home Secretary and his Informants

An examination of the Home Secretary's correspondence reveals

that, along with reports from the Lord Advocate, politicians and the authorities in Glasgow, there exists a steady stream of letters. Some correspondents offered to become spies, probably with an eye on financial remuneration. Many more people wrote offering information including the dates and locations of meetings and particularly the extent of pikes, guns and other weapons in the hands of the radicals.³³ One writer, apparently on the make, complained of seditious publications circulating in Glasgow, and offered to set up a 'loyal' publication. The only problem was that he was financially embarrassed, so, 'if your Lordship will kindly give me a few pounds to enable me to commence the undertaking'.³⁴

Sidmouth also received information from a Roman Catholic priest in Glasgow and the Minister of Houston in Renfrewshire, who believed that radical contacts in London had poisoned the minds of the working people in the west of Scotland.³⁵

Among the warnings of armed radicals, John Weir of Glasgow, wrote a confusing letter, firstly stating that he used his wife, a midwife, to listen out for intelligence. He then went on to explain that he knew how to make the dangerously unpredictable Congreve Rocket, and seemed to be asking for money to not provide the radicals with this weapon.³⁶

Correspondence to Sidmouth at the end of March 1820 contains detailed information on radical weapons including:

It seems there are thousands of small steel instruments about 6 inches long with 3 feathers at the end, made in order to throw at the Magistracy, Constables and Military, when attempting to put down mobs, and the horrible intention goes even the length of poisoning the Darts.³⁷

Another report described the 'great number of ash trees which have been cut and carried away' to be used as the wooden staffs for pikes.³⁸ The waves of correspondence that Sidmouth received indicates a climate of fear that saw radical bogeymen meeting and plotting everywhere.³⁹

The Member of Parliament and his Spy

Alexander Richmond is the best-known spy of the Radical War, and this is because in 1824 he published his version of his activities in *Narrative of the Condition of the Manufacturing Population*. Richmond's account is an apology for his spying activities, centred on the idea that he had been striving to prevent the deluded working people from exposing themselves to severe punishment.⁴⁰

Richmond had taken a leading part in weavers' union societies fighting for higher wages, and in January 1812 he met a Glasgow businessman, Kirkman Finlay. He was arrested and charged with inciting a strike; he

went on the run but eventually served a lenient month's imprisonment.

It is clear that by the end of 1816 Richmond had become well acquainted with Finlay, who was now Lord Provost of Glasgow and member of parliament for the city. Their relationship was cultivated by Finlay because he feared an uprising of disaffected weavers, and he needed information on the extent of their organisation. According to Richmond, Finlay had offered him 'a respectable, permanent situation, if I would lend my assistance to suppress the conspiracy'.⁴¹ Richmond agreed to the offer, and proposed that he should seek out and employ a few men to assist him, with the stipulation that none of them should know of the others' existence as spies so that their reports could be compared and verified.⁴²

Thus Richmond became Finlay's principal agent in a spy network, recruiting McLachlan, Macdowal Peat and, as if to show the secrecy and confusion of the nature of spying, Biggar, already in the employ of Sheriff Hamilton.⁴³ The system initiated was a chain of command whereby Richmond's spies provided information to him; he in turn reported to Finlay, who forwarded it to the Lord Advocate and eventually it arrived on Sidmouth's desk.

By the end of 1816 Richmond's spies were providing intelligence on the radicals and their news was worrying for the ruling elite; secret committees of the disaffected had been formed in several parts of Glasgow and in Ayrshire, Dumbartonshire and Stirlingshire. There was also talk of secret oaths binding the reformers together, a resolution to extend their activities into Edinburgh and Perth, and the plan to form a disciplined armed force for the purpose of overthrowing the government.⁴⁴

On 30th December 1816 Richmond

communicated that there were 50 secret associations in Glasgow, with '60 to 100 stands of arms and a quantity of powder and balls... they have a great number of cutlasses prepared'.

Plans were also revealed of attacking the barracks, and it was Richmond's opinion that 'an insurrection will be tried without

26 Robert Hamilton to Lord Sidmouth, 23rd February 1820, NA, HO 102/32, f. 186.

27 James Reddie to Sidmouth, 12th and 13th January 1817, NA, HO 102/26, f. 825.

28 James Reddie to Sidmouth, 12th January 1817, NA, HO 102/27, f. 86.

29 C1/1/53, ML, Glasgow Council Act Book, 31 October 1820.

30 C1/1/53, ML, Glasgow Council Act Book, 10th November 1820.

31 W. M. Roach, 'Alexander Richmond and the radical reform movements in Glasgow in 1816-17', in *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. LI, (1972), p. 13.

32 Pentland, *Spirit*, p. 31.

33 Anonymous writer to William Rae, 24th October 1819, NA, HO 102/31, f. 63.

34 James Wilson to Lord Sidmouth, 19th November 1819, NA, HO 102/31, f. 142.

35 William M. Roach, 'Radical Reform Movements in Scotland from 1815 to 1822: With Particular Reference to Events in the West of Scotland', (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1970), p. 197.

36 John Weir to Lord Sidmouth, 24th March 1820, NA, HO 102/32, f. 267.

37 Anonymous writer to Lord Sidmouth, 20th March 1820, NA, HO 102/32, f. 263.

38 James Porteous and John Fulton to the Earl of Glasgow, 31st March 1820, NA, HO 102/32, f. 303.

39 Owen Owens to William Rae, 3rd April 1820, NA, HO 102/32, f. 311.

40 Alexander B. Richmond, *Narrative of the Condition of the Manufacturing Population* (London: John Miller, 1824), p. 64.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

43 Peter Mackenzie, *An Exposure of the Spy System Pursued in Glasgow, During the Years 1816-17-18-19-20* (Glasgow: Muir and Gowans, 1833), p. 6.

44 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 25th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 729.



Carron Ironworks

delay'.⁴⁵

Richmond's personal technique for obtaining information was to befriend a member of the radicals' central committee and sit drinking with him until the early hours, pretending to be under the influence of the alcohol but staying sober, noting all his drinking partner's revelations.⁴⁶

This flow of intelligence brought with it a high level of confidence in Richmond. Maconochie told Sidmouth that Richmond was a man 'in whose fidelity we now place implicit reliance'.⁴⁷

Two of Richmond's men had been accepted by the radicals and taken the secret oath.⁴⁸

In his book Richmond rather labours the point that he had tried to save the radicals from themselves, and that he had explained to them the dire consequences of 'assisting or joining the confederacy'.⁴⁹ He continued to spy for Finlay until at least 1820, and the following year he accepted a sum of cash for his work but had to move

to Edinburgh because he had become so unpopular.

Police Spies and Agents Provocateurs

It is important to try and assess the extent to which the spies were *agents provocateurs*.

Peter Mackenzie, who had been a volunteer to put down the uprising but went on to become a social reformer, believed that they were, and he despised them because they received payment for encouraging men to commit treasonable acts. Payment for information resulted in cases where spies, including Richmond, exaggerated the threat of insurrection so they were kept on and their pay days extended.

Mackenzie wrote that two spies, Turner and Craig, had suggested the march to the Carron Iron Works, where they said the radicals would find canon.⁵⁰ Similarly, the Strathaven group that marched to the Cathkin

Braes had been instructed to do so by a spy called Shields, who stated that he was passing orders from the central committee of the radicals.⁵¹

How far these spies instigated the uprising is debatable. What is not is the success of the police spies. Captain Brown and his men had infiltrated the central committee of the reformers and knew all of their plans, which they fed up the chain of command, ultimately to Sidmouth. Massie's comments from the start of this work concluded that 'the Radicals' cause was a good one, their methods foolish'.⁵²

Ultimately, the reformers were defeated by the Georgian state's use of a traditional tool, the spy.

45 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, 30th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 777.

46 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth (Minutes of conversation with EF - Alexander Richmond), 20th December 1816, NA, HO 102/26, f. 817.

47 Alexander Maconochie to Lord Sidmouth, ? January 1817, NA, HO 102/26, f. 819.

48 Kirkman Finlay to Lord Sidmouth, 28th January 1817, NA, HO 102/27, f. 175.

49 Richmond, *Narrative*, p. 83.

50 Mackenzie, *Exposure*, p. 46.

51 John Stevenson, *A True Narrative of the Radical Rising in Strathaven* (Glasgow: W and W Miller, 1835), p. 5.

52 *The Scotsman*, Saturday 9th April 2016.



DR DAVID SMALE served in the Royal Marines and as a constable in Lothian and Borders Police, working in both the city of Edinburgh and in the rural Scottish Borders. He has studied with the Open University and the University of Edinburgh. He is presently researching and writing on various aspects of Scottish police history.

Not Forgotten: WPC Bertha Massey Gleghorn

The First Female Metropolitan Police Constable Killed in the Line of Duty

By KEITH FOSTER

As the key researcher who presented the first inclusive account of the lifelines for WPC Gleghorn (128 'C', Wt 428), I find it truly remarkable that as 2019 draws to a close (I am writing this in early October), the 75th anniversary of her death as a result of an exploding German V1 missile on 17th June 1944 has been 'forgotten' by all who ought to have marked the event in the fashion we have become accustomed to witness for other police officers.

Working for the original Police Roll of Honour Trust during a ten-year period from 2001, I was granted free and unfettered access to the MPS archives by the late and sadly missed Maggie Bird, who was then the curator of the records at the Charlton base. It took a further three years, until 2014, before the story was completed with the eventual discovery of her last resting-place following cremation, at Golders Green Crematorium.

Thus, it was that later in 2014 the then-Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick was able to preside over the first ever memorial relating to Bertha's place at the head of the Met's women police who have died on duty, when a plaque was unveiled at Charing Cross police station.

On the anniversary date this year I visited both the location of her death at the rear of the former Tottenham Court Road police station and travelled on afterwards to Golders Green. There I was joined by the



crematorium's archivist for a silent reflection to Bertha's memory.

I am not aware there was any intention to officially mark the occasion; indeed on reading the Order of Service for the centenary of the Women Police at Westminster

Abbey this year, it failed to even print the names of all five of the women constables recorded on the Met's Roll of Honour.

At least Bertha was not completely forgotten on the appropriate day, and at an appropriate location – within



shown in colour on the back cover.

I hope a suitable memorial, an original kerb-side stone mind, will one day be placed at the scene, which would serve to record Bertha's place at the head of the history of the women who have served the London Metropolitan Police. The words on the wreath card are as follows:

LEST WE FORGET

*Bertha Massey Gleghorn
WPC 128 C Division
Metropolitan Police
9.10.1910 – 19.6.1944*

This singular and personal tribute is to honour the sacrifice of London's first Woman Police Constable killed in the line of duty 75 years ago.

On 19th June 1944, Bertha was crossing the yard of Tottenham Court Road Police Station, then opposite

this exact spot in Whitfield Street, to take up her duty for the day.

At that moment, unknown to her, a German V.1 missile was falling silently to earth, and exploded as it struck the building, burying WPC Gleghorn under the falling brickwork. She suffered fatal injuries as a result. She was aged 33.

As you pass by on your way to, or from work, please remember Bertha at this memorial which has been presented by those who wish her memory to live on.

Please feel free to share this presentation through your social media contacts.

Thank you – 19th June 2019 London



KEITH FOSTER is a London Police History Researcher.

the public gardens opposite the scene of her death in Whitfield Street – as my presentation wreath illustrates in the accompanying photograph,

Devon Constabulary Benefit Society Study of Infant Mortality Before The National Health Service

By **PETER HINCHLIFFE**



Photo courtesy S W P H C

In 1858 the men of the Devon Constabulary formed a Benefit Society to help them provide health care for their families. The Constabulary was responsible for the health and well-being of the men, but the men were required to provide medical assistance for their wives and children.

The National Health Service was not created until 1948, prior to which medical services were funded privately or through charitable arrangements.

In Victorian times many organisations were established with a view of preventing hardship, such as

when sickness struck a family, and the Devon Constabulary Benefit Society was one.

The South West Police Heritage Centre holds the ledger for the Society (Ref 1975:00322:001). The first entry in it relates to William Cunningham, and shows that he joined the society in 1858.

Cunningham was a Superintendent from 1860 and the Deputy Chief Constable from 1872. The rank of Deputy Chief Constable was usually combined with that of Chief Clerk.

There are a number of reasons that suggest that police records were not well kept in mid-Victorian times, not least the contemporary reports of the HM Inspector of Constabulary.

I wonder if the ledger we have is the first book of the Society. It is more probable that it replaced the original, perhaps less formal books. The earliest handwriting of the entries, which show dates from 1858 to 1882, appears to be that of the same author, and may indicate that early entries were made in retrospect, possibly in response to the HMI requiring more comprehensive records to be kept.

The ledger gives a wonderful record of the families of the Constabulary, which through the Victorian era were generally larger than today.

With the help of this book we have been able to assist many people conducting research into their family genealogy.

The use of a person's date of birth as an additional means of identification was not in common use on police records until early in the twentieth century. The preferred method was to

describe a man by years and months, eg 24 years + 7 twelfths, but usually without a date when the age was achieved!

Membership of the Society appears to have been restricted to serving officers (who were all men), their wives and their children under 14 years, which in later years was the school leaving age.

Some Constables joined the Society when they joined the force; a great many more joined with their wife, when they married. Their children usually joined at birth, the medical attendance at their birth probably being paid for by the Society. The family remained members until the man received his police pension or left the Constabulary.

A child's membership continued until they reached 14 years of age.

The ledger shows that infant mortality was a considerable problem in Victorian society, but reflects the gradual advances in medicine, particularly in paediatrics and maternity welfare, which resulted in a dramatic fall in childhood deaths from the Great War era onwards. By 1948 and the establishment of the National Health Service, deaths among children were very unusual.

The ledger also records that the force did not escape the international Influenza epidemic of 1919, with several Constables and some families being victims.

Deaths through illness amongst serving policemen were not uncommon, but very many fewer than amongst their wives. A surprising number of Constables were widowers with children to care for.

In total, 213 child members of the Society died between 1858 and 1960, almost all of them before 1920. 159 of these children were under two years old; 36 children died when aged between two and five years, and 18 children over the age of five died.

The cause of death recorded in the ledger overwhelmingly shows 'convulsions' in the case of babies. Surprisingly, only one is shown as 'rickets'. Others include typhoid fever, and several show Bright's disease (a kidney ailment). Among the older children, diphtheria and scarlet fever were not uncommon. Two children died of 'sun stroke', and two were drowned. In 1884, one child's death was recorded as 'poisoned'!

Some families were particularly unfortunate, losing two and three infants.

In the 1870s the wife of PC214 Brownson gave birth to nine children; six of them died before reaching their second birthday, while three did survive until they were 14 years or older.

The Society was 'wound up' in the 1960s. Some money was given to the Compassionate Fund and the rest was returned to the membership.

It seems that of the constituent forces, only Devon formed their own benefit society. Devonport Borough Police encouraged their men to join The Hearts of Oak Benefit Society to provide in times of need. There is no record of provision in the other forces.



PETER HINCHLIFFE is a volunteer at South West Police Heritage Trust, a retired Policeman who served with Exeter City, then Devon and Cornwall Police.

Strike!

By CORINNE BRAZIER and STEVE RICE

It seems to be a little known fact that the police had a union. Or that the Metropolitan Police, together with the City of London Police, brought the Government to its knees in 1918 through a strike that saw over half of those forces marching to Downing Street to protest about poor pay and working conditions and the victimisation of members of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers (NUPPO).

The strike was led by NUPPO, which had been created back in 1913 by former Metropolitan Police Inspector John Syme. He left the police following a disagreement with senior officers that saw him moved to another division, which he felt was unjust. He began a campaign against the senior officers of the force, which saw him imprisoned several times. The union which he had created parted ways with him and decided to disassociate themselves from his fight, and focus instead on improving pay and working conditions.

In the summer of 1918, at the height of the strike the Union Executive, including amongst them ex-PC Tommy Thiel (whose recent dismissal was arguably the catalyst for the strike), chairman PC James Marston, Honorary Secretary PC John Crisp and City of London PC John Zollner, met with the Prime Minister David Lloyd George and other officials to agree terms to get the men back to work. All their demands were met, including a significant increase in pay, pensions for police widows and child allowances, as well as the reinstatement of ex-PC Tommy Thiel.

But crucially, the request that their union be recognised was not agreed.



City of London Police officers during the 1918 strike

This was to be a point of disagreement in the future; the Union felt that Lloyd George had agreed to recognise the Union once was the Great War was over. Lloyd George, however, stated that he had never agreed to recognise the Union.

The Union gained numbers around the country throughout the remainder of 1918 and into 1919, with the Birmingham City Police apparently being the biggest branch outside London, much to the frustration of Chief Constable Charles Haughton Rafter.

The Government appointed the Desborough Committee in the spring of 1919 to formally look into pay and working conditions of police forces around the country.

By May 1919, with no formal

recognition forthcoming and the pay increase still pending, the Union balloted its members to strike but, fortunately for the Government, they decided against strike action. This gave the Government the chance to rush through the recommendations of the Desborough Committee in the Police Act 1919, which gave police officers much better pay and significantly improved working conditions, but, crucially, made it illegal for police officers to go on strike.

In July 1919 a further ballot took place, and on 31 July another strike was called. This was different in many ways. Forces in addition to the Metropolitan and City of London forces took part this time, with Birmingham, Liverpool, Bootle, Birkenhead and Wallasey joining in.

However, the numbers were much smaller; many of the men (including half the NUPPO Executive) did not join the strike, or were able to sneak back on duty after seeing how unsuccessful it had been. Less than 2,500 men across the three cities took part, and all were dismissed with the exception of just over 50 from Liverpool, who accepted an offer to return to duty before 8.00pm on 1 August.

Liverpool and the surrounding districts were the worst affected, with widespread riots, looting and drunken mobs roaming the streets. The Armed Forces were called in, warships docked on the Mersey and one rioter was killed during a scuffle for an officer's rifle.

Despite repeated pleas for leniency, with petitions being heard before Parliament and appeals to the various authorities and Watch Committees, none of the strikers were reinstated and it was many years before any of them managed to receive their pension contributions back. In fact, it required a change in pension legislation in 1926 before many of those requests were granted.

It was long thought that none of those officers ever wore a police uniform again, but research carried

out for a new publication by the West Midlands Police Museum has revealed that two of the Birmingham officers did indeed become part of the police family again. Research by museum volunteers tracing families through Ancestry and delving into police archives has identified that Frederick Husselbee became a first police reserve (likely in the Staffordshire Police) and Frank Howes became a special constable. Neither of these officers re-joined Birmingham, but it is interesting to know that they continued a policing role.

Many of the Birmingham strikers have descendants that served with Birmingham City Police, other local forces and much further afield such as Avon and Somerset.

Out of the Blue tells the amazing story of the events of 1918 and 1919, explains why over 2,000 men risked everything to fight for a cause that many already thought won and goes on to show what happened to most of the Birmingham men after they left the force. With incredible personal stories, including that of NUPPO Birmingham Branch Chair Edward Charles Taylor who had only months left before retirement, this book takes the reader on a journey of discovery to relive the short life of NUPPO and



NUPPO lapel badge
West Midlands Police Museum

ensure the men that fought for the rights that officers enjoy today are never forgotten.

West Midlands Police Chief Constable Dave Thompson described this book as the 'definitive record of the police strike', with more information captured and published than has been possible in previous strike publications.

Available from www.WMPeelers.com/shop or by sending a cheque for £18.50 made out to the West Midlands Police Heritage Project (along with details of who and where to send the book to):

Corinne Brazier
Police Museum
PO Box 52
Birmingham
B4 6NQ



CORINNE BRAZIER has worked for West Midlands Police in a variety of roles since 2005 and is currently attached to the West Midlands Police Heritage Project, which is aiming to relocate the West Midlands Police Museum.

STEVE RICE has worked for the force since 1990 and has enjoyed different uniformed roles. He is now an inspector attached to the Heritage Project working alongside Corinne.



Birmingham officers, believed to be policing an industrial strike
Courtesy of the Russell family

PC Arthur Wright, Derbyshire Constabulary

By MICK SHAW

My interest in PC Arthur Wright started when, whilst looking on eBay, I came across a postcard photograph of him. On the back of the postcard was written by hand:

Policeman who got drowned trying to rescue a 14 year old girl who jumped in the river, she was arrested after stealing money. She also drowned (Sylvia Gratton). What a night it was PCs a,m, we all knew him, decent fellow I was about 15 years old, Mum.

After some brief research I decided to bid on the postcard. Several days later I had the winning bid, purchasing the postcard for just under £20.

To begin my research I contacted Derbyshire NARPO, who passed me on to their historian Mike Baker. Mike was compiling a history of the Force and had written an article about PC Wright for the *Derbyshire Police Magazine* some years earlier. Mike was more than willing to help me in my research into PC Arthur Wright, and passed on lots of information on the tragic death of the officer.

With his help and online research I managed to come up with this account of a policeman hero who sacrificed his own life in an attempt to save a young girl in his custody who, in an attempt to escape, jumped into the River Derwent. The very detailed accounts I found in the newspapers, and also Mike Baker's article some years earlier, made it difficult for me to re-write this story as so much of it has been taken from the newspaper article and Mike's subsequent account, although I have tried to

add some further information. Therefore I cannot take all the credit for this article but, having found the photograph on eBay, I didn't think it would hurt to bring this officer's sacrifice to everyone again.

Arthur Wright joined the Derbyshire Constabulary as a 3rd class constable on 10th April 1901. Born in Apperknowle, near Unstone, Derbyshire on 29th March 1875, Arthur was initially to follow in his father's profession as a miner at the local colliery. His younger brother Herbert also followed in the family tradition.

Their elder sister, Amelia, married William Thomas in October 1893. William was a 1st class constable with an unblemished record, having already received a favourable report for his courage during the Holbrook Riot (coal dispute). He joined the Derbyshire Constabulary at the age of 20 years on 3rd January 1890 as a 3rd class constable. It was more than likely William who persuaded Arthur to break with tradition and become a policeman. At the time, Arthur, who was 25 years old, was described as 5ft 11in tall, with a dark complexion, dark brown hair and blue eyes.

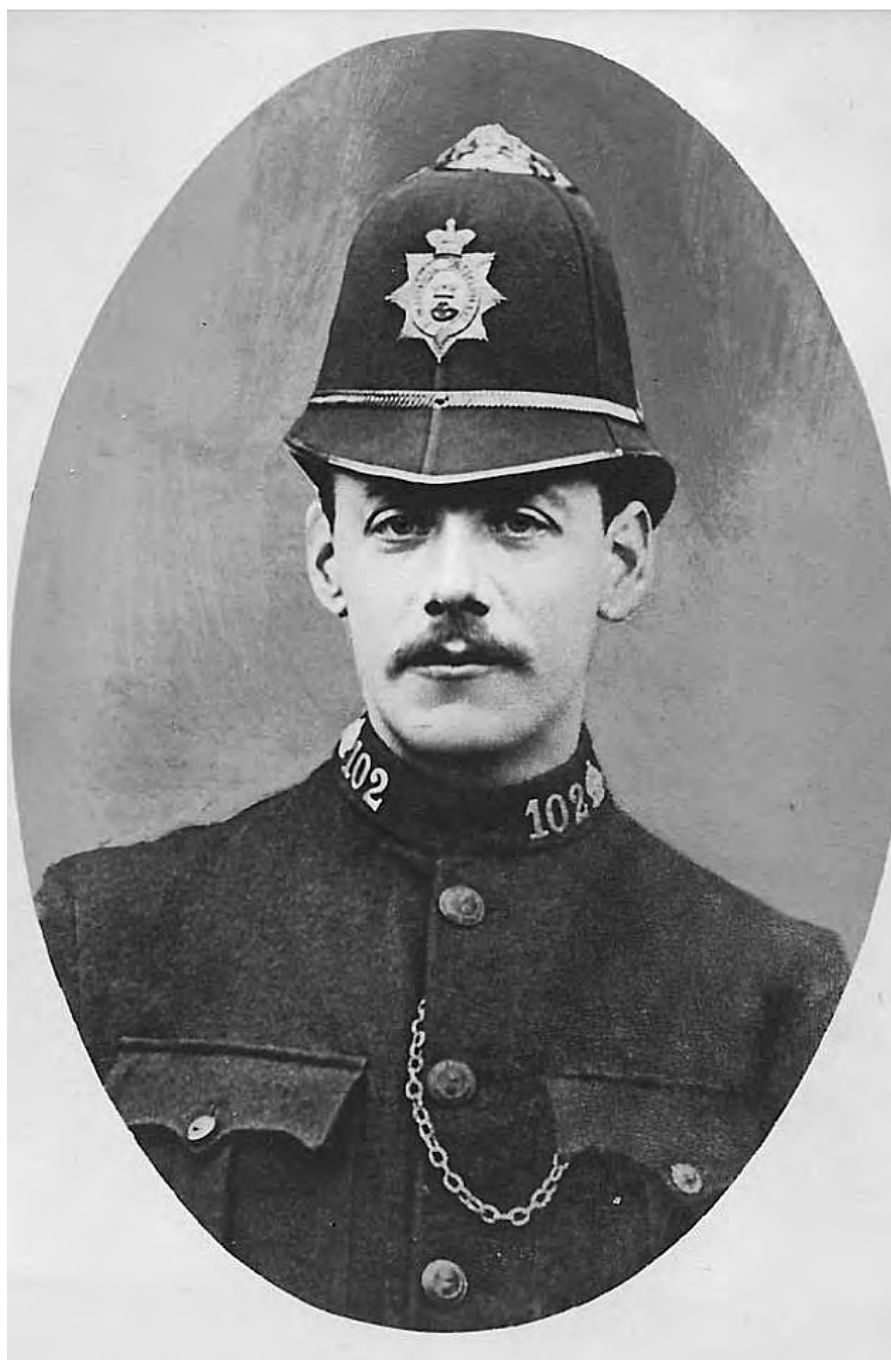
After his initial training he was issued with collar number 102, as can be seen on the picture opposite, and posted to Grassmore, Chesterfield where he received several favourable reports from his supervisors, such as one on 3rd February 1902 for "Observations on his Beat". He received another similar one on 7th October 1902, and in December that year for "Good capture of two

poachers". He was also highly thought of by members of the public on his beat.

He did, however, receive one reprimand, in January 1902 for "Telling falsehoods to obtain leave". During this period discipline was very strict; not many officers managed to complete their service in the Constabulary without being disciplined sometime for trivial matters. Many ended up being dismissed. This reprimand did not prevent him from being promoted to 2nd class constable in May of that year. By December he was promoted to a 1st class constable. These promotions also meant a small rise in pay.

Life in the Constabulary was to take a serious turn for PC Arthur Wright during the evening of 11th March 1905. He was on patrol when he came across a disturbance involving a number of men. PC Wright approached the men and the disturbance abated. He cautioned them with regard to their behaviour and the men dispersed. He continued his patrol, but shortly afterwards he came across them again standing on the pavement. As he walked past them he was hustled by the men, one of whom grabbed him by the throat, dislodging his helmet. The other men joined in, one grabbing him from behind shouted "Bash him Harry while I throttle him."

PC Wright was knocked to the ground and they started to kick him shouting "Kick his ***** brains out," and "Kill the ****". As well as being kicked in the stomach he was kicked in the head several times.



treat the wounds on the rest of his body, PC Wright was taken back to his lodgings into the care of the owners of the house, Mr and Mrs Alton and their cousin Edith.

The other offenders were later arrested by Acting Sergeant Cutts of Grassmoor and Constable Spencer of Tupton. At the April Quarter Sessions the Chairman commended the witness Mr Drabble, stating that he had behaved "With very great courage and pluck going to the assistance of the constable." Two of the five offenders were sentenced to 15 calendar months' hard labour and the other three were sent for three months' hard labour. The Chairman stated that he had no doubt they (the two main offenders) encouraged the other three in the commission of the offence.

PC Arthur Wright never properly recovered from his injuries, and after four months' sick leave he was pensioned off for six months, during which time he underwent an operation at St Thomas' Hospital in London which was paid for by Mrs Arkwright of Sutton Hall. He was then sent to a health resort at Starkholmes, which forms a part of Matlock. Arthur was always grateful to Mrs Arkwright and attended her funeral only weeks before his own tragic death.

He eventually returned to work and was posted to New Mills in November 1905. In March the following year he was posted to Cresswell, and in November he was sent to Long Eaton. In June the following year he moved again to Ilkeston, but he was having difficulties with his health and was forced to take a temporary pension again.

It was not all bad news for Arthur, as he became engaged to Edith Alton. It was Edith who had helped him after his initial assault. She was the daughter of John and Mary Alton. Her father was a coal miner and Edith was

In the bedroom of a house nearby, a man named Drabble heard the commotion outside and went downstairs to see what was going on. He ran outside and over to the disturbance, and immediately pulled one of the men off the now badly-injured officer who was bleeding from the head. Despite his weakened state PC Wright still managed to hold onto one of the offenders, while Mr Drabble held onto another. Both offenders were eventually arrested. The others ran off. A miner

named Harry Wilkinson heard the constable's whistle being blown and went to investigate, but came across the fleeing offenders, hearing one of them say "Wright's got it this time, he won't live many more minutes." Wilkinson was threatened by the assailants, who continued to make good their escape.

PC Wright's head injuries needed several stitches to two serious wounds. The doctor who attended to him later described the officer's head as being "All mashed up". Unable to

the eldest of six. With three brothers and two sisters, the whole family lived at 30 New Street, Grassmore, which was the Post Office, Edith being the postmistress and her youngest sister Annie worked as an assistant.

Edith was born in Dronfield, a town in north east Derbyshire, on 24th June 1875, the same year as Arthur, and the two had quite a long engagement, possibly due to his long recovery from the brutal assault. Arthur not only suffered with his physical health but his mental health as well. The engagement to Edith would have been an aide to encourage his recovery. Towards the end of 1908 his health improved such that he was able to return to work, spending five months at Swadlincote.

To continue his road to recovery the Chief Constable, Captain Herbert Christian Holland, moved him to the spa town of Matlock where he lodged at Mrs Taylor's house in Starkholmes, commencing duty in May 1909. Here he became involved in the local community, eventually becoming vice president of the Matlock Cavendish Football Club. He was described by local residents as tactful, courteous and with a sense of humour. His health continued to improve, helped along by Edith, his involvement in the community and police duties.

Swadlincote was to be Arthur's last posting as tragedy struck on 1st April 1911. Having received a report of a burglary and theft from a greengrocer's shop at Riber, Matlock, Arthur and Constable 300 John Webster met up in the quiet spa town of Matlock and made their way to the premises. It was around 3.30pm. The circumstances appear to be that Mrs Francis Taylor, owner of the shop, had been visited by a neighbour's girl – 17 year old Sylvia Ann Gratton – and whilst being distracted by her children, who were unwell in an upstairs room, Sylvia had opened a drawer and removed £2 9s



Sylvia Ann Gratton



Constable Evan Clementson

6d from a purse.

The officers first went to the greengrocer's shop and after taking a statement from Mrs Taylor they went to Sylvia's home. After questioning she admitted the theft, and in a distraught state she showed the officers where she had hidden the money, which was under some slates in a pigsty adjoining her home. After recovering the money Sylvia was arrested.

The police station was some distance away and as was normal at this time the constables had to walk Sylvia to the station. Sylvia, who was still very upset and crying, walked between the two officers unrestrained. At just after 6.00pm the three walked across Hall Leys Park in the town centre when, without warning, Sylvia suddenly ran from between the officers towards the River Derwent and arrived at the river bank. The officers, totally taken by surprise, ran after her but did not reach her in time to stop her jumping into the deepest part of the river. It was a very cold Spring afternoon and the river would have been freezing and forbidding. As the officers reached the bank they could see Sylvia struggling

and being taken to the centre part of the river, her heavy clothing dragging her under.

Neither officer could swim, but this did not stop Arthur removing his helmet, greatcoat and tunic and jumping in. Arthur managed to grab the girl as his colleague, slightly more cautiously, climbed four feet down the bank and, holding onto a branch, tried to wade into the river. Unfortunately he could do nothing to stop Arthur and the girl who was holding onto him from being dragged under the water.

Constable Webster could do no more to try and save them. He instructed a 16-year-old boy who was standing nearby to run to the police station for help. The boy and Constable Evan Clementson (pictured below) returned within five minutes. The constable, who was a strong swimmer, dived into the freezing river and commenced a search by swimming up and down the area where Arthur and the girl were last seen, and then widened his search when unsuccessful. The constable dived as many as three times, staying under for some considerable time groping with his hands in the

darkened depths. After some time he decided that his search should come to an end as he could do no more.

On the arrival of Superintendent Clark the officers started a dragging operation to try and find the bodies, all hopes of life now being lost. This was a long, laborious operation of throwing a rope and hook into the river and dragging it back. As darkness fell lighting was brought in, loaned by local companies, and a boat to assist with the dragging operation.

At 9.30 in the evening Arthur's body was found caught up some 50 yards from a curve in the river, which at this point was some 12 feet deep. Arthur was still clutching the girl's empty blouse. He was carried to the Town Hall mortuary by stretcher.

Work continued for the girl's body. Rain and falling snow made efforts even more difficult. It was so cold that Sergeant Thomas H. Smith's hands froze to the dragging rope and had to be prised off to allow other officers to continue. Assistance was given by local residents supplying hot drinks and food for the rescuers.

The two officers who originally went into the river were by now showing the effects of hypothermia

and were taken from the scene and given hot baths. PC Webster was haunted by the tragedy for months afterwards.

At 6.30am Sylvia Gratton's body was recovered. At least ten police officers and a number of members of the public were involved in the search.

During the early part of the search the girl's mother Florence was made aware of the situation and arrived at the scene breathless and in a hysterical state, barging into people and trying to get into the water. Police were forced to sympathetically restrain her and take her from the scene. She later claimed that the police had locked her in a cell, but this was disputed by the authorities.

Arthur Wright's 36th birthday, sadly enough, was the day after the tragedy. He was due to spend the weekend with his fiancée at Grassmore. Instead, his body was formally identified by his brother-in-law Sergeant Thomas.

Inquests were later held into the deaths, the verdicts being that Sylvia Gratton committed suicide 'whilst in a state of excitement' and Constable Wright drowned while in the execution of his duty.

To honour PC Arthur Wright's heroic deed a public subscription took place, with a number of high profile donations made, one of which was by the Duke of Devonshire. Whilst he was alive Arthur had contributed to his widowed mother's upkeep. The Duke sent a cheque to her as well.

A monument commemorating Constable Arthur Wright's deed was later purchased and located in Hall Leys Park at Matlock, near to where the incident occurred. Over the years the memorial fell into disrepair, and on 23rd March, 1997 the Derbyshire Constabulary paraded in the Hall Leys Park where the Chief Constable John Newing took the salute. The Right Reverend Robert Beak held a service to commemorate the Centennial celebration of the Fund and the restored Memorial to Constable Wright was rededicated.

My research found that Edith Alton, Arthur's fiancée, never married. She passed away in September 1969 at Ilkeston, Derbyshire at the age of 93. This reminds me of the end of the film *Titanic*, starring Leo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. For those who have seen the film you will know that Jack Dawson died young when the Titanic sunk. Rose DeWitt went on into old age and after her death they were reunited under the clock on the stairs of the liner. I like to think this was the same for Arthur and Edith who, after Edith's death in old age, were reunited many years later on the river bank at Hall Leys Park, Matlock.



MICK SHAW is a retired Police Officer who served a total of 33 years. He has a collection of well over 2,000 photographs and around the same number of full or part records of service of police officers who served in the Bucks Constabulary up until the amalgamation in 1968. Visit his website: www.mkheritage.co.uk/bch.



Rededication of the Memorial to Arthur Wright

Police Constable 285 David Bain MacLennan

Northumberland County Constabulary, Killed while serving with the Scots Guards in WW1

By PATRICK W. ANDERSON FSA Scot

Several years ago when my wife and I holidayed in Ross and Cromarty in Scotland we stopped to look at the Avoch War Memorial in Ross-shire, near to the Parish Church. The War Memorial is an obelisk memorial and lists the many casualties of the Great War and the 1938-1945 War.

The memorial front records:

“To the Glory of God and in Affectionate Remembrance of the Men of Avoch Parish who fell in the Great War – 1914-1918. Their Name Liveth for Evermore.”

There are 54 casualties of the Great War listed on the memorial, and each casualty's name, rank, regiment/corps etc is recorded. I noted a number of Highland Regiments listed, and by chance I found out that a named casualty – MacLeman, D.B.- Scots Guards, Corporal – had served as a Police Constable in the Northumberland County Constabulary. I commenced some research on him and found that the Imperial War Graves Commission (nowadays Commonwealth War Graves Commission) recorded this Avoch casualty as Private 6657 David Bain MacLennan, death date 14th September 1914, whilst serving in the 1st Battalion of the Scots Guards. He was 27 years of age, and is listed on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing, Seine-et-Marne in France.

The record shows that he was

the son of Alexander and Catherine MacLennan of Rosehaugh, Avoch, Ross-shire, and husband of Elizabeth Sim Miller of Boldside, Fishing Lodge, Galashiels. I noted that he was not listed on the Scottish National War Memorial at the Edinburgh Castle, so I began the research necessary to be able to submit a file to the Trustees of the Scottish National War Memorial.

I found that on 6th June 1887, at 4.00am, David Bain McLeman was born at Bog of Afterflow, Avoch in the County of Ross-shire, and his parents were Alexander McLeman (General Labourer) and Catherine McLennan or McLeman. I then found the 1891 Census for Avoch, which shows Alexander and Catherine had five sons and a daughter. David Bain McLeman is the youngest, aged just 4 years. The 1901 Census again records the McLemans residing at the same address, with only four sons residing with their parents. In this census David Bain McLeman is recorded as being 13 years of age and a scholar.

It would appear that on 23rd November 1906 he attested for service in the Scots Guards, enlisting at Inverness and being allocated the service number 6657. His details were entered by the Colour Sergeant as follows: David Bain McLennan, aged 19 years 6 months, 5ft 10 inches tall, occupation Farm Servant. He signed the form 'D B MacLennan', but 'Mac' was deleted and changed to 'Mc.' on the form.

On 5th December 1906 he was

posted to 1st Battalion Scots Guards in London and qualified as a Marksman. He had a machine gun qualification as well.

The next England census, for 1911, shows Private David Bain McLennan of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards in Egypt, and he is recorded as being 24 years of age. He was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal during that year, and on 2nd January 1913 he returned to the UK and during November transferred to the Army Reserve. He was paid a gratuity of £7. He informed the Army he had intended to apply for the London Dock Police or Glasgow Tramways, but instead around this time he was appointed a River Tweed Police as a Water Bailiff, before applying to becoming a Police Constable in the Northumberland County Constabulary.

On the application form he recorded that he was a River Tweed Police Officer, aged 26 years 7 months, and was 5ft 10 inches tall.

On 6th March 1914 David Bain MacLennan, aged 26, married Elizabeth Sim Miller, aged 22, at their home address of Boldside, Galashiels. He is recorded as being a Constable on the Marriage Certificate.

Ten days later, on 16th March 1914, he was appointed Police Constable 285 in the Northumberland County Constabulary and stationed at Morpeth Police Headquarters. He was 3rd Class Constable on appointment, stationed at Police Headquarters

to carry out the training period for a new Police Constable, with the course ending on 30th April 1914.

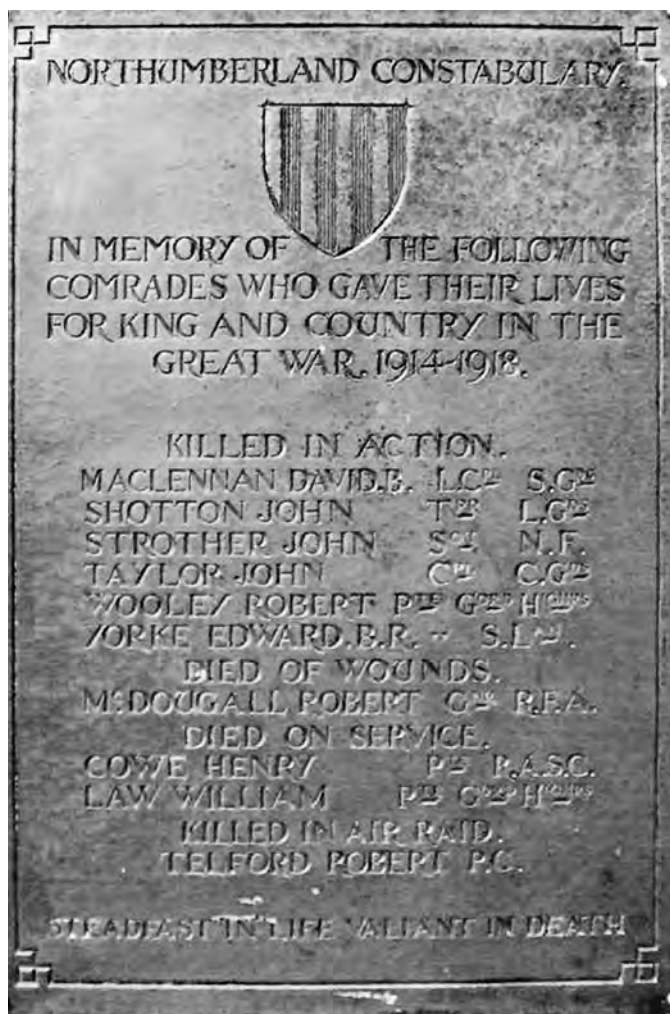
The following day he was posted to Wallsend to take up Police Duties in the County Police Force but then, on 4th August 1914, War was declared and on 5th August 1914 he was recalled to his old Regiment, enlisting at Inverness in the Scots Guards as Private 6657 McLennan in the 1st Battalion.

Once again the Army spelt his surname differently to that he was using at that time! He was posted to Aldershot as part of the 1st (Guards) Brigade, 1st Division, and on 13th August 1914 embarked for France, landing at Le Havre. He was promoted to Lance Corporal at some point.

The Scots Guards in the Great War 1914-1918 records:

That night (13th) the French XVIIIth Corps was on the right of the 1st Brigade, the rest of the 1st Division on the left on a line passing through Moulins and Oeuilly to Bourg.

The battle of the 14th September began at 3am, in rain and mist, when the 2nd Infantry Brigade advanced to seize the Chemin des Dames, with its right directed on the village of Cerny beyond it on the farthest side of the ridge, looking down on the valley of the Ailette. Its left was directed on a point a mile west of Cerny. Covered by this attack, the 1st (Guards) Brigade was to move leftwards through Moulins, which was to be passed about 7.30a.m., and then turn northwards over the ridge through Cerny-en-Laonnais, down to Chamouille on the farther side of the Ailette valley on the



direct road to Laon.

The leading troops of the 1st Brigade reached Vendresse about 7a.m. The day had broken in thick mist and rain, which, once troops were in action, rendered almost inevitable the mixing of companies and battalions through losing direction.

The 1st Brigade was coming into action on the left of the 2nd, with the 1st Coldstream Guards on the right. The 3rd Brigade was in reserve at Moulins. The Coldstream Guards on the right of the 1st Brigade, as they mounted towards the plateau from Vendresse, had found themselves in a terribly steep and thick wood, and by the time they reached the top found that the battalions on their left, the Black Watch and the Camerons beyond them, had found a clearer way and were already in position. Between the right of the Black Watch and the left of the 2nd Brigade, the Coldstream Guards found room. Everywhere on

the ridge there was the confusion of companies and battalions, which could not be avoided in the mist in an unknown country. The mist lifted about 10.30 a.m.

The 1st Scots Guards sent two companies ("B" and "C") as escort to the guns at the Tour de Paissy, the other two (Right Flank and Left Flank) acting as Brigade Reserve.

Soon after 1pm a great German counter attack on the 1st and 2nd Brigades drove back the troops to the right of the Camerons, exposing the right flank of that battalion, which suffered heavy losses. A gap had developed between them and the Black Watch and into this was sent the two reserve companies of the Scots Guards. The Scots Guards companies deployed, under cover of the Troyon ridge, about half a mile west of Vendresse.

Each had two platoons in front and two in support. They were heavily shelled, but had few casualties before the crest was reached. They then extended and pushed forward by rushes. One shell burst in the front of the Right Flank Platoon, wounded 2nd Lieutenant E.D. Mackenzie and killing or wounding several NCOs and men. Another killed Sergeant Royall and seven men. The leading platoons went on, under heavy rifle and machine gun fire, but without many casualties, until they came in touch with the Camerons on the right and the Black Watch on the left, both of whom had already suffered severely and could get no farther forward. Captain Sir V. Mackenzie (R.F. Company) then sent back a message explaining the situation; but two minutes later received an order which had crossed his messenger, that no advance was to be made beyond the hedge about 200 yards behind the village of Chivy, where his company already was.

Some 200 yards in front of him was thick wood.

In this position Right Flank remained, helping to repel the counter attacks which were made up until about 3pm. At dusk the fighting was over for the day, and the company was ordered to withdraw and rejoin the rest of the battalion on the Troyon Ridge.

The rest of the Left Flank had been withdrawn at dusk to the general line. This had been the heaviest fighting the 1st Scots Guards had yet had, and their losses for the first time were really serious. They were:

Killed: Major J T Carpenter- Garnier, 2nd Lieutenant Compton-Thornhill, 2nd Lieutenant Inigo-Jones and 16 OTHER RANKS.

Wounded: 2nd Lieutenants E D Mackenzie, J Stirling- Stuart, and 86 other ranks.

Missing: 12 other ranks.

The Roll call after the battle on the 14th September 1914 would have recorded that Lance Corporal David MacLennan, killed in action, was one of the casualties of that day.

On 21st January 1915, his widow Elizabeth Sim MacLennan was sent – to her home address – her husband's effects of £2.16 7d, and on 7th May 1919 a War Gratuity of £5. These payments are recorded in the Register of Soldiers Effects for each casualty. Also recorded is the entry "no Children."

The first report in the *Southern Reporter* for 3rd June 1915 records a long list of Officers and Men under the heading of "Gala Roll of Honour-Officers and Men who have made the Greatest Sacrifice." This list includes the name of Private D.B. McLennan, Scots Guards.

During 1918 the medals that would have been awarded to her husband were sent to his widow, Mrs E.S. MacLennan. The medals issued were the 1914 Star, the British Victory and British War Medal, as well as the 1914



clasp "awarded to those who served under fire or had operated within range of enemy artillery in France or Belgium between 5th August and 22nd November 1914".

The Victory and British War Medals were awarded to him as a Private in the Scots Guards, but his 1914 Star was awarded to Lance Corporal David Bain McLennan of the Scots Guards, and recorded on that roll is just "Killed in Action 14/9/1914". The qualifying date for these medals was recorded as 13th August 1914, the date he entered the Theatre of War in France and Flanders.

The *Morpeth Herald & Reporter* for 17th September 1920 included an

article titled 'County Police Memorial – Bronze Tablet unveiled at Morpeth by The Duke of Northumberland'. The report goes on to record what was written on the Memorial Tablet, viz:

Northumberland Constabulary - in Memory of the following comrades who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War 1914-1918:

KILLED IN ACTION:

MacLennan, David B. L.Cpl, S.Gds.
Shotton, John. Tpr, Irish Gds.
Strother, John, Sgt, Northumberland Fus.
Taylor, John, Cpl S.Gds
Wooley, Robert, Pte, Gord Highrs.
Yorke, Edward B.R., Pte, S.Lancs

DIED OF WOUNDS:

McDougall Robert, Gnr, R.F. A.

DIED IN SERVICE:

Cowe, Henry, Pte, R.A.S.C.
Law, William, Pte, Gord. Highrs.

KILLED IN AIR RAID:

Telford, Robert, P.C.
"Steadfast in Life, Valiant in Death."

The Chief Constable at the time of the Great War and the unveiling of the Northumberland County Constabulary War Memorial at their Police Headquarters at Morpeth was Capt (Sir) Fullarton James CBE. He was appointed Chief Constable on 4th July 1900, having been Chief Constable of Radnorshire Constabulary until the previous day.

His Majesty's Stationery Office issued the 80 volumes of soldiers who died in the Great War, and this publication records in the Scots Guards book: 'Guardsman 6657 David Bain McLennan, Born Avoch, Ross-shire, enlisted Inverness, Residence Avoch, Killed in action 14th September 1914 in Theatre of War – France & Flanders'.

On 15th September 1923 Colonel A.F. Mackenzie, CMG, MVO unveiled the Avoch War Memorial in Ross-shire. This Obelisk Memorial records 54 casualties of the Great War and includes MacLeman. D.B., Cpl. Scots Guards.

On 5th October 1925 the Galashiels War Memorial was unveiled by Field Marshal The Earl Haig KT, GCB. OM., GCVO, KCIE. This memorial lists 639 men war dead of the Great War, including 'Scots Guards: Pte D.B. McLennan.'

I found enough facts on Scots Guards Lance Corporal David Bain MacLennan to present a file to the Trustees of the Scottish National War Memorial at the Edinburgh Castle, and in due course I received a communication from Lt Colonel Roger J. Binks, Secretary to the Trustees, informing me that the casualty had been accepted as a

casualty of the Great War and that the Roll of Honour in the Scots Guards Roll would list him as viz:

*MacLennan, David Bain
Guardsman 6657 Scots Guards
1st Battalion*

Birthplace Avoch, Ross shire

*Date of Death 14th September 1914
France & Flanders*

Killed in action

Other details: Originally MacLeman.

I am so pleased that the Trustees of the Scottish National War Memorial at the Castle in Edinburgh accepted that Scots Guards Guardsman 6657 David Bain MacLennan be recorded as a casualty of the Great War and listed on the Roll of Honour, and that the Northumbria Police, during September 2017, had a dedication ceremony to the Memorial Wall into the Memorial Garden at their new Police Headquarters at Middle Engine Lane Police Station, and that Police Constable 285 David Bain MacLennan of the then Northumberland County Constabulary and his colleagues in that Police Force are remembered and now by the Northumbria Police!

Addit

One of David Bain MacLennan's elder brothers, Piper 1914 Kenneth McLennan (MacLennan) of the 1/7th Highland Light Infantry, was recorded in the *London Gazette* on 11th March 1916 when awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry on the 21st July 1915 at Gallipoli, when he advanced with the attacking line playing his pipes, to the great encouragement of the men. When his pipes were shattered by shrapnel, with great bravery and coolness Piper McLennan tended and dressed the wounded under heavy fire.

Another of David's elder brothers, Private 147203 Alexander MacLennan, 78th (Manitoba Regt.) Canadian

Infantry, was killed in action on 14th October 1916 aged 37 years. He is listed on the Vimy Memorial in France.

Sources

Internet: Scotland's People; Ancestry; Scottish War Memorials Project; Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Scottish National War Memorial.

Publications: *The Scots Guards in the Great War 1914-1918* by F. Loraine Petrie, Wilfred Ewart and Major General Sir Cecil Lowther (1925); *Southern Reporter*, 3rd June 1915 ('Gala Roll of Honour'); *Morpeth Herald & Reporter*, 17th September 1920 ('Unveiling of County Police Memorial').

Other: Avoch War Memorial, unveiling ceremony, 15th September 1923; Northumberland County Constabulary 1857- 1957; "Soldiers Died in the Great War" (CD-ROM).

Acknowledgements

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PATRICK W. ANDERSON, FSA Scot is a retired Police Sergeant. He joined the former West Riding Constabulary in May 1966, then served with the former Lanarkshire Constabulary (1970) and its merged force of Strathclyde Police. In 1979 he transferred to the West Yorkshire Police, retiring after 30 policing years. He was the youngest Special Constable in the former Exeter City Police during 1965, and the then Chief Constable K. E. Steer told him he was the youngest Special Constable in the south west of England at that time. He has been a PHS member since the early years of the Society and he has had a number of articles published in its pages from 1991.

Rural Policing in Mid Victorian England

By PAUL B. DAVIES

If my great, great, great grandfather had joined the Metropolitan Police when they were a fledgling organisation I wouldn't have had to do much more than read the 1829 *General Instructions for the different ranks of the Police Force to discover what he did.*

As well as providing a guide to the duties, responsibilities and powers of officers, *General Instructions* described how the force was organised and what, almost to the minute, the people in it were expected to be doing.

Each of the seventeen Divisions had an identical establishment of a hundred and forty four Constables, sixteen Serjeants (sic) and four Inspectors, under the command of a Superintendent. The Constables were arranged into sections of nine (eight to cover beats and one to act as a reserve), led by a Serjeant.

As the force of each Division was split equally between days and nights, two of the Inspectors were on duty at all times. One remained at the Divisional station to deal with calls for assistance, administrative matters and the supervision of prisoners, including their court appearances. The other spent his time on the 'street' taking reports from the eight duty Serjeants and checking the sixty four Constables on the beat (he was expected to visit every part of the Division during his 'tour').

Each Serjeant's duty began with an assembly of his Constables to check that all were present before they were inspected and given the orders of the day. The beat Constables were then marched from the Divisional station to their patrol areas where

the Serjeant had to ensure that his men formally relieved each of the Constables about to finish their duty before making his first report to the street Inspector. Following this the Serjeant's time was spent ensuring that his Constables were patrolling as expected and reporting to the Inspector, at times and locations previously stipulated by him. At the end of the patrol period the Serjeant 'collected' his Constables, as they were relieved, and inspected them prior to their going off duty.

Constables had to visit every part of their beat at least once every ten minutes, or quarter of an hour, and to meet their Serjeant at times, and in locations, nominated by the latter. They were not permitted to leave their beat for any reason until relieved by another Constable or their Serjeant/Inspector. When off duty they had to be prepared to return at any time to supplement the reserves, if a need arose.

Even if funding had been available, this pattern and scale of deployment wouldn't have been appropriate for counties such as Essex, whose recently formed Constabulary my ancestor, John Jonas, joined in April 1842. The duties, responsibilities and powers of those in the two forces were however very similar because the Home Secretary had asked the Metropolitan Police Commissioners to draft rules for the new county constabularies and around half of what was in *General Instructions* was copied verbatim into the 1840 *Orders and Instructions Framed and Issued for the Superintendents and*

Constables of the Essex Constabulary.

The content which wasn't copied of course was that not applicable to Essex, including the structure and organisation of the Metropolitan force and what its members were expected to do.

Instead, *Orders and Instructions* stated that each Constable was to patrol every part of his 'guard' as often as practicable and that guards were to be arranged so that patrols in adjacent Divisions were able to confer (and "patrol in pairs" was added in the next version, published in 1849).¹

Although the preference was to locate the majority of the establishment as centrally as possible within each Division it was also expected that Constables would be located at, or near, the boundaries of the larger Divisions (which in 1849 became "... at different points of the Division as may be found most desirable.")

The smallest Divisional force, among the fourteen in Essex in April 1842, consisted of a Superintendent and three Constables, while the largest was formed of a Superintendent, three Inspectors and twelve Constables.

Initially there hadn't been any Inspectors in Essex, which is essentially why they didn't have any defined role in *Orders and Instructions* as they did in *General Instructions*; there were no Sergeants in the county until 1855.

Before speculating what the above may have meant in terms of rural policing it's worth considering some background issues:

- Although a few locations had access to rail transport the vast majority of journeys would have relied on horses but for many years these (and ‘carts’) were only issued to the Superintendents in Essex, with their use limited to tasks such as conveying prisoners and moving Constables between Divisions. The alternative was usually walking, but as this would have meant journeys of several hours for some Constables, particularly those located at or near Divisional boundaries, contact with a Constabulary station was likely to have been limited.² Extensive instructions to Constables regarding how they should, for example, investigate burglaries in the 1849 *Orders and Instructions* may be an acknowledgement of the difficulties that Superintendents or Inspectors had in providing timely assistance to relatively isolated Constables.
 - ‘Free’ and daily delivery of letters in rural areas was far from universal, while access to the telegraph was limited and the service relatively expensive. The communication issue was one of the main reasons for arranging guards so that Constables could confer, but it would be surprising if regular visits to Constables for the same purpose wasn’t a key (and time consuming) duty for Inspectors, where the latter existed.
 - The diversity of rural habitation combined with roads, lanes and footpaths which would have varied widely in their availability and condition meant that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to design guards in the same way as the beats in the Metropolitan area. Arranging patrols so that Constables could confer, or complete their guards concurrently (where several were stationed together) may have required some part of a ‘natural’ route to be omitted or repeated, or time ‘wasted’.
 - The 1849 *Orders and Instructions* specified that prisoners were to be checked every hour and should always be able to communicate with whoever was holding them in custody, but some of the time of those Constables based there would always have been required for duties relating to prisoners at stations where the latter were held. This would of course have reduced the Constables availability for other activities, including patrols.
 - Without reserves, all or part of any regular patrol would have to be abandoned if a Superintendent considered it necessary to guard one part of his Division more than another, or if a Constable had to attend to some other matter such as a court appearance, delivering a summons or observation of an anticipated crime scene.
 - Inspectors had been introduced to deputise for Superintendents and assist with managing the Constables but the time required for that would have varied between Divisions. This meant that at least in some areas Inspectors also acted as additional, or in locations where there were none, as alternative Constables.
 - *Orders and Instructions* had been ratified by Quarter Sessions so at least some of the content may have been for the benefit of the magistrates, although not necessarily considered practical by the Chief Constable.³ He often mentioned the difficulties of a “dispersed” force and may have been far more pragmatic than *Orders and Instructions* suggest.
 - The geographical extent of the Divisions, compared with the manpower that was based in them, suggests that a degree of pragmatism was anticipated in the structure of patrols. In the Division with the smallest force for example there was an average of around twenty six square miles and almost 5,000 inhabitants for each of the three Constables.
- Even if they hadn’t been reminded of the need to use their initiative in *Orders and Instructions*, many Constables would have had no other option and it would have been natural for the ‘unique’ circumstances in which they operated to have produced different arrangements; only part of their time may have been spent patrolling and patrols may have varied in duration and/or coverage and/or scheduling, even from day to day.
- In short, it seems reasonable to believe that there wouldn’t have been a standard pattern for policing in rural Essex during the mid Victorian period.
- In 1856 my ancestor moved to another newly formed Constabulary. We know that almost all of the ‘guidance’ provided in the North Riding of Yorkshire was very similar, if not identical, to Essex because the *Orders and Instructions framed and issued for the Government of the North Riding Constabulary* were almost completely a verbatim copy of the

1 ‘Guard’ was the term used in Essex for beat.

2 Carriers, using horses and ‘carts’, ran scheduled services between larger settlements which meant that on some routes Constables stationed in outlying locations may have been able to use them for part of their journeys (although payment for such services would have been another matter).

3 In the early years of some county forces Chief Constables had to contend with hostility from magistrates who’d never supported the formation (or cost) of the new police forces. Even if this wasn’t the case many magistrates were local landowners who would have wanted assurances that the force would be preventing crime in their localities (and on their holdings).

Essex 1849 *Orders and Instructions*.⁴ Minor differences in the North Riding version included using 'beat' rather than guard and the omission of an instruction to patrol in pairs.

Unless required to do otherwise Constables had to patrol every part of their beat as often as practicable and when their usual hours of patrol were over had to return to their quarters where it was expected that they'd remain until their next patrol. If they left their quarters before then they had to leave a note providing the time of leaving and probable time of returning, together with the reason for their absence.

Constables were to be located where it was considered most desirable although there was to be one at, or near, any station where there was a 'mounted' officer and a lock up, to provide cover at that station (although in reality this wasn't always the case, at least in the early years of the force).

The number of Constables in post two years after the force was established meant that each was then responsible for an average of around twenty three square miles and more than 2,100 inhabitants.⁵ Although the latter was less than Essex the rural population was often spread over a significantly larger geographical area and was generally less accessible as a result of the terrain and sometimes because of the type of weather conditions which were experienced in the North Riding.

If a Constable was to comply with *Orders and Instructions* and be responsible for the "life and property within (sic) his beat", be "perfectly acquainted with all parts" of the latter and be able to recognise all of the inhabitants of his area (so as to render assistance to them) in most cases his walk would have been long, and sometimes strenuous. Simply patrolling the perimeter of 23 square



Ayton, North Riding

miles would have required most, if not all, of a Constable's 'day'. In Pickering Lythe, one of the eight North Riding Divisions, a walk of four to five hours would have been required to travel from the most distant stations (when the force was established) to the Divisional station, although sometimes it may have been possible to use a carrier for part of the journey.⁶ It isn't surprising that in the North Riding, Inspectors as well as Superintendents were provided with horses (and carts) from the inception of the force.

In the light of circumstances such as these it seems reasonable to believe that the pattern of policing in the rural North Riding would, as in Essex, have involved a far more pragmatic approach than implied by *Orders and Instructions*. There is some evidence for this in the form of the *Journal* kept (April 1866 - May 1869) by the Inspector at Ayton, in the eastern part of the Pickering Lythe Division.⁷

The *Journal* was a requirement of the Chief Constable and subject to examination by magistrates and superior officers so we can be reasonably confident in regard to its veracity. It's also worth pointing out that the Inspector involved had held the rank since the inception of the

force, and before that in the Durham County Constabulary, so it seems unlikely that what was practiced in his area was abnormal.

Originally the Ayton detachment only had Constables at Cayton, nearly five miles to the south east, Scalby, around five miles to the north east and Snainton, more than five miles to the west. Almost five years later a Constable had supplemented the Sergeant or Inspector at Ayton, and within a year another had been stationed at Staintondale on the moors north of Scalby, almost twelve miles from Ayton.

The Inspector's 'typical' day involved going on duty at 9 a.m. and remaining at the station for two to three hours before patrolling in his local area, or more usually, visiting townships and stations around the detachment area where he conferenced with prominent local residents and/or his Constables. He generally returned late in the afternoon, although early evening wasn't uncommon. Before going off duty at midnight the Inspector often patrolled his local area although occasionally he conferenced with one or more of his Constables, sometimes after midnight. When he wasn't otherwise engaged he seems to have

had an hour or so off duty around midday with another two to three hours in the early evening.⁸

Regular exceptions to the Inspector's typical day were Thursdays, when he attended Petty Sessions at Scarborough, Saturdays when he usually finished his patrol after midnight and Sundays when he tended not to travel and to finish before midnight.

'Irregular' exceptions, such as policing major events, escorting prisoners and appearing at Quarter Sessions or Assizes were frequent; he didn't usually travel if he'd done so particularly extensively the previous day, and/or if he'd finished in the early hours of the morning.

Of course any changes to the Inspector's day almost certainly impacted on the Ayton Constable's typical day as he probably would have had to take on unavoidable commitments, such as station coverage, even if that meant abandoning duties such as patrolling. Obviously his colleagues would also have had to forsake such duties in response to exceptions to their days which might not have occurred as often but would, as described below, have included regular, and sometimes significant, travelling time to meet and conference with the Inspector.

One in two of the Inspector's patrols were made in the late evening, usually finishing at, or close, to midnight. Afternoons were next most common, accounting for around one in four, with the remainder divided almost equally between mornings and early evenings. Sundays accounted for one in four of the Inspector's patrols with Fridays next most frequent, although there were nearly as many on Wednesdays. Almost as often as the latter were Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, each with a similar number of patrols.

Although it's probable that the

scheduling and frequencies of patrols were largely the result of when the Inspector wasn't otherwise engaged in his other duties it seems improbable that he would have carried out any which he didn't consider to be worthwhile.

Despite the potential impact of the weather, and changes in available daylight, there was little seasonal variation in the frequency of the Inspector's patrols. However they varied considerably in duration; most were around three hours although as a significant proportion were two hours the Inspector may have considered this an optimum as there was no 'official' reason otherwise for him to finish (although it may have been so that he could return to the station and 'release' the Constable there, possibly to patrol).

Sometimes the Inspector appended "neighbourhood" or "vicinity of" when recording the location that he'd patrolled which may have been because, unusually (such occasions constituted less than one in ten of his patrols) he hadn't covered the 'residential' area.

In contrast, Constables may have spent little of their time patrolling residential areas as in Pickering Lythe these were relatively limited. Many were nothing more than continuous development along a 'main' thoroughfare; including East and West Ayton (with their nine thoroughfares which the Inspector often spent no more than two hours patrolling) the average number of roads within townships in the Ayton detachment area was three, and these were generally, with the exception of the main thoroughfare, relatively short. As well as minimising the time required for residential patrols this would obviously have also limited the potential to vary beats, other than their scheduling. Constables therefore probably spent the majority of their

time patrolling non residential areas, although, as intimated above, the size of these and widespread nature of much rural habitation would have limited the probability of them covering all points with a single patrol.

This meant that in many rural Constable's areas two or more patrol routes were likely to have been required simply to cover every point; arranging these to be of similar durations, based on the Constable's (home) station would have enabled him to more easily respond to exceptions to his day than if he had to patrol a very long route (over many hours).

If the number of routes was increased above the minimum required to cover the area it would have been possible to reduce the duration of each patrol which would

- 4 Yorkshire was divided into three Ridings until 1974 when significant changes were made to county boundaries. Some of the North Riding is contained within North Yorkshire although the latter was supplemented by areas which had formerly been in the East and West Ridings.
- 5 Compared with around thirteen square miles and more than 2,500 inhabitants in Essex.
- 6 With each Constable responsible for around twenty one square miles and more than 2,400 inhabitants Pickering Lythe would have been reasonably representative of the North Riding.
- 7 The location was actually East Ayton: West Ayton was a continuation of the township on the opposite side of the river Derwent.
- 8 This has been inferred from the Inspector's repeated use of "came on duty at" and the apparent absence of activity between the time of the previous activity being completed and that statement.

We shouldn't begrudge the Inspector any rest that he managed as during the thirty eight months of the Journal he had a total of three annual leave and twenty and a half (net) sick days (most of which related to an episode of food poisoning and an accident while on duty).

have further increased a Constable's ability to respond to exceptions and be more readily available in the event of an 'incident'.

Although such a pattern would have made it unlikely that a Constable would pass the same point every day this clearly wouldn't have been possible anyway in many rural areas, even when an exception of some sort didn't impact on the Constable's day. It also seems reasonable to believe that not knowing which day a Constable might be patrolling wouldn't have been much less of a deterrent than not knowing what time he might be patrolling. Also worth considering is the increased flexibility offered by having more than the minimum number of routes and them possibly only requiring a few hours each to complete; particular points of interest (such as the home of a magistrate or suspected miscreant) could be included on more than one route and ad hoc alterations and/or additions to routes more easily accommodated.

The Inspector conferenced with his Constables at almost any time of the clock but nearly half of occurrences were during the afternoon with a third of these being at the Constable's station (home). This proportion would have been greater if Constables hadn't been Absent as often (more than half of all recorded conference absences were at the (home) station during the afternoons).

Meeting Constables during the afternoon at their home (stations) might suggest that was because they weren't generally on duty then (as they patrolled at nights) but it may simply have been a case of not knowing where the Constable might otherwise be when a conference was arranged (probably on the last occasion that the Inspector had met the Constable).

When a Constable was Absent from his (home) station he presumably left

a note, as required by *Orders and Instructions*, because in such cases there was usually a conference soon after that scheduled but in a different location. Often this was elsewhere in the Constable's area suggesting that he'd left his station in response to an incident or been delayed while on patrol (and his family had informed the Inspector which route he'd been patrolling if there was more than one). Otherwise the Inspector must have left a note for the Constable and they met later, usually in another Constable's area, sometimes with other Constables joining them.

Some afternoon conferences were at Scarborough when the Inspector was attending Petty Sessions (and at least one or more of the Constables that he met there were probably doing the same) or at the station in Ayton and their 'group' nature (and regularity) suggests that they may have been primarily for sharing intelligence and/or the distribution of recent orders. Particularly when group conferences at Ayton were missed the Inspector usually met the absent Constable(s) within hours, which suggests that he had a particular reason for gathering his Constables concurrently at that location, for example to distribute their pay and/or to inspect them.

A third of the Inspector's conferences were held after 10 p.m., usually in the Ayton or an immediately neighbouring area, sometimes with two or three Constables. As these conferences were often held at known 'landmarks' it's possible that they occurred when the 'local' Constable was on patrol but when Constables from non neighbouring areas were involved they may have, at least sometimes, occurred during an observation, rather than a patrol, and the Inspector could have been checking on his men's deployment as much as wishing to conference with them. There's a period in the *Journal*

when all of the Constables, other than from Snainton, were involved almost every night/morning for weeks in what seems to have been a major observation (which also involved the Superintendent and members of the Scarborough borough force).

As night time conferences seldom occurred later than 2 a.m., if they were accommodated within patrols it may be that the latter didn't usually continue much later (although the timing may have reflected the Inspector's desire to finish his day)

Although the Inspector used his horse and cart on average around ten (and the horse alone on a further seven) occasions each month he didn't seem to have used it, as might have been expected (but contrary to *Orders and Instructions*) when conferencing with several Constables together away from his area at night (when he might for example have taken the Snainton Constable from Ayton to a point in the east) as the cart was only used on a few of the same days as such conferences.

Mornings were the least likely time for conferences which may have reflected the Inspector's availability (station duties) but may equally have been due to when the Constables normally began their days (the Inspector may usually have been at the station at Ayton during the morning because the Constable stationed there didn't come on duty until later).

The seasons didn't seem to have any impact on the Inspector's conferences. Surprisingly there were more night time conferences in the winter months, with daytime meetings being most popular in the summer. This was at least partly because events which involved policing by most, if not all, of the Constables (after conferencing with the Inspector) tended to occur during the more clement months. Perhaps

counter-intuitively the Inspector met the Staintondale Constable more often in the winter than during the other seasons.

On average the Inspector conferenced forty three times each month with his five Constables, with them being Absent almost seven times from an obviously pre-arranged meeting. In addition the Inspector engaged in an "ongoing conference" with the Ayton Constable on an average nineteen days each month (which may have been when a prisoner was in custody and continuous coverage of the station meant that the Inspector and Constable had regular 'handovers'). Perhaps surprisingly there doesn't appear to be any relationship between these occasions and those when the Ayton Constable conferenced with the Inspector away from the station, which occurred, on average four times each month, primarily after 10 p.m. in neighbouring Constable's areas (although of course the prime objective of such meetings may be other than a conference).

The overall frequency of the Inspector's conferences was around that expected by the Chief Constable but didn't satisfy the latter's requirements that Inspectors conferenced with each of their Constables in their areas twice weekly at night. Among other reasons, this may have been because coverage of the station often precluded night meetings, the Inspector (and/or Constables) couldn't physically manage a schedule which would have facilitated such meetings and/or the Constables weren't usually on duty for much of the night.

It was however probably a reflection of the practicalities of visiting the Constables in their areas as the travelling time could be significant and obviously would have impacted on the Inspector's daytime

activities. Although that would have been the case at any time of the clock, there were advantages to travelling during the day so for example when the Inspector visited the Staintondale Constable, which involved several hours even using his horse, he tended to call on the Scalby Constable, conference with prominent local residents and/or carry out Weights & Measures inspections en route.

The particular problems of visiting Staintondale almost certainly also explains why the Inspector only met with the Constable stationed there on average five times a month compared with almost ten occasions with each of the three stationed at Cayton, Scalby and Snainton. That was despite the Staintondale Constable supplementing the Inspector's visits by regularly meeting him at Scarborough and sometimes taking what must have been a long walk to Ayton (primarily for group conferences).

The lower frequency of conferences between the Inspector and the Staintondale Constable (the latter could of course readily conference with colleagues in the Scalby area and/or Whitby Division) may have been the reason for him being Absent less than half as often as each of his three colleagues. However another reason might have been that as the latter were nearer, the Inspector might not have always pre-arranged every conference with them, increasing the likelihood of those Constables being otherwise engaged when he visited.

Meetings at the Petty Sessions on Thursdays meant that day was twice as popular as the other weekdays but otherwise conferences with the four Constables at the outlying stations were spread reasonably evenly over the days of the week. Conferences on Saturdays were as frequent as during the week but Sundays were half as popular possibly because of a general

desire for a 'short' day, together with the need to attend Divine Service and/or check on local licensed establishments.

Sometimes Constables were conferenced with more than once in a day (such as at Petty Sessions and then later in the evening) but there were few instances when Constables were conferenced with at widely different times on the same day which may have been simply because a second conference wasn't essential or Constable's duty patterns didn't provide the opportunity.

Conclusions

It doesn't seem unreasonable to believe that the Constables worked a similar pattern as the Inspector - 'fifteen' hours including breaks (at home). Such an arrangement would have provided the maximum coverage which could be reasonably expected of an individual while the working hours probably wouldn't have been considered excessive by the standards of the day. Any less and the generally younger Constables could be unfavourably compared with the Inspector - any more, other than in exceptional circumstances, being physically unreasonable.⁹

It also seems likely, based upon the timing of conferences with the Inspector, that the Constables started their typical day a few hours later than him, possibly midday (therefore usually finishing around 3 a.m.).

The generally limited extent of residential areas meant that the Constables would have spent the majority of their time patrolling rural areas. The size of these, often widespread nature of their habitation and probable preference for Constables to also be able to reasonably speedily respond to other

⁹ There were of course no days off nor any significant leave of absence allowed.

demands however suggests that an alternative to single long patrol routes may have been necessary.

One option could have been a series of routes, possibly radiating from the Constable's (home) stations and covering every part of their areas, which they would have patrolled whenever, and as often as, they were available, in compliance with the *Orders and Instructions* directive that each Constable patrolled "every part of his beat as often as possible".¹⁰

If such a pattern was deployed and extended so that each route required no more than a few hours to complete, by patrolling several routes the Constables may have been not only able to cover an area equivalent to that which a single long route (over many hours) might have covered but also more easily able to accommodate exceptions to their days. It would for example mean that during his typical day the Ayton Constable might complete two or three patrol routes as well as undertake his share of coverage of the station, but on a day that a

prisoner was in custody, increase the latter by completing possibly only a single route. For his colleagues it would have meant being more able to respond to other demands on their time, including conferences with the Inspector, without leaving a route uncompleted.

Such a pragmatic approach to patrols would not only have provided the most flexible coverage possible but been consistent with Constables applying "intelligence and discretion" in their working lives which was necessary as the frequency of conferences suggest that Constables often spent several days at a time without direction or supervision.

As well as directly relating what a rural Inspector was doing in mid Victorian England, by inference then the *Journal* also suggests what his Constables may generally have been doing. More than that, in a similar way, it may also provide an idea of what the local Superintendent, in this case my ancestor, might have done as according to *Orders and Instructions*

his responsibilities were similar (if not identical) to that of the Inspector (and their areas were alike).

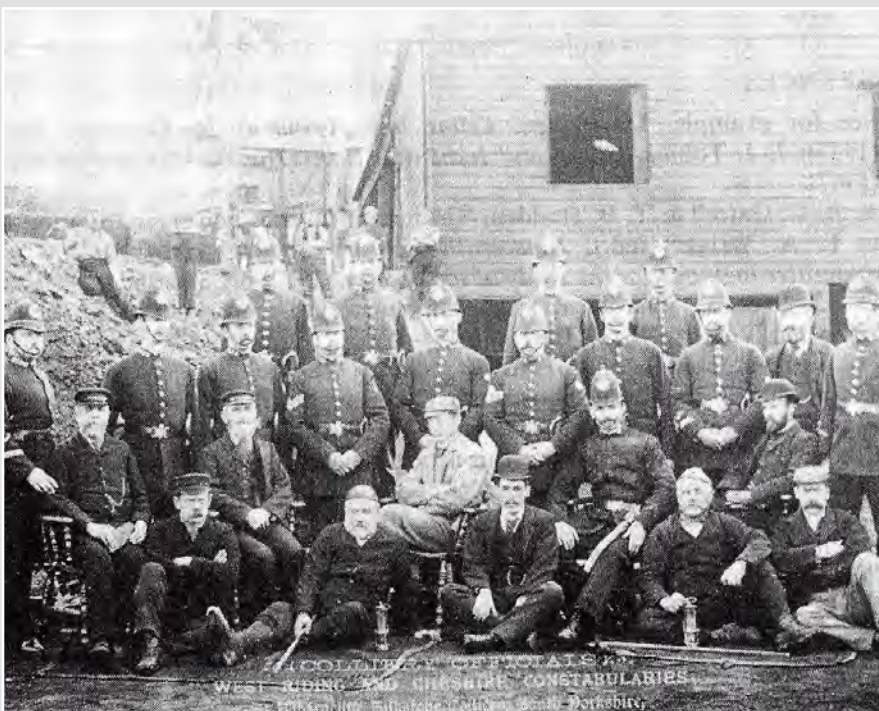
However it should be stressed that the *Journal* is relevant only to a specific county. Not every Chief Constable dispersed his force and many Quarter Sessions were willing to finance larger establishments. While the Metropolitan force was at one end of the policing spectrum and the North Riding (and Essex) constabularies were probably at the opposite end, the other rural counties would have been at every point between.

¹⁰ Beat in this case meaning a route which included at least every inhabited point in a Constable's area, if not other locations which might attract criminal activity.



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FROM THE ARCHIVES



Colliery officials at Wharnccliffe Silkstone Colliery, Tankersley, with members of the West Riding & Cheshire Constabularies who had been drafted into the area to maintain order during the great coal strike of July 1893, which involved 300,000 members of local miners' associations who were locked out when they refused to agree to a 25% reduction in wages. The men eventually returned to work in November at pre-stoppage rates after a period of acute deprivation.

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Keeping the Peace

180 Years of the Gloucestershire Constabulary

By DR TIMOTHY BRAIN OBE QPM

The County and District Constables Act 1839

This Court taking into Consideration pursuant to Notice of the Act of Parliament lately made in past session for the Establishment of County and District Constables and it being made to appear to the Justices of the Peace now in General Quarter Sessions assembled that the Ordinary Officers appointed for preserving the Peace are not sufficient for the preservation of the Peace and for the Protection of the Inhabitants and for the security of Property within this County do declare that 250 constables are needed in their opinion to be appointed within this county for the purposes aforesaid.¹

And with that official minute of the Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions meeting held at one o'clock on Tuesday 15 October 1839 at the Shire Hall, the great journey of the Gloucestershire Constabulary commenced, the anniversary of which we are this evening celebrating.

Gloucestershire was one of the earliest counties to adopt the County and District Constables Act of 1839. The Act had received its Royal assent on 27 August. It was a permissive not obligatory act, and it was the job of county justices of the peace assembled together in Quarter Sessions to determine whether to adopt it or not. Over the succeeding years a little under half the eligible counties in England and Wales would choose to do so. Gloucestershire adopted the Act almost straightaway, so did our near neighbours Worcestershire and Wiltshire, but Somerset would not get around to it until 1856 and then only under the compulsion of a new,

obligatory act.

Around the country justices met in Quarter Sessions at the four great quarter feasts of the church's year – Epiphany, Easter, Trinity and Michaelmas, so the autumn of 1839 was the first chance county magistrates had to consider the Act.

The justices themselves were a curious collection of the great and good of the county. All, of course, were then male. A few were aristos but most were from the middling or upper gentry, plus a few clergymen. They were not elected, nor were they paid, but as they were the link between central government and local communities the government of the day took care to keep them on side. As much as any non-elected body could be, they were representative of their class, and they were at least close to local communities.

In the 1830s the business of local government was very local. The key unit was the local township, a community that was rarely an actual town but more likely to be a village with surrounding farms and estates. Another term to describe this unit was the manor, or commonly the parish. There were over three hundred parishes in Gloucestershire, and each was charged, by common law, with the upkeep of their area and electing certain local officials, again generally unpaid, to do the work of maintaining order in their area. The most important of these was the local constable, who reported to a high or chief constable for a collection of parishes known as a 'hundred'.

Being a parish constable was a

thankless task, with some parishioners dodging it if they could. Nevertheless, at every annual parish meeting, the Court Leet, an individual would be duly elected, and everyone hoped for the best

Most of the ancient towns and cities, 'the boroughs', were outside of this system. They possessed royal charters and they were responsible for their own local government. Since the Statute of Winchester 1285 they had been required to maintain a town watch, which in many cases by the nineteenth century had become professional, but with varying degrees of effectiveness.

In 1839 Bristol, Gloucester and Tewkesbury all had borough status, but not so Cheltenham, which had a population of about 30,000, having grown from just over a couple of thousand at the beginning of the century. The leading citizens of Cheltenham, however, like many others in similar situations across the country, sought out their own solution, and in 1821 sponsored a local 'improvement act', which regulated paving, lighting and policing under a board of commissioners who could levy a local rate. In 1839 Cheltenham had its own local police force of 23 officers for patrol mainly at night.

Looking back from the perspective of the 21st century the development of modern professional policing in early nineteenth century England, exemplified by Peel's Metropolitan Police Act, seems obvious and

¹ Gloucestershire Archives (GA), Quarter Sessions Minute Book, Michaelmas [15 October] 1839.

inevitable, a shining example of improvement in what contemporaries termed the 'age of improvement'.

Those are the last things it would have seemed at the time.

By the 1820s most people could agree that wherever it was, town or country, the current policing systems were not perfect; the problem was how to replace the current arrangements with something which did not infringe civil liberties, put too much power in the hands of central government, or cost too much.

There were plenty of ideas about how to improve the system, but it was Robert Peel, Home Secretary from 1822, who managed to steer through reform for the 'Metropolis', those parts of Westminster, the east end and Southwark which immediately surrounded the City of London, creating a 1,000 strong civil force. For practical political reasons he excluded the City of London from his plan.

Peel might have extended his scheme but within a couple of years he was out of office and the next stage of 'police reform' fell to the Whigs under Earl Grey, and his home secretaries, first Lord Melbourne then Lord John Russell.

As a generalisation, the Whigs were doctrinally for the rights of the individual and against big government, but the state of policing in the ancient boroughs, the rise of crime and growing civil unrest, in the form of trades unionism and Chartism, forced them to act.

First a Royal Commission scrutinised local government in the ancient boroughs and found what they expected to find, chaos and inefficiency. Policing was no exception. When they visited the three ancient boroughs in the Gloucestershire they found policing in the small borough of Tewkesbury adequate but inadequate in the large boroughs of Bristol and Gloucester.

In the subsequent Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, the ancient charters were swept away. Under the new act each borough was required to appoint a 'Watch Committee', which in turn was required to 'appoint a sufficient Number of fit Men ... to act as Constables for preserving the Peace by Day and by Night, and preventing Robberies and other Felonies, and apprehending offenders against the Peace.'²

In this area Bristol, Gloucester and Tewkesbury all duly followed their responsibilities, with, of course, varying responses in terms of size. The Bristol force on formation comprised around 230 officers, Gloucester 25 and probably around seven in Tewkesbury.³ The Peelers had come to the provinces.

The Whigs would by preference probably have left rural policing alone had it not been for force of circumstances. In the 1830s the counties were not some rural backwater but the place where most people still lived and worked. Faced with rising crime, especially robberies, burglaries, rustling and industrial-scale poaching, together with political unrest amongst agricultural workers and artisans in rural based industries like weaving, the Whigs were forced to review rural policing.

Home Secretary Lord John Russell (1792-1878) put to work another Royal Commission. It recommended a radical solution – a national rural constabulary. But Russell decided a national force would jeopardize the good will of the local justices on whom local government depended, so he accepted that control of the new professional forces would rest with a professional head, a chief constable, who the justices would appoint.

In the face of substantial Parliamentary opposition Russell trimmed further, making adoption

of the act voluntary rather than mandatory.⁴ With those concessions he got his bill through, to receive the Royal Assent on 27 August.

The purpose of the new Act was explicit:

*where it shall be made to appear to the Justices of the Peace of any County in England or Wales in General or Quarter Sessions assembled, or at any Adjournment thereof, that the ordinary Officers appointed for preserving the Peace are not sufficient for the Preservation of the Peace, and for the Protection of the Inhabitants, and for the Security of Property within the County, it shall be lawful for them to set forth the same, by a Report in Writing under the Hands of the Majority of the Justices there present, and to declare how many Constables are needed in their Opinion to be appointed within their County for the Purposes aforesaid, and the Rates of Payment which it would be expedient to pay the chief and other Constables...*⁵

It was not, however, Russell who would oversee the implementation of the Act. In a ministerial reshuffle he was replaced by Constantine Phipps, First Marquess of Normanby (1797-1863), who had just finished a stint as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

He therefore would have had a detailed knowledge of the system of the professional rural police that had been in place in one form or another in Ireland since 1816.

Adopting the Act in Gloucestershire

On 18 September 1839, just three weeks after the Rural Police Act had received the royal assent, the process of adopting the Act in Gloucestershire formally got under way.

Five Gloucestershire justices wrote to the Deputy Clerk of the Peace for the County, Edward Bloxsome (1800-67), giving due notice that they

wished 'the business relating to the adoption of the said Act' to begin at the next meeting of the Quarter Sessions precisely at one o'clock on the fifteenth day of October.

The five signatories merit some scrutiny. They were Lord Segrave, Lord Ellenborough, the exotically named Purnell Bransby Purnell, Charles Bathurst and John Probyn.⁶

Who are they and what motivated them to adopt the act without delay?

Lord Segrave was William FitzHardinge Berkeley (1786-1857), Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and occupier of Berkeley Castle, although, thanks to the marital wanderings of his father not then possessor of the earldom. Like father like son, he led a colourful personal life, Greville the diarist dismissing him as 'an arrant blackguard'. It is, however, his politics that interest us. He was 'the mainstay of the Whig interest' in the county, and therefore a government supporter.⁷

Charles Bathurst (1790-1863) of Lydney Park was a qualified barrister, son of a Tory MP, and presumably a Tory himself.⁸ He was, it seems, utterly convinced of the inadequacy of the parish constable system.⁹ In 1839 he occupied the crucial position as chairman of the Quarter Sessions.

Purnell Bransby Purnell owned Stancombe Park, North Nibley, and was 48 in 1839.¹⁰ He would gain a positive reputation for his work improving the management of the County's lunatic asylums. Although his party politics are uncertain, it is, therefore, reasonable to assume that Purnell was of a progressive and improving turn of mind.

Then there was John Probyn, 1788-1863, of Huntly, son of the Venerable John Probyn, Archdeacon of Llandaff, and 'representative of one of the oldest families of the county'. At the time of his death he was described as the country's 'senior magistrate'. In

personal terms he had been a friend of Lord Segrave since childhood. In political terms he was a Whig, and therefore another government supporter.¹¹

Finally, there was Lord Ellenborough (1790-1871) of Southam Park, Prestbury. He was a Tory who had previously served in Wellington's government and was therefore presumably on message when it came to Peel's earlier police reform. In 1839 he still had a career ahead of him, as Governor General of India.¹²

So, the net result of this is that we have here a cross party group of the County great and good, who for a combination of reasons were not shy of promoting reform. But what might have motivated them to move quite so quickly.

There are several preconditions that might have encouraged them.

First, Gloucestershire had a recent history of progressive penal reform. The new gaol at Gloucester, built in 1792, put into practice the most advanced contemporary views on penal policy espoused by John Howard (1726?-90) and his local advocate Sir George Onesiphorus Paul (1746-1820). The regime was based on, separation of classes of prisoners, one prisoner per cell and hard labour. That might not sound too enlightened, but alternatives elsewhere still included execution, transportation or confinement in an insanitary building, with prisoners of all ages and both sexes living cheek by jowl. 'Houses of correction', run along similar lines, were also built at Little Dean, Northleach, Horsley and Lawford's Gate, the latter on the Gloucestershire side of the Bristol border near Old Market.

Second, Gloucestershire suffered more than its share of crime, as evidenced by a perusal of the Quarter Sessions judicial minutes, but also by statistics collated by Bryan Jerrard,

who has demonstrated that the rate of increase in crime in Gloucestershire between 1803 and 1836 was half as great again as the country at large.¹³ Some were headline grabbing like the 1834 murder of a Stow man simply

2 S 76, Municipal Corporations Act 1835.

3 M Stallion and DS Wall, *The British Police Forces and Chief Officers 1829-2012* (2nd edition, Police History Society, 2011), 72, 108 and 191.

4 D Foster, *The Rural Constabulary Act 1839* (Standing Conference for Local History, no date), 13-17.

5 An Act for the Establishment of County and District Constables by the Authority of Justices of the Peace [27 August 1839].

6 Segrave and others to Deputy Clerk of the Peace, 18 September 1839, GA, Q/AP/1.

7 The History of Parliament (Hist Parl), www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/berkeley-william-fitzhardinge-1786-1857 [accessed 6 October 2019].

8 Son of Charles Bathurst MP (1754-1831), who was brother-in-law of Henry Addington, later Viscount Sidmouth, and Prime Minister (1801-4) and Home Secretary (1812-22). He held relatively junior posts in successive ministries until 1822. His son's focus, however, appears to have been entirely local. Hist Parl, www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/bragge-%28afterwards-bragge-bathurst-%29-charles-1754-1831 [accessed 6 October 2019].

9 His stance on rural police reform may be readily deduced from his observations to the Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions when he introduced consideration of adopting the new Act on 15 October 1839. See *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 19 October 1839.

10 'Purnell Bransby Purnell (1791-1863), Chairman of Quarter Sessions (1842-1863)', ArtUk, artuk.org/discover/artworks/purnell-bransby-purnell-17911866-chairman-of-quarter-sessions-18421863-62841 [accessed 4 October 2019] and Purnell/Bransby Memorial - St Cyr - Stinchcombe, www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=f46259e8-713c-4e85-882f-3eb18aac749d [accessed 4 October 2019].

11 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 20 June 1863.

12 Edward Law, First Earl of Ellenborough, 1790-1871, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

13 B Jerrard, 'Early Policing Methods in Gloucestershire', in *The New Police in the Nineteenth Century* (ed P Lawrence, 2011).

for his watch. In response the Stow residents set up a private 'police association', in which local residents paid an annual subscription based on the rate they paid for the Poor Law. Private prosecution associations had been relatively common in the county and elsewhere since the late 1770s, but the Stow association represented a step change. Two Metropolitan Constables were hired, one senior, the other junior, not simply to prosecute criminals whom they detected, but also to regularly patrol the district around Stow to prevent crime, in the manner of the Metropolitan Police. The apparent success of the Stow Association encouraged the establishment of similar associations in several other Cotswold towns.¹⁴ This means that the professional policing principle had been established in the county before 1839, albeit at a local not county level, nor consistently, nor convincingly. In the 15 October 1839 debate in the Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions on adopting the new Rural Constabulary Act, Cirencester MP Joseph Cripps (1765-1847) remarked that the private patrol association in his area (presumably Stow) had recently ceased.¹⁵

Then there was political unrest in the form of the Chartists. In Gloucestershire they generally behaved peacefully but the political and social establishment always feared there might be a change of tact. Bathurst in his remarks in favour of adopting the new Act in 15 October debate alluded to the Chartist threat:

one occasion for the act of Parliament was the unfortunate disturbances that had existed in different parts of the Kingdom; the act had long been contemplated, but this was the reason of its being passed in the last session. It might be said that in some parts of this county that Chartist disturbances did not exist; but that was no reason why they might not hereafter exist.¹⁶

But the key reason why reform got underway so quickly was that everyone, but everyone, agreed that the present system just simply was not working.

The editorial of the Gloucestershire Chronicle for the 19 of October 1839 exemplifies the point. It opined: 'One thing is certain, that the present parish constables in consequence of the great increase that has taken place in the population, and other causes, are necessarily inefficient instruments for the protection of the rural districts.'

The editorial elaborated: 'crime cannot be repressed without organization, and it is owing to this in a great measure that the Metropolitan Police system has been so successful.' The only hint of caution was over the expense to which the magistrates had committed the county ratepayers.¹⁷

But it wasn't just the great and good who wanted a professional force. So did the middling sort who constituted the backbone of rural life. For example, a petition in favour of reform was received from St Briavels, signed by people identifying themselves as 'gentlemen', in other words with landed income, farmers, inn keepers, blacksmith, tailor, plasterer, butcher and baker. Even the guardian of the castle signed. Their inevitable rider was to ask for the cost not to fall too heavily on the ratepayers. Other petitions came from Stow, Frampton, and St Matthews, Cainscross.¹⁸

The petitions were important. They established that although the justices were unelected, they were acting in the interests of the ratepayers. They also ticked the box created in the Act's preamble, that there was a crime problem locally and that the current system was not up to coping with it.

So, what happened at that historic meeting of Quarter Sessions on Tuesday 15th October 1839?

The full meeting had commenced

at 10 o'clock in the Grand Jury Room of the Shire Hall where formal business was conducted.¹⁹ The magistrates then considered the Act, presumably about 1 o'clock as the earlier notice specified.

Bathurst, the chairman, read out the principal clauses of the Act and reminded the meeting of the 'various advantages' of a constabulary force as outlined in the report of the Royal Commission. For those sentimentally attached to the old system he concluded it was now no more than the 'wreck only of an ancient system... if it had been the best system in the time of Alfred or Elizabeth, it was not now.'

He told the meeting it had to make three decisions:

First, to report to the Home Secretary that they wished to adopt the Act.

Second, to decide if they wished to adopt it for the whole or a part of the county.

Third, to decide how many constables to appoint and to appoint a chief constable, and what to pay them.

They should also decide if they had any representations to make about the rules that Normanby was about to publish.

The first speakers, Segrave and Ellenborough, both supported Bathurst. Another Lord Redesdale did not oppose the principle but argued rather for an incremental approach; Mr Cripps agreed. The majority of magistrates, however, did not, and instead supported Bathurst and voted (a) to adopt the Act and (b) to appoint no less than 250 constables.

They then moved swiftly through the next measures. The salary of the chief constable was set at £300 and Bathurst was empowered to write to 'Lieut. Col.' Duncan McGregor (1787-1881), the Inspector General of

the Irish force, to identify a suitable candidate for chief constable. Clearly, they had from the start in mind someone with Irish experience to be their first chief constable.²⁰

Next, the salaries for the superintendents were set at £80, £100 and £120 pa depending on the size of their districts. The pay of sergeants, the number of which was not to exceed 30, would be 22s and 6d per week, while that of the constables was set at 18s per week. With that the job was done. The report was sent to the Marquess of Normanby the next day.²¹

Normanby's parliamentary under-secretary, the Honorable Fox Maule (1801-74), wasted no time in replying. On 18 October he wrote back, acknowledging the report of the 16th, replying that a copy of the Home Secretary's rules would follow but asking them to double check that the 250 constables did not exceed the ratio of officers to population required by the Act.

The justices reconvened on 4 November, at noon, to consider the rules since received from Normanby, at which point a Mr Canning (probably Robert Canning (1773-1868) of Hartpury) sought to present several petitions against the adoption of the Act. After much discussion it was decided on a vote that they should not be received. The rates of pay were confirmed.²²

There was, however, the thorny question of Cheltenham, which had its own professional force under its own improvement act. Should the town be exempt? It was agreed to seek Normanby's views.

Appointing a Chief Constable

Also at the Quarter sessions on 4 November the magistrates debated what sort of chief constable they wanted.

Ireland was the preferred source for

Bathurst. He argued that in England no currently serving superintendent had the experience to run a county force, whereas he thought Irish district superintendents would possess the necessary experience. Ellenborough agreed on the grounds that there then could be no suggestion that the appointment was made because there then could be no suggestion that the individual owed his appointment to personal connections and favouritism.

Bathurst reported on Col McGregor's reply to his enquiry and that he had someone suitable in mind.²³ After further discussion it was agreed to adjourn to 18 November to address the appointment of a chief constable.

On 14 November Normanby's permanent under secretary Samuel March Phillips (1780-1862) wrote formally to Bloxsome, located at Dursley, that 'the Inspector General of Police in Ireland recommends Mr Lefroy as well qualified for the office of Chief Constable for Gloucestershire, and if the magistrates will appoint him Lord Normanby will give directions for his proceeding to Dursley without delay.'²⁴

Anthony Thomas Lefroy (1802-90), an Englishman from Northumberland but with Irish connections, was 36 and had been an officer in the Irish police since he was 21. It is interesting that Normanby was prepared to give such an instant endorsement, but it must be remembered that as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland there is every possibility Normanby knew him or knew of him. Often referred to as a superintendent the rank he eventually attained was styled 'County Chief Constable'. His posting was Rathdrum, Wicklow, so relatively close to Dublin and the centre of government.²⁵

Appointing of an officer with Irish experience to a county post was unique in 1839 but it made sense.

Ireland had had a professional standing police force in the rural areas since 1816, a creation of Peel's when Irish Secretary. It was not the kind of force he would create in London, but rather it was a gendarmerie.

Although there was clearly a momentum behind Lefroy, when the justices reconvened on 18 November McGregor gave three names, but Bathurst focused from the start on Lefroy. He informed his colleagues that Lefroy was 36 years old, and not a military man 'but an extremely

14 Philips and Storch, 98-9.

15 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 19 October 1839.

16 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 19 October 1839.

17 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 19 October 1839.

18 St Briavels Petition, September 1839, GA, Q/AP/1.

19 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 19 October 1839.

20 McGregor had been in fact been promoted full colonel on 28 June 1838, immediately prior to his appointment as Inspector General. See J Herlihy, *Royal Irish Constabulary Officers* (Dublin, 2016), 215.

21 Clerk to the Justices to the Home Secretary, 16 October 1839, GA, Q/AP/1.

22 'Gloucestershire Adjourned Sessions', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 9 November 1839.

23 'Gloucestershire Adjourned Sessions', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 9 November 1839.

24 SM Philips to the Clerk to the Peace, 14 November 1839, GA, Q/AOP/1.

25 Herlihy, 37 and 193-4. The *Gloucester Journal* reported on 9 May 1840: 'Mr Lefroy, the Superintendent [sic] of the Gloucestershire Constabulary Force has just been presented by the magistrates, residents [sic] of the County Wicklow [sic], Ireland, with a silver coffee-pot, tea-pot, sugar-bowl, and cream ewer, richly ornamented with vine leaves pattern. The coffee-pot bears the following inscription:- "presented to Anthony Thomas Lefroy, Esq, for many years sub-inspector of constabulary, in the County of Wicklow, as a small testimony of his valuable services and worth, by a few sincere friends."'

gentleman-like man, an Englishman ... had served with entire satisfaction in the Irish police.²⁶

Other names were briefly considered – but in what looked like a planned move, Segrave and Ellenborough proposed Lefroy. Ellenborough stressed that his lack of connections with the county as a positive advantage. ‘No man could ask him as a favour to appoint a superintendent or a Constable.’

Captain David-Latimer St Clair, RN, (1784-1861), of Staverton Court, not unreasonably asked if they should appoint as Chief Constable someone they had never seen and asked for an adjournment so that they might see all the candidates. Bathurst brooked no delay. He called for a show of hands for each of the candidates, ‘when there appeared a very large majority in favour of Mr Lefroy.’²⁷

The justices reconvened again on 9 December 1839. The first item of business was the reading of a letter from the Home Office stating unequivocally that the new Act applied to Cheltenham.

This time Lefroy was present and Bathurst introduced him. It seems that he had first arrived in the county ‘a few days after the last meeting’, which must mean something like the 20 or 21 November. He had then returned to Ireland to conclude his business there and to bring back with him ‘12 or 14 experienced men, seven of whom he intended to fill the office of superintendent, and the others that of privates.’ It seems that he had already appointed at least one of them superintendent by then.

He advised them it was his intention to make his headquarters in Gloucester and to commence raising, training and equipping his force. If he was based in Gloucester, a city with its own force, it presumably was not long before he realised the necessity of relocating to Cheltenham. He

went on that he would be guided by the magistrates in making local appointments. It was resolved that the Clerk should write to Normanby seeking his confirmation of Lefroy. Lefroy then announced his schedule of meetings with the magistrates.²⁸

The Force Register confirms that Lefroy had been active in forming his force. The Register records that the date of the ‘commencement of the Force’ was 1 December 1839. Twelve officers were appointed that day, all of them from Ireland. Another seven, three from Ireland, four from Gloucestershire would be appointed before the end of the year.²⁹ In a separate register three superintendents were appointed: Charles Keily, Thomas Rupell and John Nicholls, presumably all from Ireland, although this is not clear.³⁰ Keily would be appointed deputy the following July. It would prove to be a fateful choice.

In summary from Sunday 1 December 1839 the Gloucestershire Constabulary was a going concern. Several crucial boxes had by then been ticked: the Act had been formally adopted for the whole of the county; the Secretary of State had confirmed their decision; the Justices had set the establishment and rates of pay, although these would be adjusted. Crucially, the magistrates had appointed a chief constable, and the first constables and superintendents had been signed up. The magistrates made one distinct economy, however. They did not appoint a constabulary treasurer or paymaster,³¹ instead leaving it to Lefroy to make some suitable internal arrangement. It would prove in time an expensive economy.

Lefroy was busy in the days before Christmas. On Monday 16 December he was in Cheltenham consulting with magistrates there, advising them he thought 50 officers necessary to

police the town and district.³² It was probably then he identified No 1 The Crescent as a suitable place for his headquarters, which was then not much more than an office for himself, a clerk and a flat for himself, and John Dower House, dating from 1812, as the place for his Cheltenham Station.

On the Saturday following he was in Gloucester to receive testimonials about appointments for the Dudstone and King’s Barton Division, and announced the appointment of Thomas Pilkington as the district superintendent.³³ As Gloucester had its own borough force in 1839, and the city boundaries compact compared to what they became, the division would be run from a building in Wotton.

The business of setting up the Constabulary continued over the next three months. By 12 March 1840 the required 250 officers had been appointed, with eight superintendents, 30 sergeants and the remainder constables.³⁴ It will be noted that as yet there are no inspectors. The first of these would not be appointed until 1853.

Thanks to the Constabulary Register we know a few things about these new officers. The list of their occupations on joining includes ‘Cooper’, ‘Carpenter’, ‘Mason’, ‘Tailor’ and ‘Shoemaker’, there is even one schoolmaster, but by far the most common is ‘Labourer’ or ‘Farmer’, which is likely to mean farm labourer.³⁵ Of the first 250, 128 are either labourers or farmers. Their average age was 26, the oldest being 47, the youngest 17. Three were six feet or over, most however were between 5 feet 7 inches, the minimum height specified in Normanby’s rules, and 5 feet 10 inches. We also know because of Normanby’s rules that they had to be able to ‘read and write, and keep Accounts’, in good health, and of good character, which meant in practice an endorsement from a person of

standing in the local community, such as a JP or clergyman, and their previous employer.³⁶

The maximum age was 40 but exceptions could be made, which explains the presence of Charles Bennett from Chesterfield, the 47-year-old. Only one joiner is listed as previously having been a constable, David Bridgewater from Gloucester, so possibly a city officer. Curiously, the first twelve officers appointed from Ireland are all listed under civilian occupations, all but one being a farmer or labourer.³⁷

Sometimes a photograph does more than convey a likeness of the individual, it can reveal in the inner person, and I believe that the well-known photograph of Lefroy does just that.

This is clearly a picture of Lefroy later in life, but from it you can get the measure of the man and his fixedness of purpose. In 1839 he needed all of that. He was doing something no chief constable has done before or since; start with a completely blank canvass.

He knew his new force would stand or fall on how the public perceived it, and some very much resented it, especially young labourers who thought many of the new constables had got above themselves.

He knew that his officers would be required to work long, grueling hours and endure loneliness and provocation. But he knew they would have to be self-reliant and be possessed of reserves of self-discipline, because they would largely work unsupervised. The line between being on and off duty was negligible, especially as officers wore uniform on all but exceptional occasions. He was therefore rightly merciless on infractions of discipline.

Dismissals for breaches of discipline, frequently for

drunkenness, but also fighting with colleagues and telling falsehoods were common. But Lefroy knew he had to be firm. Twelve of his first appointments would be dismissed in the first year of the Constabulary's existence, but the most spectacular had to wait till 1853.

John Keily had been one of Lefroy's earliest appointments as



Anthony Thomas Lefroy (1802-90)
Chief Constable 1839-65
(Gloucestershire Police Archives)

superintendent who in July 1840 became deputy chief constable, and therefore a highly trusted senior officer, one in fact who was responsible for drawing the cash to pay the officers. In 1853 he absconded with £445 of the Constabulary's cash never to be seen again, a consequence of the justices' parsimony in denying Lefroy a treasurer in 1839.³⁸

26 'Gloucestershire Adjourned Sessions', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 23 November 1839.

27 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 23 November 1839 and GA, Sessions Minutes Book, 1839-43, Q/SM 3/5 5 1839-43, 18 November 1839.

28 GA, Sessions Minutes Book, 1839-43, Q/SM 3/5 5 1839-43, 9th December 1839, and, 'The Rural Constabulary Force', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 14 December 1839.

29 GA, Gloucestershire Rural Constabulary

Register, Q/Y/1/1.

30 GA, Default and Commendation Books, Superintendents, 1839-1914, Q/Y/1/10/1.

31 Paymasters were a feature of the Irish Constabulary and therefore something Lefroy would have been used to. Herlihy, 19.

32 'County Constabulary', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 21 December 1839. Interestingly, he took the opportunity to signal his policy to ensure his officers would remain impartial in the execution of their duties: 'The Chief Constable remarked that the superintendents and constables to be selected would be required to remove from that part of the country where they had previously resided to another part, in order to prevent their exercising partiality. They would be continually subject to removal.'

33 'County Constabulary Force' and 'Gloucestershire Petty Sessions, Shire-Hall, Rural Police Force', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 21 December 1839.

34 Candidates Joining Book, 1 December 1839-15 March 1852, GA, Q/Y/1/3/1.

35 The term 'farm labourer' was itself a generalisation which included other specific skills, eg shepherd, stockman, ploughman, etc. It should not be surprising that such numbers were drawn from farm labourers as they constituted the largest single workforce designation at the time.

36 'Rules made by the Marquess of Normanby', GA, Q/AP 3. Literacy levels for the 1830s are not easy to assess. David Cannadine recently has estimated the proportion of the population able to read was approximately 50 per cent, but writing and arithmetic skills might be as low as 33 per cent. (D Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom 1800-1906* (London, 2017), 257.) Presumably better than a mere basic literacy and numeracy were required, placing the average police recruit in a mini-elite within the working classes.

[37 I am grateful for Sue Webb, Honorary Gloucestershire Constabulary Archivist for supplying me with a copy of her spreadsheet of the Force Register.

38 'The Case of Mr Keily, late Deputy Chief Constable', *Gloucester Journal*, 2 July 1853. Despite the offer of £100 reward he was never found. Gloucester Journal, 16 July 1853. The Keily affair may have hastened the introduction of inspectors into the rank structure of the Constabulary. There has previously been some doubt as to whether the correct spelling of the miscreant deputy's name was 'Reilly' or 'Keilly'. Contemporary newspaper reports clearly spell the name as 'Keily'. See H Thomas, *The History of the Gloucestershire Constabulary 1839-1985* (Gloucester, 1987), 341.

However, it was not just about discipline. Lefroy issued a stream of early orders making it clear that officers had to be smart, use minimum force, and not enforce every minor infraction of the law.³⁹ He knew his nascent force had to build up public confidence, especially as there were only handfuls of constables scattered across the county in their station houses. Some, like those in the extreme south of the county at Lawford's Gate and Oldland were several miles from any significant help. It is easy to forget just how big the county was in 1839, stretching from nearly Stratford-upon-Avon in the north to the outskirts of Bristol in the south.

By June 1840 there would be 32 stations across the county. Cheltenham was easily the largest, with 49 officers and two superintendents based there. But that was the exception. After that the largest was Hanham with 12 officers and Stroud with 11. These were not, of course, custom built stations, but simply the best buildings available.

Lefroy, however, not only set the culture of his force from the beginning, he also set its framework and pattern of work, some residues of which are still evident today.

'The Irish System'

He adopted what was known as 'the Irish system', not unreasonably as his experience was that of the Irish system. This was described a few years later, in 1853 by George Blathwayt of Dyrham Park, a south Gloucestershire Magistrate, when he gave evidence to the Select Committee on establishing a more uniform system of policing.

I will explain it: in each division probably there are at least three constables, that is, one sergeant and two men; those men are sent out to patrol six hours in the night. When a man goes out he is furnished with a

*ticket; this ticket is entered in a book; he is desired to go to a particular house and leave this ticket, and two days following another policeman goes round to collect those tickets; those tickets are brought back and filed. In the course of the week the superintendent visits the station and examines all the tickets in order to see that they are all delivered; my servant, if it is brought to my house, writes his name upon the back of it. Those particulars are stated in the reports, and then the reports are brought before the magistrates in petty sessions once a fortnight, and all the journals are open to their inspection.*⁴⁰

The system was not perfect, and still relied own self-discipline.

Blathwayt went on to describe just what police patrol meant in the early days of the Constabulary: 'I consider the Gloucestershire policemen work very hard indeed; they are out every night for six hours, and they are frequently out on patrolling duty during the day. I should say that the district for which I act extends over an area of about 60,000 acres, containing a rural population of about 14,000; we have only 16 policemen at different stations, three and four to a station.'⁴¹

Gloucestershire it seems was unique, certainly unusual in maintaining this so-called Irish System.⁴² Lefroy was not called to give evidence personally to the Select Committee, surprising given his longevity of service at that point, but other rural chief constables gave evidence of their different systems, usually one in which individual constables were dispersed in individual villages, visited from time to time by sergeants and superintendents, and when appointed, inspectors.

The 1853 Select committee would be radical in its recommendation, in requiring all counties to adopt the 1839 Act, a recommendation which resulted in the 1856 County Police Act

which required recalcitrant counties, like Somerset to fall into line. It also facilitated the merger of the smaller borough forces within counties.

Tewkesbury merged in 1854⁴³ and Gloucester duly followed suit in 1859, although the Gloucester establishment of twenty officers remained a distinct element within the county structure for several more years to come.⁴⁴

One of the more uncertain aspects of Lefroy's early days is his use of detectives. Deploying officers in plain clothes was a sensitive matter in 1839 as it smacked of spying and was against the underpinning principle of the New Police which was to prevent crime.

The evidence is that Lefroy used detectives sparingly and incrementally. For example, a newspaper report in January 1854 refers to Superintendent Seys being appointed as Cheltenham superintendent. One of his chief qualities was that he had been 'specially employed as a detective when required'.

This gives us the clue. Plain-clothes work and detective work, either in the form of observations for pick pockets at large events, like Barton Fair, or more complex investigations, was undertaken when required.⁴⁵ Further examples include Detectives Day of Cheltenham and Chipp of Gloucester being employed against pickpockets from London in 1860.⁴⁶

One other element that Lefroy established was the uniform. There seems to have been no particular debate or special order, but the uniform adopted from the outset was that of the Metropolitan Police – top hat and dark blue tailed coat. That remained the uniform for Lefroy's tenure.

The evidence is that the Metropolitan Police had replaced the top hat by the summer of 1863. Bristol

replaced the top hat about the same time. There was, as yet, no change in Gloucestershire.

Captain Christian

Lefroy announced his retirement to Quarter Sessions on 25 March 1865. In considering his replacement it is possible to detect some polite criticism that Lefroy had not kept up with changing times.

Magistrate George Blathwayt, who had given evidence to the 1853 select committee, observed it was time for a change. He had some trenchant views on the kind of man that should replace Lefroy.

They would find it was the practice in many Boroughs to have detective officers, who were found to be most useful in preventing crime. Why should they not have a detective force also? We know crime has become a regular system, an art; and therefore they must have men who were conversant with crime, and the best modes to be adopted for its suppression. The Irish constabulary were the finest body of men, perhaps, in the world, but though equal to the suppression of riots, they were not equal to the detection of crime. The county wanted men who could detect crime, as well as suppress disturbance; they wanted men at the head of the police force perfectly conversant with the detective system. He suggested that when the advertisements were published for candidates, the Clerk of the Peace be instructed to desire the candidates to furnish three particular testimonials – which indeed would only be fair to the candidates themselves, – namely one of age, for they ought not to have a man over 50 years of age, who had perhaps spent two-thirds of his life in India, but one with 20 years work in him; secondly, the candidate should produce a medical certificate of his health and strength; and thirdly, some further testimonial as to his capability as a policeman. He did not want to know whether the candidate

was a good swordsman, but he wanted to understand something about the suppression and detection of crime. Now, when it was probable they would have 100 men seeking this appointment, he was sure the police committee would act conscientiously, and choose that man who had health and strength, and the best capabilities for the office.⁴⁷



Captain (later Admiral) Henry Christian
(1828-1916)
Chief Constable 1865-1910
(Gloucestershire Police Archives)

It might be thought that with this in mind the justices would choose one of the officers from the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard, but instead they chose a 34-year-old recently retired naval captain, Henry Christian. He at least came clutching the testimonial from Rear Admiral Machardy the chief constable of Essex, testifying that he had spent several days visiting the force and learning the ropes directly from the superintendents.⁴⁸

In the event the magistrates chose well. Christian made no immediate change to the 'Irish System' he inherited, he simply incrementally enhanced it over the years with extra village police stations. He also gradually regularized the existence of detectives, although they remained few in number and subject to divisional control at Gloucester and

Cheltenham. We would have to wait for Major Stanley Clark in the 1920s before a Criminal Investigation Department would be established.

Probably the most important early change that Christian made was to replace the top hat with the helmet. In November 1865 an advertisement appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* for uniform tender, which included a specification for 276 'helmets or hats'.⁴⁹ Whatever indecision there may still have been in the autumn it seems to have been resolved by the following April, when the *Gloucester Journal* reported that at the opening of the Gloucester Assizes the officers paraded 'for the first time in their new uniforms and helmets.'⁵⁰

39 See, for example, Thomas, 13.

40 'First Report from the Select Committee on Police', *Reports from Select Committees* (vol 29, London, 1852-3), 128

41 *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Police*, 128.

42 That Blathwayt had to describe the 'Irish System' in such details suggests its unusualness.

43 The initiative for the Tewkesbury merger came from the Tewkesbury town council. Four officers, 'three privates and a sergeant', were to be 'constantly employed in the borough'. *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 1 July 1854.

44 The merger of the forces had been under discussion since January 1857. A significant incentive for the merger was the reception of city prisoners at the county Gaol. *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 12 March 1859 and GA, Gloucestershire Rural Constabulary Register, Q/Y/1/1.

45 'Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions', *Gloucester Journal*, 7 January 1854.

46 'Great Volunteer Review at Gloucester', *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 22 September 1860, 2.

47 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 25 March 1865.

48 Christian himself would in due become an admiral while serving as chief constable. This was due to the current Royal Navy system of promoting officers on half pay by virtue of seniority.

49 *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 18 November 1865.

50 *Gloucester Journal*, 7 April 1866.



*Constable Charles Mason in hat and helmet
(Gloucestershire Police Archives)*

With that change it may be said that the first stage of the Constabulary's development came to a symbolic close. It had become an established part of the county scene. There was no longer any equivocation about a professional, organised police for the counties. With the absorption of the smaller boroughs it might equally be said that it was the county system rather than that of the boroughs which was prevailing, in other words where the direction and control was with a chief constable and not shared with a watch committee, although it would be another 79 years before that change was completely affected with the passing of the 1964 Police Act.

Who was first?

It is clear from all of the foregoing that Gloucestershire was among the first counties to adopt the 1839 Act. The justices in Quarter Sessions did so swiftly, on a non-party basis, and without significant opposition. But which was the first county to fully adopt the Act?

That distinction is normally claimed by Wiltshire. The first clue is in the force motto, 'Primus et Optimus', the first and best. It is a claim asserted in the foreword of the official history of the force, a second edition of which was published in 2003, when the then chief constable, Dame Elizabeth Neville wrote: 'As the first of the County Forces to be created by virtue of the 1839 County

Police Act, we have a long and varied history'.⁵¹

On what basis does that statement rest?

For Wiltshire the sequence of formation starts on 11 September 1839 when the justices instructed their Clerk of the Peace to give formal notice that the question of adopting the new Act was to be discussed in Quarter Sessions when it met on 15 October in Marlborough. At this point the Wiltshire magistrates were a week in advance of the Gloucestershire counterparts, five of whom, it will be recalled, had initiated instructions to their clerk on 18 September. However, as both county Quarter Sessions were scheduled to meet on the same day, 15 October, that head start for Wiltshire

was negated.

The Wiltshire Michaelmas quarter sessions assembled on Tuesday, 15 October 1839 in Marlborough. Proceedings formally commenced in the town hall but then moved to the Castle Hotel. The Chairman raised the issue of the County Police Act but was quite explicit about the limitations of the discussions for that day. He had it 'brought forward, not because he intended to make any motion, but merely that it might be discussed.' After some discussion it was resolved:

That a committee be appointed to enquire and report whether the ordinary officers appointed are sufficient for the preservation of the peace, for the protection of the inhabitants, for the securing of property in this county or any part of their of, and to enquire and report how many constables are needed in their opinion to be appointed within the county or any part thereof for the purposes of aforesaid... and that such committee enquire and report as to the necessary qualifications to be possessed by the person or persons to be appointed to the office of Chief Constable under the Act.

It was further agreed that the committee report to the adjourned session of the Quarter Sessions to be held on Wednesday 13 November at Devizes at 11 o'clock.⁵²

So, we must be quite clear that on 15 October Wiltshire agreed to appoint a committee to make recommendations about adopting the Act. The Gloucestershire magistrates that same day adopted the Act, set the number of constables at 250 and agreed to report to the Home Secretary.

The Wiltshire magistrates met again on 13 November at The Bear Inn, Devizes. The Committee recommended adopting the Act, appointing 187 constables at 19s 6d per week, two superintendents at £75

per annum, and a chief constable at £400 a year. After some discussion the pay for the superintendents was set at £75 with a £25 allowance for a horse, while the constables had to make do with 17s 6d a week. It was agreed to report to the Home Secretary and meet again on the 28 November to appoint a chief constable.⁵³

Back in Gloucestershire the 14 November was the day that Normanby was writing back to the Gloucestershire justices informing them that he would be prepared to endorse Lefroy as Chief Constable and would direct him to proceed to Dursley without delay. Lefroy was elected, sight unseen, on Monday 18 November.

The Wiltshire magistrates met again on 28 November when they considered 13 candidates for the post of chief constable, including Captain Hay the assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Highly respected, it seems Hay was on a bit of a promise. Starting a tradition of Metropolitan officers turning up for county chief constable jobs as if on a sure thing and returning disappointed, he did not get the job, but this was on a technicality – he was under Normanby's regulations, by a couple of days, too old. The job instead went to Captain Samuel Meredith, RN, who had experience in customs and excise in Kent.⁵⁴

He did not quite hit the ground as fast as Lefroy. Meredith did not start appointing his officers until 31 December 1839, by which time Gloucestershire had appointed its first twenty officers.⁵⁵

Consequently, Gloucestershire beat Wiltshire to the punch on adopting the Act, setting the number of Constables and Superintendents and their salaries, appointing its Chief Constable, and even appointing its first officers.

Does that mean Gloucestershire

should have the title 'Primus'?

The answer is yes, but that too requires some scrutiny before it is accepted.

Fourteen counties took some form of active step to adopt the Act in the closing months of 1839. Of those fourteen all held Quarter Sessions meetings at more or less the same time, the second or third week of October. Not all had completed the process of implementation by the end of the year, however.

The first county Quarter Sessions to actually debate the Act was Nottinghamshire on 10 October, but all they agreed to do was postpone discussion until the Epiphany session, that is till January 1840.

If we are looking for the first county to actually adopt the Act, then it looks like that honour goes jointly to Leicestershire and Worcestershire, who both adopted the Act on 14 October, the day before Gloucestershire. However, Leicestershire did not appoint its chief constable until 7 December.

Worcestershire magistrates might have adopted the Act on the 14 October but they then only agreed to implement it 'by degrees', that is to appoint a chief constable, ten sergeants and three men under each sergeant, a total of 30 constables.⁵⁶ A committee was set up to look at the appointment of a chief constable, and it reported on the 2 November,

51 E Neville, 'Foreword', in P Sample, *The History of the Wiltshire Constabulary 1839-2003* (2nd edition, Devizes, 2003). 5.

52 'Marlborough', *Wiltshire Independent*, 17 October 1839.

53 'Wilts Quarter Sessions', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 14 November 1839.

54 *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 28 November 1839.

55 [Advert,] *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 19 December 1839.

56 'Rural Police', *Worcester Journal*, 17 October 1839.

when it was agreed to move to an appointment on 2 December.⁵⁷ Taking a diametrically different view of the appointment than Gloucestershire, the Worcestershire justices appointed a Metropolitan Detective Inspector, Richard Reardon Harris.⁵⁸

To set this in context, the day before Gloucestershire had appointed its chief constable a fortnight previously and appointed its first officers the day before, the 1 December.

Durham too had considered the Act on 14 October but did not adopt it formally until 19 November and it did not appoint its chief constable, Major James Wemyss, until 10 December.

Cumberland met on 15 October but only adopted the Act for the Derwent Division, appointing a superintendent and three constables. Similarly, Glamorgan adopted the Act on 17 October but only for the Miskin and Caerphilly Division, not adopting it for the whole county until 1843.

By a short head, therefore, Lefroy becomes the first Chief Constable appointed under the 1839 Act, and Gloucestershire becomes the first county to complete the adoption and implementation process required by its provisions.⁵⁹

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The Gloucestershire Constabulary, stations and disposition, in 1853
(Gloucestershire Police Archives)

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57 'New Constabulary Police', *Worcester Journal*, 7 November 1839.

58 'Worcestershire Adjourned Michaelmas Quarter Sessions', *Worcester Chronicle*, 4 December 1839.

59 GA, Gloucestershire Rural Constabulary Register, Q/Y/1/1.



The Private Life of CID Paperwork

The Transition of Murder Files from Institutional to Public Records

By ANGELA SUTTON-VANE

Introduction

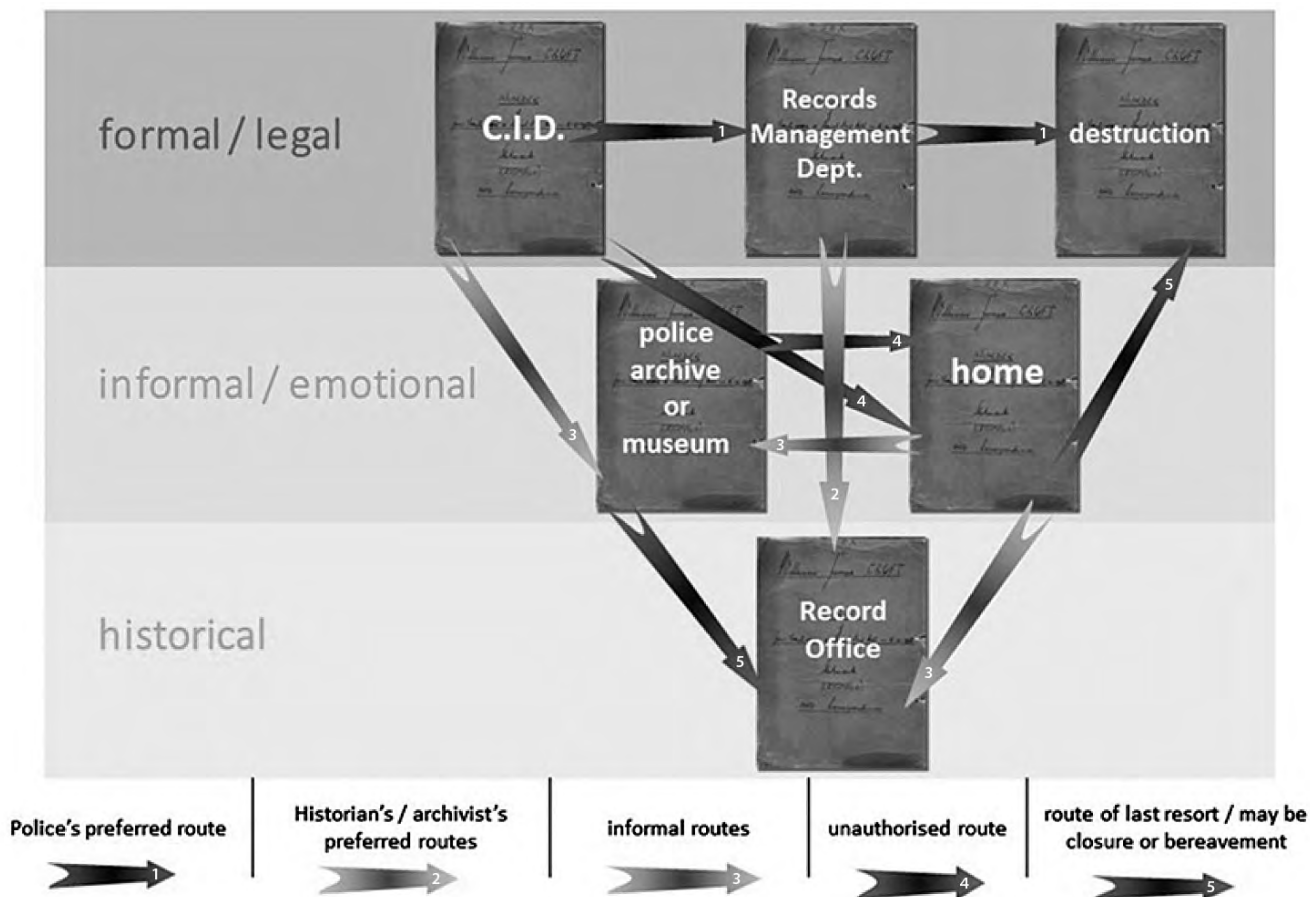
“The history of regional police force detectives has been heavily influenced by the Metropolitan Police’s Criminal Investigation Department, affected by poor resourcing and constant revisions to working practices and fractured by a string of county and borough amalgamations.

This research, however, will not be a thesis around this relatively unexplored history, per se, but concentrates on the little understood area of the paperwork they produced. Referring to ninety-two murder, manslaughter and infanticide files

currently sitting in Local Record Offices (LROs) in England and Wales, it will examine the unique culture of these files and how the working lives, regulation and history of detectives ultimately influenced their survival. As such, research is also working at the historical coal-face, raising questions around why, how and when policing bureaucracy becomes history and what material will be available for future criminal justice researchers. Very much founded on practice, as opposed to practice-based, these themes were developed during my experience as the curator of a police museum and archive, when it became

evident that the majority of the documentary material being received by the museum was not via the route I had, perhaps naively, anticipated: the police records management department. It was, instead, from private donations discovered in the attics of retired or deceased police officers or, occasionally, from unregulated departmental or station clear-outs. To try to rationalise this I compiled the diagram below which subsequently became the foundation for my PhD.

For the purposes of this paper one research element will be examined: the life-cycle of the murder file and



how and why it may transition from private to public life or, referring to the diagram above, from the formal / legal phase, via the informal / emotional to the historical phase.

In order to place the paper within the context of the wider research it will be useful to answer two key questions: firstly why research has concentrated on regional police forces and secondly, why murder files? In response to the first question, London's Metropolitan Police, the City of London Police and what is now Police Scotland have been excluded for the reason that they were established under specific acts which subsequently influenced national archival policies.¹ Regional police forces in England and Wales, on the other hand, were formed as a consequence of a number of historical aberrations which resulted in the exclusion of these forces' records from the public records acts.² To answer the second, the rationale for concentrating on case files relating to murder, manslaughter and infanticide is that these files sit at the apex of a complex, cultural, legal and professional network and, as such, are most likely to survive; they may already have a public presence via press coverage and they are quickly identified by LROs for reasons of public interest, ethics and access.³

The Private Life of CID paperwork

*In practice, there has been little historical work on the detective branch of policing, researchers having been kept at bay by the secrecy in which the records are shrouded. Full knowledge of the work of the detective branch has also been withheld from other departments within the police organisation. Furthermore, the CID made a virtue of its secret mode of operation[...]*⁴

Barbara Weinberger's statement succinctly defines the network between detectives, their paperwork, their culture and the writing of history and justifies why, although grounded in history, research interdisciplinarity

is crucial. It will allow, for example, forays into material culture theories of life-cycles, object biographies and networks, along with a more anthropological approach towards the archives through fieldwork and interviews with archivists, police museum curators and retired detectives. These interviews will encourage an otherwise absent cultural narrative around the files from the viewpoint of both the creator (the detective) and the collector (the police museum or LRO).⁵

Drawing out such cultural narratives and comparing them with the historical account may illuminate, for example, the reasons for the secrecy that Weinberger described which could firstly be in response to overwhelming criticism as a result of repeated corruption scandals. Although most documented occurrences related to the Metropolitan Police's CID, consequential ripples travelled to the regional departments.⁶ Secondly, a long history of favouring prevention over detection led to associated underfunding of regional detective departments and, in order to protect their status and resources, it was to their advantage to develop an inflated image of their skill and indispensability. Lack of budget, a permanent location and space was a recurring theme and through interviews with retired Detective Constable M.C. this becomes evident: 'We were the poor relations. We didn't have proper wooden – proper made trays. We used to have to bloody go to Clarks shoe shop to get Clarks' boxes.'⁷

Other than protectionism it was known via policing *shibboleths*, but little documented, that the preservation of regional police records was adversely affected by the radical programmes of regional force amalgamations during the 1940s, 1960s and 1970s. Not a bureaucratic rupture suffered by the Metropolitan

Police, for the often fiercely independent and proud county and borough forces they undoubtedly caused loss of morale, organisational identity and created deeply fractured histories. For example, Malcom Young described in his anthropological study of policing culture that officers in 1980s Merca Police still referred to the 'real police forces' as the small units they had joined in the late 1960s and early 1970s and, again, M.C. clearly illustrated how this affected the management of murder files:

All this stuff was stored where nobody else wanted it, and it was in basements, lofts and any – sheds, garages out the back. [...] When these four districts became two, people used to find these things in lofts and say: 'Well, that has nothing to do with us anymore' [...] They used to chuck all this stuff in the back of a van and take it to the district that was then responsible for that murder, make sense? [...] Well, these people that it was taken to weren't all that interested. All they did was shoved it up in the loft and you can imagine if you kept moving stuff around like that, it soon deteriorates.'⁸

Because detective departments may have lacked the administrative support given to uniformed officers, a consequence was unregulated storage of files in office cupboards, lofts or out-buildings; when no space was left files were cleared-out. As a museum curator I was told of records being thrown into skips as acts of inter-force or inter-departmental revenge and M.C. corroborated this: 'I then got a call at some stage in this thing that a police station was shutting down. It was the Traffic Department who never liked the C.I.D. anyway [...] And somebody said they were throwing out murder files, and stuff like that'⁹ [...] Not only was this a reflection of under-resourcing, it was a reflection of the detective's relationship with their paperwork: at best disliked in that it removed them from the *real*

work of crime-solving, but at worst flaunted: 'As a CID aide in 1963, my first detective chief inspector used occasionally to declare 'a Queen's birthday amnesty', when we could "file the blueys in the hothouse."¹⁰ This instruction allowed detectives to burn some (blue) crime reports which could not be solved.

The triggers for change, for several police forces at least, were two-fold. Firstly, the emergence of DNA with the ability to review cold cases, along with increasing numbers of public enquiries and appeals taking place from the 1980s. It became apparent that when historic case files were needed they simply could not be found, a situation described by Martin Lloyd-Evans and Paul Bethell: 'the next and probably most difficult step is to locate the case papers and original exhibits. Unfortunately, many police forces do not have a central archive and documents and exhibits can be stored anywhere within force.'¹¹ Secondly, the increased policy of outsourcing of services, one of which was records storage, required forces to undertake information audits for the first time. These reviews, coinciding with the passing of a number of significant acts, led to a wide-spread rationalisation of the way case files were to be catalogued and stored.¹² This period of the early 1980s also coincides with the end of the appearance of murder files in the public domain.

Police Museums

Files relating to the investigation of murder, manslaughter and infanticide are rare in the public domain: so far during this research ninety-two have been identified ranging in dates of creation from 1909 to the early 1980s.¹³ An emerging pattern is the role of police museums as half-way houses or gateways allowing them to become liminal in that they cross the divide from the formal / legal phase

as police records with a strict life-span to the informal / emotional phase. Police museums are neither private nor public domains with associated problems around restricted access and lack of resources to catalogue or store records to acceptable archival standards. Typically they are unregulated in that they were often informally established by retired police officers and fall outside the scope of the force's records management policies, illustrated in an interview with a police museum curator, a retired detective. When asked about the dialogue between records management and the museum he commented: 'It was very adhoc. When I was there [in CID] I could say "hang on – can we think about the museum here?" We no longer have that contact. We've got the interest, we've just not got the process, that's the problem.'¹⁴

In recent times of financial constraints these museums have also become increasingly vulnerable and a number have simply disappeared at which point the decision may be made to transfer difficult archives to LROs

- 1 For example the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829; under this the force was directly answerable to government departments and, as such, its records were classed as public records. In 2003 when the force moved to the administration of the Mayor of London this arrangement ceased.
- 2 For example, the Municipal Corporations Act 1835, the Rural Constabulary Act 1839 and the County and Borough Police Act 1856; although in theory regional police authority records (and therefore surely police records which were under their administration) fell under section 224 of the Local Government Act 1972 which required that "proper arrangements" should be made around management and preservation of records; in practice this seemed not to have happened and with the demise of police authorities it has left a piecemeal situation.
- 3 The term 'homicide' covers the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Murder and manslaughter are common law offences that have never been defined by statute, although they have

been modified by statute. Information from Office for National Statistics.

"Homicide in England and Wales: Year ending March 2017", 2018, website available at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#how-is-homicide-defined-and-measured

- 4 Barbara Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World: An Oral History of English Policing from the 1930s to the 1960s* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995), p.75.
- 5 For example, referring to Ian Hodder's work on networks and assemblages: *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2012). To date three retired detectives have been interviewed, one retired police inspector, two police museum curators and one archivist.
- 6 Hobbs wrote that "the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984, according to many provincial policemen, is a punishment for the 'sins of the Met'"; *Doing the Business: Entrepreneurship, the Working Class, and Detectives in the East End of London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.224; *ibid*.
- 7 For example, Maurice Morson described that accommodation for Norwich detectives was insecure and they were moved around in a "pinball fashion"; in 1926 the Watch Committee were informed that their office was 'dilapidated and unhealthy'; *A Force Remembered: The Illustrated History of the Norwich City Police 1836-1967* (Derby: Breedon Books Publishing Company Ltd, 2000), p.80.. M.C. (retired Detective Constable), interviewed by author, 02 Mar 2017 (to protect the individual's identity interviewees have been allocated codes and any reference to the name of the force has been removed).
- 8 Malcolm Young, *An Inside Job: Policing and Police Culture in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.68. M.C., interview.
- 9 M.C., interview.
- 10 Young, *An Inside Job* p.324
- 11 Martin Lloyd-Evans and Paul Bethell, "Review of undetected historic serious crime: 'why bother?'" *The Journal of Homicide and Major Incident Investigation* 5, no. 2 (2009), p.4.
- 12 For example, The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and the Data Protection Act, both passed in 1984.
- 13 It is accepted that more may be present in uncatalogued collections and there are also examples of earlier nineteenth century cases but these tend to be collections gathered together for historical interest rather than working case files.
- 14 Will Brown and Peter Hampson (Museum of Policing in Cheshire), interview by the author, 18 April 2018.

rather than back to the originating force; an action which raises interesting cultural questions around why the donors wanted these records removed from the policing family.¹⁵ The contents of these troubled collections were frozen in time by Ian Bridgman and Clive Emsley in their 1989 survey which remains the only baseline information on what historic documents police forces in England and Wales then held or, perhaps more accurately, admitted to or had knowledge of holding.¹⁶ The fact that out of the thirty-five forces surveyed and 2,342 records, or groups of records catalogued, they identified only nine murder files is testament either to the rarity of these files or to their undisclosed existence. None of the nine correspond to the 123 murder files identified in LROs suggesting that they still remain with their police forces.¹⁷

The Public Life of CID paperwork

Of the three detectives and one police inspector interviewed and asked: 'Should murder or serious case files be held by local record offices?' all replied *no*; for them such records are confidential police business and have no historical significance.¹⁸ This critical response, picked up by Chris Williams and Emsley in their 2003 questionnaire sent to forces in England and Wales, highlights how police culture and policy feeds into the preservation of records, and is magnified by the forces' own in-house guidance on records management.¹⁹

The detectives' response, however, is contradictory; during a historical window of opportunity they *were* recognising their files as cultural assets, whether as souvenirs of involvement in a case, as aide-memoires for retirement force histories or biographies, or as proof of their perhaps unrecognised professionalism. Research around the motivations of detectives to write their

memoirs by both Haia Shpayer-Makov and Paul Lawrence corroborates this last point: '[...] with little in the way of training [...] until the late 19th century it is certainly possible that officers sought to define and locate their own legitimacy in their memoirs.'²⁰ Whatever the catalyst, encouraged by the *laissez-faire* approach to records management, murder files were being 'put-aside' or taken home and recognising that they may only survive because they acquire the mantle of a souvenir, narratives around collective memory and sites of memory are beginning to emerge.²¹ Collective memory, in other words the shared memories of a group, has traditionally concentrated on the family, religion or ethnicity but rarely on organisational identity, and yet it is a theory that is useful for institutions such as the police where performance and ritual are enacted, for example, through parades, ceremonies or spaces of remembrance.²² Pierre Nora describes his *lieux de mémoire* as remains: '[...] the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it.'²³ Sites of memory are, therefore, symbolic objects and with Nora's examples including dictionaries, archives and libraries, it seems logical that this attribute could also be applied to an individual file of personal importance.

Murder files are beginning to reveal their alternative narratives. For example, the files relating to the Gorse Hall Murder were identified and retrieved from CID during the writing of the history of Cheshire Constabulary by retired Superintendent R.W. James.²⁴ A file relating to the 1924 murder of Emily Beilby Kaye in Eastbourne and held by East Sussex Record Office was created and subsequently taken home on his retirement by Detective Inspector Thomas Hall who was

seconded from New Scotland Yard to work on the case.²⁵ A handwritten note in the file beginning 'Mother – this is the map I was sketching [...]' clearly demonstrates its transition to the status of souvenir in that it was in response to his photograph appearing in newspapers. As such the file came to represent a memento of the solving of a murder, the meting out of justice which briefly raised him above the humdrum of everyday paperwork and catapulted him into the public arena as a form of hero.²⁶ Following Inspector Hall's death, the file fell into the hands of an individual who attempted to sell it to East Sussex Record Office, at which point it was transformed into an illicit commodity.²⁷ At the same archive a file relating to the Brighton Trunk murders of 1934 contains correspondence dating from 1982 between the widower of Leopold Holt and detectives from Sussex CID regarding the donation of the file back to the police in preparation for the opening of a new museum.²⁸

Having arrived in the LRO, there is another facet to these files which reflects theories of archival power and the way in which organisational decisions around selection, preservation and access to material may influence the historical narrative.²⁹ As discussed above, amalgamations undoubtedly led to the loss of records during the process of extensive station, departmental and headquarters closures, records which were, on occasion, retrieved from skips either to enter police museums, to be taken home or to be informally donated to LROs. It seems there was, however, a tendency to donate to the LRO supporting the original, pre-merger force, perhaps in an act of remembrance or defiance. A search, for example, for the West Midlands Police via The National Archives reveals nothing: with a knowledge of the force's 'family tree', however, it is possible to locate the

records at several LROs under Walsall, Wolverhampton and Dudley borough police forces, Birmingham City Police and West Midlands Constabulary. It is almost as if the history of these old forces has defied modern policy and remained doggedly *unmerged*. Generally, the scattered nature of these records and the way in which they may subsequently be catalogued, for example buried within local authority or Watch Committee minutes, presents an obstacle for researchers and a valid reason for why regional police force histories lag behind those of the Metropolitan Police.

Conclusion

Although the evolution of these files around a sensation-rich and highly researched culture certainly contributed to the original act of preservation; once in the LRO their low public profile, along with stringent restrictions around their access, continues to hinder the process of creating an overarching narrative of the modern organisational regional force.³⁰ It is an interesting observation that the authors of true crime literature rarely cite the original files held in the LRO relevant to their research. With the exception of a few authors such as W.H. Johnson who accessed the Brighton Trunk Murder file they rely heavily on other published works and the reportage of the press.³¹

Mirroring the view of detectives, the philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist, Bruno Latour, described bureaucratic records as 'the most despised of ethnographic objects.' Yet by recognising murder files not

- (2013), p.10
- 16 Ian Bridgeman and Clive Emsley, *A Guide to the Archives of the Police Forces of England and Wales* (The Police History Society, 1989), available at www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/policing/sites/www.open.ac.uk/arts.research.policing/files/files/ecms/arts-policing-pr/web-content/guide-to-police-archives.pdf
- 17 Of these nine, five appeared to be held within a police museum: The City of London Police, Lancashire Constabulary, Northamptonshire Police, South Wales Police and West Midlands Police; four of the museums survive today but the fate of the Lancashire Museum remains unknown.
- 18 For example, thoughts were that murder files are now so large that only a brief summary could be stored; and that although a murder weapon or physical evidence may be of historic interest, all the information was "available in newspapers anyway".
- 19 Only 10% of police forces who responded to the survey appreciated the wide variety of material that would be of interest to future historians; Police records archiving policy in Great Britain: interim report, The International Centre for the History of Crime, Policing and Justice (Milton Keynes: Policing and Justice The International Centre for the History of Crime, 2003), p.1, www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/policing/. For guidance see the College of Policing, "The management of police information," *Authorised Professional Practice* (2014), available at www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/information-management/management-of-police-information. This guidance provides nothing on the identification or preservation of records for future research purposes, or their possible transfer to LROs.
- 20 Haia Shpayer-Makov, "Explaining the rise and success of detective memoirs in Britain," in *Police Selectives in History: 1750-1950*, ed. Clive Emsley and Haia Shpayer-Makov (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006). Paul Lawrence, "Scoundrels and scallywags, and some honest men ...: Memoirs and the self-image of French and English policemen, c.1870-1939," in *Comparative Histories of Crime*, ed. Barry Godfrey, Clive Emsley, and Graeme Dunstall (Willan, 2003), p.136.
- 21 A theme largely absent from academic research with the notable exception of Christine Wall's paper on women's workplace mementos: "Something to show for it: The place of mementoes in women's oral histories of work" (paper presented at the Rethinking labour: Labour, affect and material culture conference, University College Dublin, 18-20 April 2008).
- 22 Michel Anteby and Virag Molnar, "Collective memory meets organizational identity: Remembering to forget in a firm's rhetorical history," *Academy of Management Journal* 55, no. 3 (2012), p.9.
- 23 Pierre Nora, "Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989), p.12.
- 24 Chester, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies: Collection of Cheshire Constabulary, Cat No CJP 20/20/1 (i) & (ii): Two files entitled R v Mark Wilde, murder: The Gorse Hall murder, 1909. R.W. James, *To the Best of our Skill and Knowledge: A Short History of the Cheshire Constabulary 1857-1957*, 2nd ed. (Cheshire: Museum of Policing in Cheshire, 2005).
- 25 Brighton, East Sussex Record Office: Records of Sussex Police Authority, R v Patrick Herbert Mahon, Cat No. SPA 2/37/3: Sketch plan, 1924.
- 26 Ian Burney and Neil Pemberton, *Murder and the Making of English CSI* (John Hopkins University Press, 2016), p.84. The authors describe the press coverage with its emphasis on Scotland Yard's dramatic race in a motor car through the night to the crime scene at a lonely stretch of land.
- 27 Files of papers concerning the recovery of SPA 2/37/2-40 by the West Mercia Police, 1993. Cat No SPA 2/37/41. Collection of Sussex Police Authority. East Sussex Record Office, Brighton.
- 28 File of papers, 1934-1935, Cat No SPA 11/3/8, Files on the Brighton Trunk murders, collection of Sussex Police Authority. East Sussex Record Office, Brighton
- 29 Randall C. Jimerson, *Archives power: memory, accountability, and social justice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009).
- 30 For example, police forces may have retrospectively laid down access restrictions; the Data Protection Acts mean that it is rare to be allowed access to files dating later than 1940 as most LROs seem to follow the life-span of 100 years with named persons in the file being of 18 years or older.
- 31 W.H. Johnson, *Sussex Murders, True Crime History Series*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2011). Although a number cite records held by TNA, books not citing the murder files held by LROs, for example in the Sutton True Crime History series, are *Lancashire Murders*, *Gloucestershire Murders*, *Somerset Murders*, *Cheshire Murders* and *Cumbria Murders*. Although a number cite records held by TNA, books not citing the murder files held by LROs, for example in the Sutton True Crime History series, are *Lancashire Murders*, *Gloucestershire Murders*, *Somerset Murders*, *Cheshire Murders* and *Cumbria Murders*.
- 15 In 2013 the author identified 14 police collections which she considered to be at 'high risk': Angela Sutton-Vane, *An overview of police historic collections in the UK: Findings of a survey carried out during April and May 2013 to support the future development of the Historic Collections of Devon & Cornwall Police*

as simple, one-dimensional sources of information, but as artefacts with a biography, they clearly demonstrate their place within social, cultural and administrative networks, connecting working and private lives, licit and illicit bureaucracies.³²

Finally, an important codicil here is to iterate that research should in no way vilify the police for their actions. During the mid-twentieth century, the period when many of these files were appearing in the public domain, an escalation of information meant that a number of organisations had simply not kept astride with ethical and management implications and were fairly cavalier with their records. By the end of the twentieth century, however, the police *had* responded vigorously and the debate as to whether the pendulum has swung too far the other way is yet to be resolved.³³

³² Bruno Latour, "Drawing things together," in *Representations in Scientific Practice*, ed. M. Lynch and S. Woolgar (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

³³ The police will argue that it has not; historians that it has.

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ANGELA SUTTON-VANE also has a first class degree in the conservation of paper and three-dimensional objects, and an AHRC-funded masters by research in

material culture. Prior to this, Angela trained as a police researcher before committing to the museum and heritage sector working, for example, at the National Maritime Museum, the National Galleries of Scotland, Heriot-Watt University Archive and most recently as a curator/archivist for a police museum and archive. Currently Angela is working on an AHRC-funded project in the history department at the University of Liverpool. Her first book chapter, 'Murder cases, trunks and the entanglement of ethics: The preservation and display of scenes of crime material' is due to be published by Palgrave MacMillan in November as part of Professor Alison Adam's *Crime and the Construction of Forensic Objectivity from 1850*. She also continues to develop and widen her research around the police record and the role of police museums.

The Corrupting Effects of the Cinema

By DR MARY FRASER

During the First World War the cinema became the new form of mass public entertainment, with an estimated 3,500 cinemas in Britain, and audience attendances of over 20 million per week by 1916. Cinemas became a significant influence on the nation.

While the public flocked to this new form of cheap entertainment, the influential upper classes feared a negative influence on the masses, which the police and Home Office reflected: that films showed scenes which could influence juveniles to commit crimes, that some of the films showed indecency which children and youths should be prevented from seeing, and that in the darkened auditoriums, children and young people could be indecently assaulted and acts of indecency could occur. It needed to be controlled.

Worries about the content of

films stretched back to 1908, when cinemas began to mushroom, giving insufficient time before the onset of war to integrate this new media into society. In 1909 the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police urged the Home Office to exercise control over the cinema, as he said fire precautions were inadequate for the highly inflammable celluloid films and the contents of some of the films glorified crime.

In 1909 the Cinematographic Act required owners of premises to apply for a license to the county council and to the police, who could visit to inspect the building and held records of licenses and licensees. Councils could also attach conditions to granting a license. Licenses gave police access to premises where they believed a film was being shown publicly, to investigate if a complaint

was received, and to assess whether any laws were being infringed.

But there was always suspicion that licensing was intended to censor films, anathema to film producers, distributors and cinema owners. This brought the licensing authority and the police into frequent conflict with the film industry. Indeed, tensions were heightened from 1910, when it was noticed that some councils granted licenses on the basis of the films' contents, and when challenged in court the council's decisions were upheld.

With continual pressure by councils, by 1912 the film industry feared central government censorship. To attempt to offset this, they sent a deputation to the Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna, to establish the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC), paid for by the industry and without

direct government control, but by 1915 support for the BBFC's decisions showed that out of the hundreds of councils able to grant licenses, only 35 had given their support to BBFC decisions. Agreement by councils and the Home Office was that BBFC's standards were insufficient, particularly for cinema attendances by children. Many councils had developed much stricter censorship which banned films given BBFC approval. The following year councils also wanted to ban some of the posters advertising films.

Apart from the content of films, by May 1916 the dark auditoriums led the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police to appoint a children's attendant to try to prevent molesting in the auditorium. He also portrayed the views of many Chief Constables that the increase in juvenile crime, seen since early 1916, was due to films having a "demoralising or injurious influence on children" and could glamorise crime and criminal behaviour. He said the war had created situations while the father was away and the mother failed to control the children properly, that without parental control children and youth could see whatever they chose.

Furthermore, despite each local authority having their own board of censors, there was no uniformity, so that people could travel from one area to another to see banned films. These worries led to increased coverage in the education columns of *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, instructing the police on their rights in relation to younger viewers in the cinema and the procedures involved in granting a license.

In some areas the police visited cinemas daily to check that films did not infringe laws of indecency or morality.

All this activity ensured that the dangers of the cinema were kept



Home Secretary George Cave

firmly in the discourse of police work, although it created problems for some Chief Constables, as by May 1916 a number had legal proceedings taken against them for trying to ban certain films.

With the 1917 change in government, the Home Secretary, George Cave, approved the National Council of Public Morals Commission of Enquiry, chaired by the Bishop of Birmingham. It was triggered by a letter from the Cinematograph Trade Council asking for an independent enquiry into the physical, social, moral and educational influences of the cinema, particularly in relation to young people.

The Commission heard evidence from the Chief Constable of Edinburgh, whose area covered 24 cinemas with a seating capacity of 17,000 for a population of 330,000. He showed the cinema had some good influences by reducing intemperance and keeping children off the streets. Although some of the films were said to show scenes of indecency, they did not infringe any laws, but the suggested immorality could influence the young and he would not want his own daughter to see some of the named films. Together with the Chief

Constables of Aberdeen and Dundee, they had heard that immorality could occur in the darkened auditoriums but had not received complaints of this. However, they recommended increased levels of lighting to prevent indecency. They had also heard that children stole to pay for cinema entrance but had not come across any instance of this in the police courts, and also that films glorified crimes of burglary and housebreaking inciting children to commit similar crimes. He had asked the boys who said their crimes were pure mischief and not motivated by scenes shown in the cinema.

He showed that although the cinema had become immensely popular since 1912, his statistics showing a steep rise in juvenile crime had only occurred since 1914, blaming the war influence, not the cinema. The Home Office subsequently approved a national model agreement for granting a cinema license.

Some towns gave increased surveillance of cinemas to women police, which continued into 1918, to ensure "the welfare of youthful patrons" and to prevent prostitutes using the refreshment facilities in cheaper cinemas as a rendezvous.

By the end of 1917, although the police in England and Wales largely supported the cinema as a place of recreation for children and juveniles, they continued to portray it as creating problems. While it kept juveniles from hooliganism and the attractions of the public house, *The Police Review and Parade Gossip* continued to associate juvenile crime with films:

The Commission is obliged to conclude that there is a connection between the cinema and juvenile crime, and that the scenes depicted in the screens of the cheaper kind of picture-houses are, by imitation a direct incitement to juvenile crime.

Advising its readers to continue to associate films shown in cheaper cinemas with juvenile crime.

In conclusion, despite its dubious start and without central government control, during the war the BBFC overcame difficulties with most of the local authorities who came to accept that their certificate gave sufficient assurance of a film's suitability for public exhibition. With changes in the levels of lighting in the auditoriums, this also gave increased assurance that immorality was unlikely. By the end of the war, public and police concerns shifted to other issues with the demobilisation of troops.



MARY FRASER is the sole author of *Policing the Home Front, 1914-1918: The Control of the British Population at War*, published on 12th December 2018 by Routledge in their Studies in First World War History series see www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781315122922.

Mary trained as a nurse in Oxford and London. Following a degree in psychology she moved to higher education, setting up one of the first three degrees for qualified nurses in the UK. She graduated MSc University of Surrey with a Department of Health Research Studentship, and PhD from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

She was Senior Lecturer in the Department of Government, University of Strathclyde and has held public appointments in healthcare in both England and Scotland. Her interest in how different professional groups talk about their lives and work through the pages of their professional journals both historically and in the present started with nursing. For the last 10 years she has been developing a similar approach with the police, another large public sector organisation with a remit of public service.

147 Years of Newport Pagnell Police Station 1872 to 2019

By MICK SHAW



Newport Pagnell Police Station was built in 1872. In those early days the policemen worked from their home address, only checking in for an update of orders. Four policemen under one inspector covered an area with a population of 3,500. The cost to build the station was around £1,600.

The earliest known photograph (shown above) was taken in 1911, and shows the children of the inspector-in-charge at the time, Charles Floyd Anthony, who was in charge of the station from 1897 until his retirement on 18th October 1911. He joined the Bucks Constabulary as a 3rd Class Constable on 30th April 1877, at the age of 22 years. He steadily rose through the ranks until his promotion to inspector on 6th July 1893, but was initially posted to Brill until moving into Newport Pagnell Police Station on 1st June 1897.



Inspector Charles Floyd Anthony

Museum. The head of the scroll bears the names of the magistrates who served the Petty Sessions Court at the time. The main part of the scroll bears the names of 204 names of local personages who contributed to the Inspector's retirement gifts and cheque.

Charles Floyd Antony died at his home at 15 Wolverton Road, Stony Stratford on 7th June 1917.

The group on the right shows officers from the Northern Division during 1908. You can see both the inspector and superintendent, who also lived at the police station, sitting down in the second row. It would be too much to mention all the constables and sergeants names in this article, but I will mention a couple.

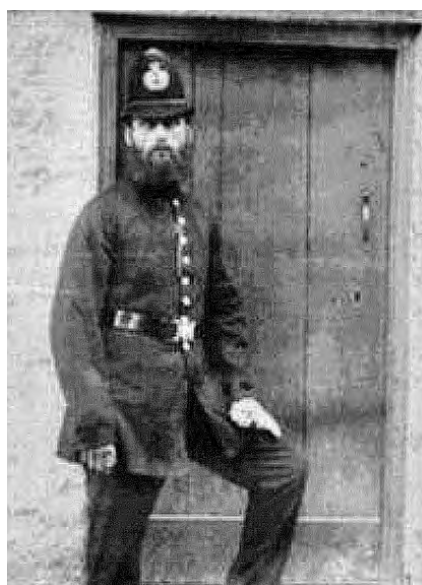
The first is Police Constable William Lawrence 107, who joined the Bucks Constabulary on 13th October 1870. He spent his entire 26 years' service on the Northern Division. I am mentioning this officer because on his retirement from the police in October 1896, he was presented with a silver-plated teapot engraved as follows:

*P.C. William Lawrence
FROM THE OFFICERS AND
CONSTABLES OF THE NORTHERN
DIVISION BUCKS CONSTABULARY
ON HIS RETIREMENT
Oct. 1896*

This very teapot is now in the Museum at Central Milton Keynes Police Station, and on the final farewell held at Newport Pagnell Police Station on 10th May 2019 I took this teapot to put on display for the evening. How ironic that it came back to this police station, 133 years after it was presented to an officer there. I believe that William Lawrence is one of the un-named officers in the first group picture seen here. I have come to this conclusion as a matter of elimination although I can still not confirm it one hundred per cent.



The second officer I would like to mention at this point is Police Constable 44 James Dickens. James joined the Bucks Constabulary on 18th October 1876, and had been born on 22nd March 1858 in Whaddon, the son of Robert and Medeylina Dickens. On leaving school he became a labourer, employed by William Henry Darke. He married Ellen North and they had nine children. During his later life James Dickens lived at 8 Spring Gardens, Newport Pagnell. He retired from the Bucks Constabulary on 19th October 1904, and died in January 1946, aged 88 years, at 66 Queen Anne Street, New Bradwell. He is buried in the cemetery of St. Peter & St. Paul's church at Newport Pagnell.



PC James Dickens

One of his sons became a Bucks Policeman; PC11 Frederick Dickens. The extended family included another two policemen, PC58 Stephen Jennings (Bucks Constabulary 1890 to 1919) and PC199 (later Inspector) Stephen Wilfred Jennings (joined Bucks Constabulary 13th March 1923, retiring in the latter part of 1959). When he was an inspector he became friends with Enid Blyton, and one of the characters in her *Famous Five* books, Inspector Jenks, was inspired by her friendship with Stephen Jennings.

Another superintendent to live at the police station was Evelyn Louis Dibben, who joined the Bucks Constabulary on 25th July 1899. Rising through the ranks, he became superintendent on 9th April 1917 after spending a year in the acting rank. He eventually found his way to Newport Pagnell, on 6th November 1916.

Superintendent Dibben passed away at his home inside the police station on 9th February 1922. In a letter to the Chief Constable, his widow mentioned vacating the station in a house move to Bletchley in order to be near her mother and other friends.

Evelyn Louis Dibben can be seen sitting in the group photograph above from 1908, next to Inspector Anthony. At this time he was a sergeant. The



picture above is Superintendent Dikken (in the rank of Inspector).

By now the Divisional Headquarters had moved to Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, leaving Newport Pagnell as a lone police station with cells.

Another inspector that lived at Newport Pagnell was Frederick Cornelius Bryant, who joined the Bucks Constabulary on 4th July 1907 as a 3rd Class Constable and, like the others, rose through the ranks and in the process received several Chief Constable's Commendations. He arrived at Newport Pagnell in 1924, having now been an inspector for two years.

In the photograph shown top right, Frederick is sitting on the second row, third from the left. This picture was taken outside the New Divisional Headquarters at Fenny Stratford. Two other officers who served at Newport Pagnell are also in this picture: PC40 Thomas Johnson and PC104 William Bunce.

Thomas Johnson can be seen standing on the third row, fifth from the right. Thomas was posted to Newport Pagnell on 8th March 1921 and was there until 19th April 1923, when he was posted to Hanslope where he served as the village policeman until May 1937. He was the longest serving policeman at



Hanslope, being there for 14 years, which was unusual in those days. His record was actually eventually broken by me. My service at Hanslope lasted 17 years, a record I am proud to hold.

An interesting story occurred during my research into the Bucks Constabulary. In September 1996, one of the two sons of Thomas Johnson was traced to an address in Wavendon, Milton Keynes (not far from Woburn Sands). This was Thomas Johnson's last posting. William Johnson, 73-years-old at the time, produced a photograph, three medals (two from Thomas Johnson's 1st World War service, the other being the 1937 commemorative Coronation Medal issued to him on 20th May that same year), also a bullet that was taken from Thomas Johnson's ankle when he was shot in the 1st World War. He even had part of the sock he was wearing at the time. These were treasured possessions for William, who was clearly very proud of his father.

William discussed with his brother donating all these items to the Police Museum at Newport Pagnell. They decided this was the best course of action as they had no-one to leave them to, not having any family of their own. Unfortunately, in late September 1996 William Johnson's home was broken into and property including the items mentioned was

stolen, leaving the Johnson brothers very upset and a museum without a valued addition to their collection.

Around a year later the stolen items were mysteriously returned though the letterbox of William Johnson's house. I was contacted and William gave the items to display in the Police Museum at Newport Pagnell. When the museum closed they were put on display at the Police Station at Milton Keynes with other historic items, where they remain today.

Going back to the group photograph above, PC104 William Bunce can be seen standing in the back row, third from the left. William was posted to Newport Pagnell on 22nd September 1903, serving there until November that year when he was posted to North Crawley, still reporting to the then Divisional Headquarters, Newport Pagnell.

The officer sitting next to Frederick Bryant is Superintendent Ernest Callaway who, if you remember, was an inspector at the time of Evelyn Louis Dikken's death in Newport Pagnell Police Station. In fact it was Ernest who took over as superintendent on Evelyn's death.

Frederick Cornelius Bryant was promoted to superintendent on 16th July 1929, retired on 25th July 1946. His retirement was delayed owing to World War II.



Ralph Browning

Ralph Browning served the Bucks Constabulary from 24th November 1913 to 4th August 1914, when he was recalled to the colours, having previously served in the Grenadier Guards. He again served with the Grenadiers throughout the war in France and Flanders, being wounded twice. He rejoined the Bucks Constabulary on 24th April 1919. He eventually became an Inspector at Newport Pagnell, living in the flat above the station with his wife and daughter. He retired on 23rd February 1939 and then moved to Woburn Sands until his death in 1966.

I believe one of the last officers to live in the police station at Newport Pagnell was Inspector Robert William Roworth, who joined the Bucks Constabulary on 20th April 1925 as a constable. By 1947 he was promoted to inspector, arriving at Newport Pagnell at the same time, where he remained until his retirement in 1956.

So far I have mentioned very few of the police constables and sergeants and – in later years – the staff and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who worked from this police station. It would take too long, as there have been many of us since it opened in 1872.

However, one officer I will mention is Sergeant 41 George Bickerton. Sergeant Bickerton was promoted

to sergeant on 30th November 1959. George joined the Buckinghamshire Constabulary on 14th August 1939. He left to serve in HM Services during 1941, returning in 1946 to continue his police career at Beaconsfield.

At this time his pay as a constable was £108/- per week. He was promoted to sergeant only a short time before his untimely death. The fatal accident occurred on 15th January 1960 during his service at Newport Pagnell.

He was attending a series of minor accidents in the southbound lane on the M1 motorway four miles north of Newport Pagnell. A vehicle was ‘bogged’ down on the hard shoulder. To make it possible for a breakdown vehicle to turn around, Sergeant Bickerton went back up the road to put out stoplights, causing the traffic to stop, but a three-vehicle minor accident occurred around the same time. It was whilst he and another two men were pushing the last of these vehicles off the road that another vehicle skidded and struck the Sergeant. The other two men were slightly injured in the accident, but Sergeant Bickerton died from his injuries at Northampton General Hospital. He was only 40-years-old.

Pictured below are (left to right) PC41 George Bickerton, PC30 Charles

Bilbo and PC50 Bob Coulson. I have not been able to establish exactly where this picture was taken.

Well, we are coming to the end of our brief history of Newport Pagnell Police Station, although there are still a couple more interesting stories to tell.

In September 2010, just a few months before I retired from Thames Valley Police, accompanied by a facilities officer I decided to look in the loft above the garage at the back of the station. No-one had been up there for years. It was dusty and very dirty. We found some old property books from the 1970s and some roadside lamps from the 1950/60s, and under some boxes we saw an old sepia photograph which could not be seen clearly owing to the years of dust and dirt. After a quick clean and dust up of the picture I saw it was titled “Bucks Constabulary Northern Division Newport Pagnell, 1913”. After a quick examination of the photo I could see it was an original of one I had just hung in the police station – spooky or what?! I had the picture framed, and it now hangs at Central Milton Keynes Police Station.

The last officer I would like to mention is WPC1 Olive Kemp, as she was the first female officer to serve in



this police station. Joining the Bucks Constabulary on 10th September 1945, she was initially posted to Bletchley in early November 1945 but later that month she found herself in Slough (then in Buckinghamshire).



One funny story involving Olive occurred on Sunday, 25th April 1959. She had been making observations in Datchet for a man suspected of indecent exposure. She watched as a man came along the path on a pedal cycle and went under the railway arches, where he remained for nearly an hour. Olive called for help from two men and two women to assist with the arrest of the man who made off over fields and woods to evade capture.

WPC Kemp found herself in the position of having to ford a stream and use a willow tree for support as she did so. However, she slipped and ended up in the brook, suffering bruising to her shin and grazing her right wrist. The man, it seems, got away!

In September 1959 she was posted back to the Northern Division at Bletchley, and eventually found her way to Newport Pagnell on 25th March 1963 after spending a short spell at Wolverton. She retired on 10th September 1976. During her service she received a number of commendations.

For a number of years, the Courtroom held a Police Museum started by Ron Spendloff, a retired Metropolitan Policeman who had now moved to Newport Pagnell. He remained the Volunteer Curator for a number of years, until the museum was forced to close after his death.

On the evening of 10th May a farewell get-together took place. Around 50 retired and serving police officers, PCSOs and staff attended. It was a fantastic reunion of both former and present serving officers, but an extremely sad occasion to think of the many police officers and staff that have passed through its doors for over 147 years.

You can see there have been few changes to the façade, although there have been many more inside. The cells are still there, but the offices and space have been updated over the years. Recent pictures show that the iron grilles on the court-room windows have been removed to aid the war effort in the Second World War. The absence of chimneys resulted with the change to oil-fired heating. The removal of the wall leading up to the entrance and the iron-grilled gate has allowed access for mechanised transport and car parking where the inspector originally had his garden.

As a footnote, a small time-capsule was placed under the floorboards by the back door on 16th April 1953. It noted all the officers working from this police station at that time. The inspector was Robert William Roworth, mentioned earlier. It was discovered in 1986, and the officers' names from that time were added. On 23rd June it was relocated in the same place. In May 2019 it was recovered, and is now in the care of the Central Milton Keynes museum.

I have mentioned just a few of the hundreds of police officers and staff that have served in this police station over the past 147 years, and this is only

a brief history of the police station. Of course there is much more still to tell of this old building and the many inspectors and hundreds of police officers and staff who passed through its doors, but I just wanted to give a brief insight into this much-loved police station's history, which I hope I have succeeded in doing. I also wanted to complete it before 18th May 2019, when the station officially closed, and I have!

I must admit that now I am finishing my brief history of this much-loved police station I have a tear in my eye, thinking that even through the happy times, sad times, and tough times, we have always had to face on the streets, this police station has been waiting for us to come home, a welcoming safe haven for us to be able to laugh and cry, and feel safe. It's carried on this way during its 147 years history, never failing, and now not knowing its own future. One thing can be certain: it will always be a police station in our memories, somewhere we can look on very fondly.

Goodbye old friend!



MICK SHAW is retired from Thames Valley Police, having served 33 years. He served 17 years as the village Constable for Hanslope and became interested in the Bucks Constabulary and police history in general during 1994, when the local school staged a display on the formation of the Hanslope Parish Council in 1894. Since then Mick has researched all the village constables since the formation of the Bucks Constabulary back in 1857, discovering that he was the 39th constable. He now has well over 2,000 photographs, and around the same number of full or part records of service of police officers who served in the Bucks Constabulary up until the amalgamation in 1968.

Visit his website: www.mkheritage.co.uk/bch.

Gay men and the Police 1950-2010

By DR CLIFFORD WILLIAMS

In recent years an area of history sometimes called 'hidden history' has come to the fore. One aspect of this is LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans gender) history. It is a history that in the past was often covered over or erased, such was the disdain and prejudice for ideas of diverse sexual orientation. This prejudice manifested itself in law and policing.

The last 25 years or so has witnessed a complete turnaround of policing *vis a vis* LGBT issues. In this article I shall look at the policing of gay and bisexual men 1950-2010, and outline some of the key changes that have taken place. The policing landscape is one that is very different today to that experienced last century. This article introduces some of the themes that I will explore and develop in more detail in my forthcoming book (planned for publication 2020).

In 1950 Metropolitan Police Sergeant Harry Daley retired. Daley was an unusual police officer of the time, in that he was gay and very interested in the arts. Whilst his colleagues knew about his homosexuality and often ribbed him about it, he did not flaunt it and he was respected as a good copper. And he was careful not to transgress the law, which before 1967 made any form of physical homosexual conduct illegal. The account of Daley's life was published in 1986, when it was still taboo and very difficult to be a gay policeman.¹

The 1950s saw a rise in the prosecutions for gay sex activity. Home Secretary David Maxwell-Fyfe (1951-4) was particularly keen to clamp

down on this 'vice', and encouraged Chief Constables to be more proactive in prosecuting homosexuals.

The most high profile prosecution came in 1954 and involved a peer of the realm. Lord Montagu, Michael Pitt-Rivers and Peter Wildeblood appeared at the Hampshire Assizes in Winchester in March 1954 on over twenty charges connected to acts alleged to have taken place with two Royal Air Force men during 1952 and 1953. All the acts alleged were consensual, and took place either on Lord Montagu's Beaulieu estate in Hampshire or on Pitt-Rivers' estate. The two RAF men were granted immunity from prosecution in return for giving evidence. Montagu had been acquitted in December 1953 of a charge of indecent assault on a Boy Scout, and some felt that the prosecution for offences on his estate at Beaulieu with the RAF men was a sweet revenge by the officer in the case Head of Hampshire CID, Wally Jones; a revenge Jones denied.²

Montagu, Pitt-Rivers and Wildeblood were found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment for 12 months, 18 months and 18 months respectively. The publicity of the case and the sentences gave rise to quite a lot of public sympathy and calls to reform the law and 'treat' rather than punish homosexuals. Indirectly this led the Home Secretary to finally agree to an inquiry into homosexuality (and prostitution); The Wolfenden Committee.

Most of the prosecutions of gay men in the 1950s were, like any other decade, for offences committed in

public. Importuning, soliciting, gross indecency or procuring or attempts at such offences in public places were the common charges. Cases of prosecution of sexual activity in private, like that of Alan Turing in Cheshire, were rare.³

Penalties were often harsh by any standard. An examination of newspaper reports in Portsmouth has shown that a sentence of six months' imprisonment was not unusual for importuning or soliciting.⁴

Often, the mere fact of a name appearing in the newspaper was enough to lead to dismissal from work, or for the man found guilty to commit or attempt suicide. Many tragic episodes can be linked to the law on homosexuality and its application at this time.

Regardless of the law, homosexuality could not be suppressed. And there were gay police officers in the '50s and '60s, although they were not 'out' in the modern sense. As a retired Southampton detective remarked,

There were two officers strongly suspected of "being queer" as it was known then, but no attempts were made to 'out them'. One I recall was nearly caught on the Common in the bushes but got away. Cannot recall his name, he was George somebody... it was considered serious but very much tolerated, especially the two officers thought to be so. Other outright "pansies" who frequented certain pubs were well known and accepted as a fact of life.⁵

Some of the regular cottaging men

were wise to the police. Mr Lucas, who lived in London and frequented the gay hot spots round Piccadilly, remarked in his diary (18th January 1967):

*The policemen were conspicuous enough, standing together facing the subway leading to the lavatory, and going in singly and in turns. Their only catch would be the wildly indiscreet or the inexperienced visitor.*⁶

Sometimes high-profile people were caught, and given much publicity.

For example, the actor Wilfred Brambell (1912-1985) was arrested by Police Constable Michael Fielding in Shepherds Bush on 6th November 1962 at 11.30pm. Fielding described his work on vice squad:

*We started between 6-8 in the evening and visited various locations. Shepherds Bush Green was one such location and we carried out observations. Brambell went into a toilet and spent 20 mins there – eye contact, looking down at private parts, signs of importuning.*⁷

The Wolfenden Committee recommended a partial decriminalisation of homosexual activity and a greater emphasis on treatment rather than punishment in the courts. But it took ten years until Parliament made any change. The Sexual Offences Act 1967 allowed for sexual activity between two men 21 years old or over to take place in private.

The police reaction to this appears in many parts of the country to be a clampdown on offences in public. Many commentators have suggested that prosecutions increased significantly after the 1967 Act, and that harassment of gay men by the police was worse.⁸ However, apart from a Home Office Report published in 1978 (Walmsley 1978), there has been little precise examination of the actual



1955 newspaper (Portsmouth Evening News) cutting about an army major- the sort of case that commonly appeared in the newspapers in the 1950s.

statistics relating to offences relating to homosexuality. The author is undertaking a closer examination of the recorded statistics (forthcoming).

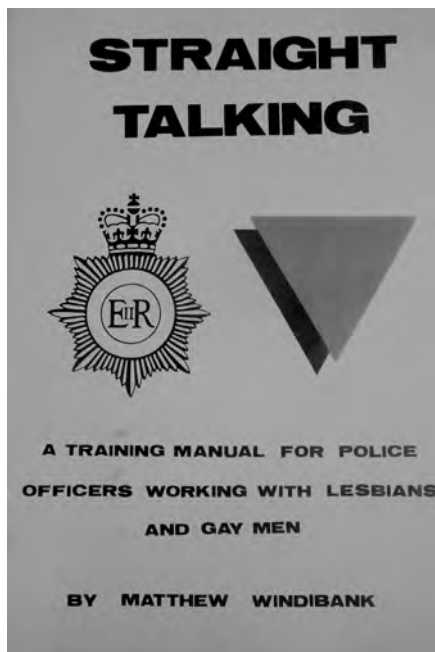
In the 1970s there was a growing campaign for gay liberation and equality. Policing continued to deal with public offences, particularly those associated with public toilets (known as 'cottages', and the activity by gay and bisexual men known as 'cottaging'). Quite how active or inactive police forces or divisions were, reflected both the extent of the problem and the views of police officers who set priorities and organised operations. Individual officers might also display a keenness to tackle 'cottaging' and other public gay activity. PC Bob Woodward of the Hampshire Constabulary appeared on the BBC programme *Man Alive* in 1976 and spoke about how he had arrested hundreds of men for homosexual offences in Southampton.⁹

There is no doubt that the use of public lavatories and other public places by men seeking sexual activity with other men was common in most parts of the country and notorious in some cities (Smith 2015). A retired

detective sergeant who served in Portsmouth Vice Squad in the 1970s remarked:

With regard to men in toilets myself and the five young officers I supervised were absolutely gob smacked by the problem in south east Hampshire. Toilets at St. George's Road (no longer there) near the pitch and putt at Eastney had to be visited to be believed from 1600 hours one could find up to 10 men waiting for sexual contact or performing sexual acts in the cubicles or sometimes openly in the urinals. I was the father of two young children and the thought of one

- 1 *This Small Cloud; A Personal Memoir* by Harry Daley (1986) (Weidenfield and Nicolson: London)
- 2 *My Own Case* by Walter Jones (1966) (Angley Books: Maidstone)
- 3 Professor Chris Waters' (Williams College, USA) research on cases involving homosexual offences in Cheshire was presented in a lecture at Birkbeck College 29th November 2017 entitled 'Turing in Context: Sexual Offences in Cheshire in the 1950s'.
- 4 Author's current research has included examining court reports in Portsmouth newspapers in the 1950s.
- 5 Personal email to author from retired detective who served in Southampton in the 1950s.
- 6 The diaries of Mr George Lucas (unpublished). I thank Hugo Greenhalgh for allowing access to see entries.
- 7 Documentary on Channel 4: *When Steptoe Met Son* (2002) accessed on YouTube. Brambell was taken to Hammersmith Police Station and charged with 'Importuning for immoral purposes'. He received a Conditional Discharge.
- 8 *In Prejudice and Pride: The People's History of LGBTQ Britain*, a documentary shown on BBC 27th February 2017 and 6th March 2017, it was said 'for the seven years after the 67 Act prosecutions rose by 66%'. Elliott and Humphries (2017) state; 'convictions for street offences such as importuning and gross indecency actually quadrupled over the following decade' (after the 1967 Act).
- 9 BBC TV *The Man Alive Report* broadcast BBC2 3rd February 1976. Roland 'Bob' Woodward was for many years the police officer who patrolled Southampton Common and would have dealt with allegations and reports of illegal sexual activity in that area.

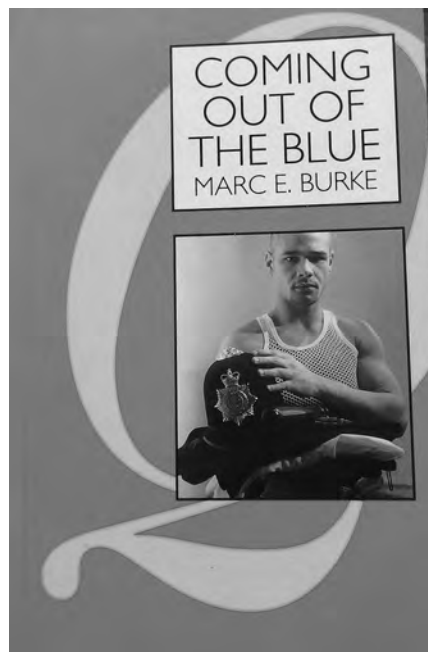


The late Matthew Windibank tried to get police forces to take understanding of gay men seriously. 1990 Manual.

of these going into this environment really concerned me'.¹⁰

Police officers new to the job often remarked how surprised they were by the extent of the sexual activity of men in toilets. One retired Chief Inspector who joined the Metropolitan Police in 1970 remarked:

I was, as a 19-year-old from a conservative, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant background, having my eyes opened wide to a world that hitherto was unknown to me. I remember the pubs and clubs around Earls Court Road and the 'haunt' of Hyde Park where the 'underground' that was homosexuality was still considered a rather scary business. I can, to this day, remember men with tense, scared expressions ducking into shadows as the police car crawled slowly around those bustling side streets. We would be deployed to places where 'acts of gross indecency' (or AGIs) had raised complaints; 'cottaging' observations were regularly brought to our attention on our parades for duty. Slang expressions for some of the many and various AGIs were bandied about in canteens when discussing



'Coming out of the Blue', published 1993

various arrests and listening to these activities being converted into non slang clinical descriptions, when presented as evidence to Marlborough Street or Bow Street Magistrates, was always the subject of much mirth.¹¹

The contrast in police approaches is well summed up by a comparison of James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester 1976-1991 with John Alderson, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall 1973-1982. In December 1986, Anderton's remark that homosexuals, drug addicts and prostitutes who had HIV/AIDS were "swirling in a human cesspit of their own making" received widespread criticism.¹² Alderson, on the other hand, advocated a more liberal approach to homosexuality and improvements in relations between gay men and the service.¹³

In the 1980s there was increasing comment in the media about the manner in which the police operated. Covert observations in toilets and plain clothes observations, especially using 'pretty' policemen as bait, came under scrutiny. Many argued that a more overt in uniform deterrent

approach was required, advising the men to attend legal gay pubs or clubs rather than hang around toilets and other public places.

It is not known what proportion of gay and bisexual men sought sex partners through public places like toilets and parks, but we do know that many of those men were not 'out' and would not be seen in openly known gay pubs.

Furthermore, many 'out' gay men were very critical of men giving homosexuality a bad name by their activities in such places.

Occasionally, police sought out offences in clubs and pubs but raids were not common on such places. When they did occur it might be because of breaches of licensing laws. If a raid did occur it was usually reported on in the 'gay press'. The raids on bookshops often threatened livelihoods. Those on saunas were more likely to lead to charges.

AIDS (as a result of HIV infection) started to affect gay men and others from 1982 onwards in Britain. The number of men dying from AIDS steadily rose, and a fear about the disease led to a reduction of the number of men seeking casual sex, whether through meeting in clubs or open air public places. The police began to take health and safety precautions when dealing with gay men.¹⁴

In the late 1980s a Bedfordshire police officer died of AIDS (thought to be related to his individual sexual activity and not as a result of infection through his police work).

For gay or bisexual police officers, the workplace continued to be a hostile environment in the 1980s and 1990s and very few put their heads above the parapet and admitted their sexual orientation. Why would they? The likely consequences were hostility, harassment and humiliation at work. One officer did go public,

after he and his partner (another police officer) had been outed by the force. PCs Lee Hunt and Richard Adair were 'discovered' by their Hampshire Constabulary ACPO team to be a gay couple living together in 1983. Immediately, they were called to headquarters and posted to work at separate locations in the two vice squads in the Constabulary. They were put on monthly reports and ordered to live apart! Despite these efforts to rid the force of them, Hunt and Adair stuck it out.¹⁵

In London, where many gay men flocked, it was in the Metropolitan Police that gay police men first started organising themselves collectively. What started as an advert for a barbecue grew into a gay police association. The Lesbian and Gay Police Association was established in 1990. In 1993 *Coming Out Of The Blue* was published, featuring stories from gay and lesbian police officers; nearly

all who still felt it necessary to remain anonymous.¹⁶

Gradually, gay police officers in other forces started to join the gay police association and social events were set up. Generally officers on shifts found that as long as the gay officer was a good cop, the rest of the shift and the sergeant caused no problems and accepted them.

10 The retired detective recalled; "I joined the Portsmouth City police in 1962 as a cadet and discovered that the vice squad at that time consisted of two men a Sergeant Harry Pilbeam later to become Detective Chief Superintendent and PC Fred Gillott. They were both ex-matelots and wore naval uniform to trap active males in public toilets. The situation changed in the early days of amalgamation (1967) with a sergeant and five but although they still dealt with the toilet or cottaging problems in Portsmouth, mainly they dealt with pornography sold in shops in the city" (personal email to author).

11 Personal email to author.

12 James Anderton quoted in BBC article published in 2005 on the AIDs campaign of the 1980s (news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/4348096.stm, accessed 25th July 2019).

13 In 1983, after he had retired as Chief Constable, John Alderton spoke of the advantages of recruiting some homosexual officers. *Police Review*, 4th February 1983.

14 During a raid in 1987 on the Vauxhall Tavern public house in London police officers wore rubber gloves on entry to the pub before any searches took place. This led a famous cartoon depicting drag queen Lily Savage (Paul O'Grady) standing on stage in the Tavern as the officers entered, saying "Well I never, Ladies and Gentlemen. We've got help with the washing up."

15 *The Police Review*, 19th April 1991. "When I 'Came Out'" by Lee Hunt. In another recollection (unpublished), Lee Hunt has described one incident when he was at cadet training school: "I was taken into a room and humiliated, told the cadets have never had queers, poofs, and one put his crotch towards me asked if that was what I liked. I was told to leave. I actually pissed myself and worse."

16 *Coming Out The Blue* by Marc E Burke (1993) Cassell, London.



Hampshire police officers and staff at Brighton Pride 2007, the first time the force had allowed their officers to march in uniform. (Note: this was done in the officers' own time)

At the same time, watchdogs were set up to monitor police activity and behaviour, particularly in relation to the policing of black men. Policing of gay men was also closely monitored. The Greater London Council gave practical support to organisations such as GALOP (a police watchdog monitoring policing of gay and lesbian people).

The police attitude to homosexuality generally softened in the late 1990s, and focus started shifting to a new form of offence: computer-related child pornography.

One officer who “joined vice squad in April 1996 and did just over two years” remarked that at that time the squad mainly focused on

*Organised prostitution, brothels, obscene publications and importuning/gross indecency between males. We were just getting into online offences and paedophile offences (indecent pictures of children offences) [when he left Vice Squad in 1998].*¹⁷

Partnership policing grew rapidly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A whole new integrated inter-agency and preventative approach to crime and disorder was matched with the police becoming increasingly aware and sensitive to the needs of what were called then ‘minority groups’. By 2000 the police had embraced diversity training, initially concentrating on ‘ethnic minorities’ and then, as the next century progressed, this included people identifying as gay and lesbian. Later, understanding transsexual people (now trans gender) was added to the diversity agenda for police. The MacPherson Report left the police service with no alternative.¹⁸

ACPO embraced a new approach. Hate crime against gay men now became a priority above offences committed in and around toilets by gay men.¹⁹

Some police forces started recruitment adverts in the gay press, much to the horror of some Federation branches.²⁰

By 2010, when the Equality Act came into being, there was no need for any lesbian, gay or bisexual officer not to feel confident that their sexual orientation and identity would be accepted. Forces established support groups for LGBT officers and staff, and allowed them to march in uniform at Pride events.²¹

This would have seemed like an idea of fantasy some twenty years earlier.

Conclusion

The remarkable turnaround within policing between 1950 and 2010 in relation to gay and bisexual men reflects the change within society and legislation requiring equality and diversity are adhered to in the workplace. The change has enabled gay and bisexual men to flourish within the police force, and secure the confidence of people who in the past had good reason to fear the police. It has also given LGBT people more confidence to report attacks on them.

However, beneath the broad brush headlines there is a complex history with many variations, particularly in the period 1950-1990. What may have been happened in one force or even one force area is not necessarily replicated in another force or area.

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Law Review, pp 400-407.

17 Hampshire Force Policy Vice Squad in 1996 was for a two year tenure, and the squads were governed by these standing orders: Observations and investigation into offences of importuning, gross indecency and other related offences, will only be carried out by vice squad officers or officers under vice squad supervision (V.6.5.1); Observation involving considerable invasion of privacy will be referred to the Divisional Commander for approval; Covert surveillance such as video recording will only take place once the options exhausted. And applications to go the Assistant Chief Constable Operations. ‘Experience has shown that short term vice squad attention does nothing to eradicate the problem’ (V 6 .6.1)

18 ‘The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry’. Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson. Ref: Cm 4262 (1999) The Stationery Office, London.

19 ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) endorsed a policing charter drawn up by the National Advisory Group – ‘Policing Lesbian and Gay Communities’ in 1997 (*Police Review*, 5th December 1997).

20 *Police Review*, 22nd August 1997: ‘South Yorkshire: Repeat of gay paper advert causes outcry’.

21 It is now a cliché to see police officers marching at a Pride event. And perhaps, with such a reduction in visible police presence on the streets, it is time for forces to stop marching at Pride events. The point has been made.



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Into the Twentieth Century

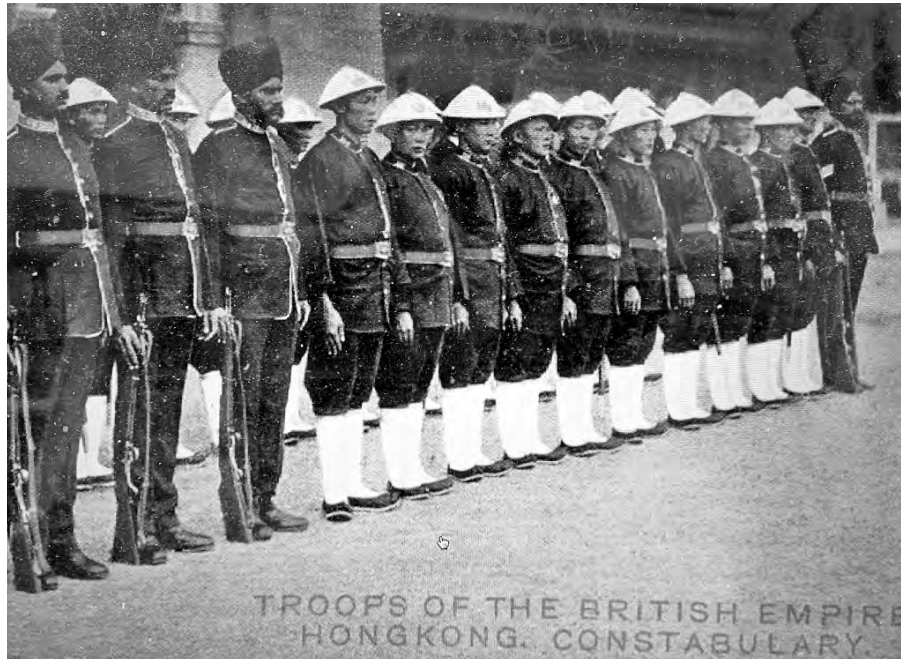
By PATRICIA O'SULLIVAN

Establishing a police force in Hongkong¹ had been no easy task. Within a couple of years of the planting of the Union Jack on Hongkong island in 1841, the need for a proper force was painfully obvious. In those early days it was more about controlling unruly soldiers, sailors and beachcombers of every nationality than any local Chinese miscreants.

But the problem was that the personnel for a police force had to come from just the same ranks – hence, in the early 1860s the average length of service for a constable before dismissal, desertion or death was just three months. The first two contingents of men brought out from the Scottish and London Forces certainly gave Hongkong some trained backbone, but poor conditions of service, rampant disease and ruinously cheap but very rough liquor all constituted a continuous challenge to the establishment of a professional, stable Force.

Policing a British colony

Initially the Force had very few Chinese members – the low opinion which the early administrators had for the Chinese constables, or *lukongs*, was almost equalled by the disdain in which the wider Chinese community held the British, thus only men completely down on their luck would volunteer for this role. Over the years the whole situation improved a little, but throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century it was still a predominantly foreign force, with about 110 Europeans (as



Contingents of the Hongkong Police

the mainly British contingent were termed) 200 Indians and 180 Chinese in the land Force plus an additional 100 Chinese in the Water Police. Of these men, there were generally about four Chinese and ten each Indian and European sergeants. The twelve inspectors and one chief inspector ranks were exclusively European. The British constable was always superior in rank to the Asiatic officers and the Chinese and Indians were generally not posted together because of the problems of communication. Police School consisted in language classes, to be attended when possible and basic numeracy and literacy as required for European and Indian constables. Weapons training (musketry drill and rifle practice) was also only given to these contingents.

As the colony matured, the remit of the police broadened and control of

the local population became the focus of the day to day life of the constables. However, that was not to suggest that the Europeans became models of rectitude. Many of the universal crimes were prevalent here – murder, gang robbery, theft in all its guises were staples, of course, with arson, fraud and financial crime also present. Then there were familiar crimes with a oriental twist, often complicated by the position taken by the British government at home. Controlling gambling, a most favoured pastime in China, was a continual nightmare for the police, with syndicates, often triad controlled, springing up at a moment's notice. Possession of non-government (i.e. untaxed) opium, the kidnapping of women and children to

¹ I have adopted the contemporary term 'Hongkong' for the British colony up to the Second World War.

be sold into slavery or prostitution and the control of brothels were frequent issues for the Force. There were still the remains of ordinances designed to control the majority population – pass and light, obstruction etc, and offences such as being a suspicious character or a returned banishee. Public order offences – riots and boycotts – increased as the situation in mainland China became more volatile with the crumbling of the Qing dynasty. Gun crime was low in proportion to overall crime, and tiny if compared with London or the cities of the USA. Criminals had perhaps less need of guns in the colony because the lanes, alleys and interconnecting houses provided perfect cover and they could rely on at least the neutrality of the local population in any contest between themselves and their colonial masters. But most feared by anyone who had reason to board a vessel larger than the Star Ferry – and that was perhaps a majority of the population at some time or other during the year – was piracy. Pirate ships from a wide area targeted vessels from the prosperous coastal ports. And with the rule of law frequently unenforceable around the China coast, these vicious and merciless men often went uncaught

and unpunished with their lucrative hauls.

A rigorously British (and to the Chinese criminal mind, very soft) system of justice operated in Hongkong, with the Police Magistrate hearing the case in the first place, with a (British) Inspector or sergeant prosecuting. Punishments at this court ranged from fines of a few cents upwards, terms of imprisonment from a single day to six months, stocks and the birch. At the criminal sessions a longer gaol term was often followed by banishment from the colony. The death penalty was effected by hanging, public hanging ceasing in 1894, although capital sentences were not infrequently commuted. Of course, there was no summary beheading or the barbarous punishments of China here, and many criminals regarded the overcrowded and unventilated Victoria Gaol almost as a rest cure – with plenty of food and medical attention provided and a mere 8.5 hours of hard labour per day.

The administration of the Force was one of the senior Civil Service posts in the colony, taken by a cadet officer until the mid 1930s. Some of these men were rather more interested in the job than others – although all

very bright and able, they came to the post with no police background, and like many of their subordinate officers, really had to ‘learn on the job’. Francis Henry May, the 32 year old cadet officer who became Captain Superintendent of Police (CSP) in 1893 was one of the most able. He remained minutely interested in the Force long after he had been promoted to higher roles – including that of Governor of Hongkong – not infrequently to the embarrassment of the actual head of the Force. As CSP, May had been the ‘new broom’ and did much to create a more efficient and better disciplined force and showed real regard and understanding of the men who served him, particularly the rather neglected Indian contingent.

Hongkong grows – and the Force has to keep up...

When Britain acquired the lease of the New Territories at the end of the century, the size of Hongkong increased ten-fold overnight – although only adding less than 50,000 to the population of 250,000. Numerous islands were also included in the accession treaty, as well as the mainland up to the Sham Chun River. Cheung Chau, a ‘dumbbell’ shaped



Cheung Chau c. 1900

island less than a square mile in size had been the focus of attention from the surrounding mercantile community for many years. Lying on the route between Hongkong and Macao, in the previous century the Chinese Maritime Customs, in its attempts to ensure duties were paid on opium and to eliminate smuggling, had opened a depot for the collection of taxes on the island. Cheung Chau had a large population for its size: the census of 1911 recorded 3244 inhabitants, probably over 70% of which lived on sampans and crafts moored around the shore. The village was really the western shoreline of the tombolo (the dumbbell's handgrip) and one main street behind that.

At the western edge of the village stood the Police Station. It wasn't what you'd call an ideal station. It had first been a small-time merchant's house, then done duty as the Chinese Maritime Customs House for many years, and was requisitioned by the Hongkong Police Force in April 1899. None of the doors in this single-storey building had locks, the guard room door (which housed the safe, guns and ammunition) was a sliding door with no bolt and the walls – including those between a room adjacent to the guard room which was occupied by a Chinese family, were wattle and scantling. The only window in the whole place was in the guard room and the back rooms of the station had neither natural light nor ventilation.

In its time as the Customs House it had accommodated both Chinese and European officials but buildings decay rapidly in the humidity and a few years into its police life the tiled floors had completely broken up and the place was infested with fleas, rats and cockroaches. Tolerable (by the standards of the day) in the cooler months, in summer it became



Sir F. H. May when Governor of Hongkong

unbearable and very unhealthy. The Force on the island consisted of four Indian policemen, a lance sergeant and three constables with a European sergeant in charge. The Indians lived with their wives year round in rented rooms in the village, whilst the European sergeant and his wife left the Station as soon as the temperature started rising in April for a matshed on the hills (built at their own expense) behind the station.

For the most part the villagers of Cheung Chau were peaceable people, getting on with making their traditional sea-based livelihoods, little disturbed by their resident European and Indian policemen, except when it came time to pay the quarterly Crown rent. In turn they gave those men little trouble aside from an occasional fracas between boat and shore based residents, some petty larceny or attempted avoidance of harbour dues. There were some American missionaries living on the hills at either end of the island, coming here for rest and relaxation after time spent in mainland China, but otherwise the police were the only non-Chinese on Cheung Chau.

...but are no match for the pirates

It was the government rents in the Station safe that attracted the attention of the pirates who raided the island one night in August 1912. They moored their large junk in the sands off the eastern side of the island where it could disgorge about 40 pirates without hinderance. Under the cover of darkness (this is long before electricity or gas came to Cheung Chau), they swarmed across the narrow strip and made for their first objective: to capture the Police Station. This proved far easier than they appear to have expected.

Surrounding the building on all sides they encountered not a great detachment of police ready to do battle with them, but one lone police guard, P.C. Jhanda Singh, who lost his life before he had time to realise what was happening or even draw his revolver. Perhaps in frustration at this lack of resistance encountered, volleys of shots were discharged, the pirates felling two of their own men. Their haul consisted of about \$1000 (rents collected thus far by the police of the \$2500 due), along with all the guns and ammunition stored in the Guard room. En masse they left the building and spilt into the main road and all the surrounding alleys and passageways.

As soon as the first shots were heard a police coolie rushed the 250 yards or so up the hill behind the station to rouse the sergeant. Patrick Boulger sent his wife to the missionaries' house above with one of their servants, then went to investigate. The very disorganisation of the raiders was the one stroke of luck for Boulger that night. He was able to go through the now empty station, and collect his revolver and ammunition from his kit bag, then clamber onto

the roof to see the progress of the gang. Unbeknownst to him two more of his men had already been killed. The man on evening patrol in the village had started to run towards the station when he heard the shots but was mown down by a volley of bullets. The constable due to take over from him at midnight lived about 150 yards distance from the station and was woken by the gunfire. Only half dressed, but with his revolver in his hand, he came running out into the street but was soon seen and dealt the same fate. The gang removed the guns of both policemen from the bodies.

Meanwhile Boulger's presence had become known to the gunmen and they fired repeatedly at him. It seems, though, that his position on the roofs gave him some protection from the bullets. By this time the gang had broken into groups, with some going to the waterfront to disable the smaller steam boats there, while others attacked the pawnbroker's shop and the main grocery store, carrying off the valuables and a small safe. Boulger realised that the object of the pirates was now the Government steam launch, so, descending from the roof, he took a position some sixty yards away from them, on a small jetty. Here he used his rounds to attempt to stop them making off, but could have little impact. The pirates left the harbour area and steamed round to the other side of the island, where they used the launch to tow their junk off the sandbanks and away to sea.

As stillness returned to the traumatised island the fate of L.Sgt. Baggat Singh and P.C. Inder Singh was soon reported to the sergeant, and he had the bodies of all three carried into the station. Beyond this there was little for him to do other than to pick up the pieces and assess the damage, as far as could be seen by lamplight. Boulger would have to wait until morning to send a sailing boat – in the absence of any functioning

motorised craft – to Hongkong.

In the days immediately after the piracy, a team of detectives camped on the island, interviewing villagers and boat people, but to little avail. More police were posted there pro tem and the Macanese police consulted, as it was believed that the pirates' hiding place was an island that both Macao and China claimed. Over some weeks delicate negotiations between China and Macao were brokered by May and his Registrar General, to launch a tripartite attack to annihilate the 'nest' of pirates of which the Cheung Chau attackers were just part. In the end that plan was aborted because some Chinese officials leaked it to the Canton press and it became common knowledge.

Weaknesses at the top revealed

But of more significance to the police were the questions that started to be asked – particularly by May. Six weeks into his governorship and already the survivor of an assassination attempt, May felt himself to be perhaps the best qualified of Hongkong's governors to date. Since being CSP he had been Colonial Secretary and had periods administering the colony in the absence of the Governor. In this time he had watched his police successor, Francis Badeley with concern. He considered him too goodnatured with the men and lacking initiative in the role. Indeed, Badeley displayed little interest, calling the job "thankless and dreary". Before even all the facts of the Cheung Chau case were known May had pounced on him with questions. Why were the men allowed to live away from the station? In all his time as CSP he had never heard of men living out of a smaller station. How could Badeley possibly justify letting the station be guarded by only one man at night? Why was the European officer in charge sleeping some 250

yards from the station? Badeley's responses – that it had been allowed for some years, that for reasons of decorum the Indian constables wives could not live in close confines with other couples and that he had never anticipated such an attack happening – cut little ice. Indeed, May became quite furious when Badeley pointed out that he – May – and other government officials had visited the island on a number of occasions in the last couple of years and had raised no concerns. The reality, though, was that the situation was well known within the police force – Badeley and his assistants visited all the stations on a quarterly basis, and must have been aware of the state of things. It was, indeed, because of their absence from the station that one Indian constable, all the wives and Boulger were still alive. And – although never brought up at the time – it was May who had personally authorized the requisitioning of the Customs House in 1899. There is no record that it was flagged up as so inadequate and impossible to defend at any time between then and 1912.

Plans were swiftly put in place for a replacement station – built more on fortress than police station lines. May couldn't have Badeley removed directly, but the man soon left on grounds of ill-health, and, when back in England, very swiftly submitted his resignation.

Glimmers of change

By the time the Great War started to brew in Europe the population had grown to half a million, of which four per cent – 20,000, were non-Chinese, including rather under 6,000 British. But estimating the number of Chinese in the colony on any one day was an inexact science. Unrest in China itself continued and people poured in to Hongkong to escape the fighting, but when the agitators of various shades



Off to War - the third contingent of HK Police departs, March 1917

caught popular opinion in the colony, the flow would reverse. This fluid state was part of the reason that police detection rates – especially of gang and highway robberies – were low at the time, and there was a perception in some quarters – often aired in the papers – that crime, especially of the most serious type, was significantly worse than it had been at the turn of the century. However, this belief is not confirmed by the figures, which show both murders and manslaughter decreasing in the decade.²

Between 1915 and 1918, 69 British members of the Force had been allowed to enlist in the war effort. They had been spared because the voluntary Police Reserve were able to take over many police duties from 6pm to midnight each evening. Because the Reserves contained many men of notable standing in the colony, there was considerably more parity between the racially defined contingents – Chinese; Portuguese; European and Indian. And for the same reason all the Reserves received weapons training, even though the regular force had insufficient ammunition for its own needs and only the detectives of the Chinese contingent were armed.

A vulnerable Force

At the Central Police Station shortly after 10 a.m. on Tuesday 22nd January 1918, Inspector Mortimor O'Sullivan,³ Det. Sgt. Henry Goscombe Clarke and chief Chinese detective P.C. Sun Tai received information that the gang who had committed a number of daring and lucrative thefts from both Chinese and European houses were operating out of a shop house in Gresson Street in Wanchai, the then largely residential area to the east of the city. 'Shop houses' were narrow but deep three storey buildings, the upper two floors of which were divided into cubicles, about 8 ft deep and 10 to 12 ft wide, usually with a family in each, reached from the street by a narrow, dark staircase.

It was to effect a very ordinary search warrant that the three men, accompanied by eight Chinese detective constables, set out by tram that January morning, detailing the men to their positions at the house. O'Sullivan took two men, including P.C. Sun Tai with him to the back cubicle on the first floor while Clarke took a party to the top floor to search there. Sun had not checked to see who had followed his orders to collect firearms – actually only he and three others had done

so. Neither of the Europeans thought it necessary to arm themselves: they each carried a walking cane, but this was more a sartorial accoutrement than a weapon. Certainly there was no anticipation of resistance, either to the search or to potential arrest, and those who did have guns did not have them out.

In the back cubicle, the police found two men lying across the bed and one sitting on it and, initially, all did go as the police might have hoped. The men answered the questions put to them, and when their clothes and outdoor coats were checked no weapons were found. But as Sgt. Clarke entered the cubicle and Sun called out for the handcuffs, another gang member entered, and, possibly at a signal, the men pounced on a box that was on the bed which had seemingly been previously hidden. O'Sullivan, Clarke and P.C. Kwong Sang grappled with the men, but guns were quickly passed around and in the very cramped confines of the cubicle, the gang had had the advantage of surprise. For the policemen, the battle was soon over. The box was packed with guns and ammunition and soon there was a barrage of bullets. Of those, just three came from the gun of Kwong and none at all from Sun, who could not get his revolver out of its holster. The other constables on that floor, hearing the volume of fire, did not dare venture in. Kwong was shot many times in the lower stomach and the leg and

² In the whole of the United States at this time the murder rate stood at about 6.1 per 100,000. This is the average for the whole country, not just any particular city or group of cities. In Hongkong the rate stood at 2.6 per 100,000.

³ Mortimer O'Sullivan (1877-1918) is the great-uncle of the author. It was to discover the story of his death that she first went out to Hong Kong in 2009, having made contact with Henry Goscombe Clarke's grandson who still lived and worked there.



Inspector Mortimor O'Sullivan



Det. Sgt. Henry Goscombe Clarke

at some point rolled under the bed, barely alive. Of the Europeans, Clarke fell first, receiving bullets to the neck, chest and shoulder, whilst O'Sullivan was killed by a bullet into his brain, but he had also been shot in the chest, back and the groin.

Sun had been shot twice in the arm and staggered down the stairs into the street. He was closely followed by one of the gunmen, but, using Sun's revolver, another constable was able to shoot him. More gunmen then appeared, firing continuously, but the policemen had soon exhausted their fire power and had to take cover. Meanwhile, on the first floor, a constable was in hiding in the kitchen. When he tried to escape via the window, his movements were heard by gang members still in the cubicle, and from that adjacent window they shot him as he climbed out. Constable Kwang Kwai was probably dead from the multiple gunshot wounds before he hit the ground.

The beginning of the response

It was not until the police who had been guarding the second floor emerged that the alarm was raised by police whistles and a phone call to Wanchai Police Station. Just at this time Inspector George Sim, in

charge of that station and who had been travelling back there on a tram, noticed the shot gang member lying on the pavement and jumped off to investigate, then hurried to phone the Captain Superintendent.

Police were starting to converge and Sim took charge, closing Gresson Street and covering the house from all directions with armed men – mainly members of the Reserve who hurried to the scene. Some while later two of the gunmen were seen clambering out of the back kitchen window, down the drain pipes and making their way along the back lane. The 'desperadoes', as they were frequently called in the press, carried a pistol in each hand, another tied to each wrist and two more hanging by string from their teeth. As soon as they emerged into the roads they kept up continual fire, running along the main road and then up into the steep lanes leading to the hillside. Thus ensued a dangerous gun chase along roads busy with shoppers, directed by Sim and led by four armed (regular) Indian constables. In the maze of stepped alleys and passage-ways the gunmen split up. One man dived into a Japanese brothel. It was in the back yard of this that P.Cs. Mullah Singh and Tara Singh caught up with him –

only for the former to be shot through the head and Tara Singh to be gravely injured. The gunman then made his escape into the scrubby hillside and was lost to justice.

Meanwhile the other gunman – the gang leader – was making his bid for freedom in the other direction. The sound of gunfire had woken Sergeant Marriott of the Naval Dockyard Police, who was asleep after night duty. Inspector Sim, labouring up the steep hill, saw him come to his door and shouted out to him, "Armed robbery, get your gun, prepare to shoot". The Dockyard sergeant ran to an upstairs window from where he could see the ringleader, and at the critical moment was able to fell him as he climbed a wall.

Meanwhile back in Gresson Street all the senior police had assembled, but the place was in a state of siege. Sporadic fire from different rooms and floors of the house continued, hampering efforts to evacuate the women and children still there. Gradually, though, it became evident that the remaining gang members were confined to the ground floor, and, very cautiously, a search was made of the upper floors. In the back cubicle they found what they feared: pools of blood on the floor and more splattered everywhere, walls and furniture heavily scarred by bullets. On the floor lay the bodies of the two Europeans, Inspector O'Sullivan's lying across the head of his sergeant. The box on the bed still contained 300 rounds of ammunition, along with eleven revolvers, and all the kit a violent gang would require. As the party were leaving the cubicle they caught sight of two feet moving under the bed. Kwong Sang, in a very weak state, was taken to hospital where he died two days later, his intestines having been ruptured in nine places.

At this point, and unprecedented in police history in Hongkong, the

Governor, Sir Henry May, arrived and assumed command. Sim then had the grim task of leading a small party including CSP Messer and the Governor back up to the first floor cubicle, where May remained for some minutes surveying the scene.⁴ By 1.30 in the afternoon gunfire was confined to the backyard, where a solitary gunman seemed to have holed up in the outside privvie. Attempts were made to get the man to give himself up, but to no avail – he preferred to blow his own brains out rather than surrender. Taken to hospital, he died a few hours later. Thus it came about that of the four police and four gunmen who were in the cubicle at 11 a. m. on 22nd January, there was just one man to bring to trial, and one witness to the actual events.

The aftermath

With the immediacy of the media at the time, news of the carnage was in every living room before the day was out, and Hongkong was profoundly shocked. All the fallen policemen were given full honours at their funerals, and the procession stretched over half a mile and drew

half the population, a quarter of a million people, onto the streets to pay their respects – and to witness the sheer pageantry of the cortege. For the first time the colony found itself collectively mourning – against the backdrop of a fractured Europe and a disintegrating China, the people of Hongkong came together to mark their own pain.

It was not surprising that the papers were soon publishing letters critical of the handling of the original search, followed swiftly by energetic ripostes from serving police, pointing out what a regular ‘job’ this one was – and that experience taught the policeman that ‘it is only on exceptional occasions he need to go armed to the teeth.’ This, they said, was the case that proved the rule, and it should be understood that even if the police had all been armed, given the cache of weapons the gang had, the outcome was unlikely to have been different. However, there can be no doubt that the subsequent events showed how unprepared the police were to react to this scale of operation, for time and again individual officers ran out of ammunition; there was only one telephone line into the

Central Police Station and the whistle was the only really sure way of raising the alarm. The rigid ethnic hierarchy did not encourage the development of initiative amongst the Chinese contingent, and so, once deprived of their senior officers, the remaining men could hardly be blamed for just running for their lives.

It could be argued that the impact of the Great War on Hongkong – especially on the police – was greater in the subsequent years than during the conflict itself. The 1920s were a time of reform, the most important of which was the formation of a proper Police Training School. For the first time a full police curriculum was delivered to all the men, with police and court procedure, law and full weapon training on the class list for all the men. The detective branch became the CID and now gave men specialist training, which included courses in anti-terrorism. By 1923 the land Force numbered 1100, now led by an executive staff of seven. Twenty European and – at long last – two each Indian and Chinese Inspectors commanded 200 Europeans, 400 Indians and 500 Chinese officers.⁵



The men involved in the Canton Road shoot-out

Trained and armed – the beginning of a new era

The story of the Canton Road Shootout, some six years after the events in Wanchai shows the benefit of this improved training and the fruit of greater value being placed by the Force to on its Chinese contingent. On the Saturday morning after Christmas in 1923 an occupant of a flat in Yaumatei, part of Kowloon ran down to the new police station to report that strange noises were coming from the flat above and that it sounded like robbers. Inspector Tim Murphy and Sgt. Charles Kelly went back with him to investigate, and could understand the man's concern when they arrived at 206 Canton Road.

The road was thronged with Saturday shoppers, but there was no time to clear it, as a couple of dozen police were assembled and took up their positions covering the door and the side alley. Leaving Sgt. Fender guarding the stairs, the two men crept up to the flat. The sudden piercing sound of Murphy's police whistle in the tiny lobby brought the robbers to the door. Two rushed out but the police could see that others had doubled back into the flat. They opened fire on the men escaping down stairs, hitting one man, but also catching Fender with a bullet in the arm. Murphy then released the residents of the apartment from the cubicle where they had been locked, but could not prevent the remaining well armed gang members from escaping, some over the verandah and more down the stairs.

In the street the police had the double problem of attempting to catch the escaping gang whilst protecting the passers-by from all the shooting. With sergeants and lance sergeants of each contingent there, both jobs were swiftly and efficiently coordinated. All the police present were armed and able to use their

guns. In the ensuing battle some 70-80 rounds were fired but there were no casualties amongst the general public. Two sergeants, Robertson and Magher Singh (who had been involved in the chase at Gresson Street) were shot at close range by the first man out, who, it would seem, subsequently escaped, whilst the second engaged in a running gunfight with Sgt. McEwen. The latter, running out of ammunition, grabbed the wounded Singh's revolver and pursued the gunman, who had run further down the road and into an empty warehouse, until McEwen again ran out of bullets and not knowing for certain whether the robber was still armed, had to engage him in physical combat. Overpowering him, he pulled the man out of the shed, but the latter suddenly collapsed, and McEwen realised that he was riddled with gunshot and in a very serious condition. He instructed his colleagues to lift the injured man onto his, McEwen's, back and took him thus the short distance to the police station. Another man who ran out of the front door was pursued down the side alley by L. Sgt. Li Cheung and P.C. Man Wan. Constable Man was hit but both continued until the gunman was caught. Meanwhile the man who had dropped from the second floor verandah had dived to cover into the building site opposite where he was pursued, and eventually cornered and caught by Detective Constable Mak In.

When brought to court in May 1924, only three of the gang stood trial. It had been a well planned armed robbery, with plenty of ammunition, much of it the particularly lethal 'dum dum' type. They received terms ranging from 15 to 25 years hard labour. However, the presentation at the Central Police Station in June the following year was rather more telling. Murphy had been recommended for the highest honour, the King's

Police Medal for his leadership and bravery, but the list of rewards to the whole team speaks of initiative and bravery shown by all ranks and in all contingents.⁶

The Police Force in Hongkong had come a long way from the chaotic years of the 1860s, but it was still very much of its time and place. The Chinese contingent were paid one-quarter to one-third the amount received by their European counterpart and there were neither Chinese nor Indians in the executive team. It would be many years after the liberation of Hongkong from the Japanese occupation of 1941-5 before there would be parity between the different ethnicities in the Force.⁷

- 4 In 1895, when on leave, CSP May (himself an Irishman) travelled to Newmarket, Co. Cork, the small, rural town near Mallow, to interview four young men as potential Hongkong Police recruits. Among those four were Mortimor and Patrick O'Sullivan – the latter, the author's grandfather – had a full career in the Force, retiring aged 45 in 1921.
- 5 Just for comparison there are today just shy of 30,000 police officers, proportionately twice as many per head of population as in 1923.
- 6 Four had been injured, and John Robertson had to be invalided home that year, dying in 1926 of complications relating to the wounds he had received.
- 7 There are currently (2018) a few dozen 'Overseas Officers' (i.e. recruited before the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997) serving in the Force. However, in response to Hong Kong's multiracial character, a recent initiative to recruit amongst the non-Chinese Hong Kong community has been launched.



PATRICIA O'SULLIVAN has travelled to Hong Kong frequently since October 2009, when she first came over to discover what had happened to her great-uncle, Police Inspector Mortimor O'Sullivan, of Co. Cork, Ireland, in the Gresson Street Affray of 1918. Since then her researches have uncovered the lives and careers of almost 20 of his towns-fellows in the Hong Kong Police Force and the Naval Dockyard Police Force. Gradually piecing all this together, *Policing Hong Kong – an Irish History* was published by Blacksmith Books in April 2017.

The Purveyor of Horseless Carriages to the Discerning Rich

By ELVYN OAKES

This is a true story, but I have changed the names. In 1964 I was the senior detective constable in a small C.I.D office of a county constabulary. My detective sergeant was a very street-wise man called Ben Bishop, who had grown up in a working class area of a nearby city. He joined us from another force and brought some very new ideas to our work.

Ben was an energetic and charismatic man with an unusual outlook on life. His stated philosophy was that all the money in the world should be gathered in and shared out: when he had spent his, it should be gathered in and shared out again. He was a dreamer, always looking to make that one big financial hit. Unlike me, he did not believe in any form of insurance and made no provision for the future of himself or his family. He was the only man I ever met who bought one gallon of petrol at a time (for his gas guzzling old Ford Consul). A very popular officer, colleague, friend and neighbour, Ben was a pleasure to work with. His personality, efficiency and humorous outlook on life made light of problems and was infectious. I never heard him say a really unkind word about anyone.

As part of our remit we got to know a large cross-section of the local population. Our senior officer expected us to keep in touch with the social life of our division. In those days we worked 9.00am to 5.00pm each day, then were expected to be out and about, around the public houses

and clubs in our area from 7.00pm until closing time each day. We had no night detectives, so we were also on call until the following morning on a number of nights each week. The only night off was the night before the weekly day off.

Detectives were expected to visit the scene of burglaries or other serious crime at the time of report; there was no overtime, or anything in lieu of payment. We worked very long hours, and there were a lot of nights with interrupted or even lack of sleep. Pay was not good, but we were doing the job we wanted to do; and we loved it.

Ben and I became aware of a recent arrival in our area, Adam Davidson, a very good-looking, educated man, well-spoken and immaculately dressed. He and his very attractive wife took a house in an upmarket area of South Manchester, and they began to mingle with the great and the good locally. They seemed to have a plentiful supply of money, and were soon accepted into the social life of the community.

Davidson claimed to have come from the London area, was a self-employed car salesman and expert in tuning expensive cars. His very ornate calling card described him as 'A purveyor of horseless carriages to the discerning rich'.

We were suspicious of him, but were unable to trace any criminal convictions recorded against him. He worked from his home and we

were unable to find out if he did sell many cars. What we did know was that he would take expensive cars from members of the local "set" and return them very finely tuned. As a result he became extremely popular; he and his wife were accepted into the homes of members of the set, many of whom were financially well off. One such man was James Earl, a young bachelor, whose parents had died recently in tragic circumstances, leaving him a very rich man. James quickly fell under the spell of the Davidsons.

We often met Davidson and his wife in local hotels and clubs; in a very short time they had become an integral part of the high society scene. Ben and I believed there was something dubious about Davidson, and kept an ear open for any gossip that would give a clue about what he was up to. We found nothing to confirm our suspicions that Davidson was a villain.

Around August 1964 we recruited an informant who lived in the Stretford area, whom I shall call Les. He told us that someone was organising a small team to do a burglary in the Manchester area. He was very vague and could give no details whatsoever, to such an extent that it seemed a ruse to extract cash. Ben spent a lot of time trying to get more information from Les, but it came to nothing. We circulated the information locally but felt it was rather too vague to be of any real use to anyone.

The General Election took place on 15th October 1964, and there were great polling activities taking place all over the country. The local Conservative party were very active in our area, a Conservative stronghold. On the night of the election, members of the party were engaged in polling and ancillary activities, which kept many of them away from their homes overnight. The Labour Party won the election.

The following morning came reports that a number of the homes of members of the Conservative Party, including that of James Earl, had been burgled. Ben and I attended the scenes of crime and it became apparent that the perpetrators had had some form of inside knowledge of the premises. Burglar alarms had been by-passed or negated in a very expert manner. Scenes of crime were called in but it was obvious the burglars had been wearing gloves and just concentrated on cash and jewellery. Most of the houses were in large private grounds, and there were no sightings of suspicious activity forthcoming from neighbours.

James Earl reported the theft of expensive jewellery from his home; it had been his late mother's and was obviously of great sentimental value to him. We made our routine enquiries and checked on the "usual suspects", with particular emphasis on Davidson, but without success. Davidson and his wife had been conspicuous at political rallies all evening during the specific hours; in the circumstances he was not seen or interviewed.

We wondered if our informant, Les, could help; he had become very difficult to trace, but trace him we did. After a great deal of persuasion, Les was able to tell us that the villains (unknown to him) had been recruited by a Mr. Big (also unknown) who did not take part in the burglaries but

would be responsible for selling the jewellery. Under extreme pressure from Ben, he told us that the plan was for the man who had planned the burglaries to dispose of the jewellery "down in the smoke", which we took to mean London. Our Detective Chief Inspector, who was under pressure from above, took some time to agree to us trying to follow the jewellery to London. However, to his credit, he did!

At that time the M6 Motorway was under construction, and the road open to traffic ended at the Gailey roundabout in Staffordshire. We made our way through Staffordshire in the direction of the new M6, calling at a number of hotels and public houses along the route making enquiries and trying to second guess our quarry. Eventually we called at a hotel in Penkridge and were delighted when the landlady told us that she had bought a ring from a man who answered the description of Adam Davidson the morning after the burglary. The ring appeared to match the description of one on the list of property stolen from the home of James Earl.

We returned to base with the ring; James Earl was able to identify it as being one of his mother's. Davidson and his wife had disappeared; their house was completely empty.

We circulated him as wanted for burglary and receiving stolen property. The Metropolitan Police located two jewellers in Hatton Garden, London who had reported their purchase of jewellery from a man answering Davidson's description. Ben and I travelled down to London to interview them, take statements and recover some of the stolen property.

Davidson was detained in London a short time later. Ben and I travelled down to interview and arrest him at Cannon Row police station, which adjoined the iconic old New

Scotland Yard. He denied the charge and refused to talk about it. On the train journey back he made a half-hearted attempt to bribe us to release him. To make conversation we asked him about his car tuning skills; he admitted that he had none. Davidson told us he just took the vehicles back to the main dealers and paid them to tune the cars. He claimed it was his way of ingratiating himself with potential customers, often leading to the sale of a car.

He became bolder, and explained how he and his father had run a scam some years before. They claimed to be able to double people's money, using a special gambling system at Continental Casinos. In fact they paid the early subscribers double their money by using cash of subsequent subscribers whilst they enjoyed a lavish lifestyle on the incoming tide of money. They were eventually exposed by an investigative journalist from a national Sunday newspaper, but were never prosecuted. He boasted that they traded on people's greed, and that one of the first groups to subscribe was the staff of an entire C.I.D. office of a North of England police force.

Davidson subsequently appeared at Cheshire Quarter Sessions, Knutsford; after a trial he was found guilty of receiving the stolen jewellery and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. The two jewellers from Hatton Garden travelled to Knutsford and gave evidence at the trial.

James Earl was very pleased with the result and recovery of some of his property; he thought that we were underpaid for our efforts. In his opinion we would be better working outside the police, and he offered to set Ben and me up in our own businesses. After considering my prospects, my wife and child, and that we were in police accommodation, I

declined the offer with thanks.

Ben, on the other hand, saw it as his one great chance and accepted the offer. James purchased a business and employed Ben as the manager. Apparently he was very good to Ben and his family, finding them excellent accommodation and schools; Ben settled down to run the business. I never saw James Earl, Ben Bishop or his family again.

In 1967 I heard that James had, after consultation with Ben, sold the business to an Italian firm. He gave Ben the choice of being set up in another business or returning to the police; all at his expense. Ben chose to return to the police force, and within six months was promoted back to detective sergeant.

In the intervening years James Earl had married. He, his wife and child then set off on a round-the-world voyage using a yacht they had bought; the last time I heard from him was a

postcard from Sydney, Australia.

Sometime around the end of 1967 or early 1968 we received a telex message at the police station where I was the night duty Inspector, to the effect that Ben Bishop had died. After duty the previous day, he was having his favourite "potato hash" evening meal when he choked on a piece of meat. It was devastating news; he was such a popular officer with all his colleagues. An immediate cash collection was organised throughout the force for the widow and children, this not being unusual at the time, but it was the last time I ever remember it happening. At that time we had just started a new group insurance scheme, which guaranteed one thousand pounds in the event of an officer's death. This sum was doubled if he or she was killed by violent external means (to cover death whilst on duty). I believe that the firm running the insurance paid Ben's widow the double amount,

which we all thought was a very generous gesture.

Ben's funeral was one of the best attended police funerals I have ever seen; almost everyone from the force was present. We lined the entire route of the cortege to the crematorium, which indicated to some extent the great respect we held for this charismatic detective.

I am always reminded of the poem by Robert Frost, 'The Road Not Taken'.



ELVYN OAKES served with Cheshire Constabulary and Greater Manchester Police, mainly in the CID, from Detective Constable to Detective Superintendent. He was Deputy Commander of Salford Division, GMP at retirement. For 20 years he was the representative for Stockport Branch and later Chair of Manchester East Branch of the International Police Association. For the past 17 years he has been a volunteer with the National Trust.

Mrs Roberts Goes Shopping

By JIM SMITH

During November 1972 I was working with one of the 'Four District' team from C11. The team was led by Detective Inspector Bob Watt and his right-hand man, Detective Sergeant Joe Skillin. I was assisting them in keeping observation on a robbery team in South London. As was usual with Bob's team, when they had finished for the day they would have a briefing in The Tank, the bar in the basement of New Scotland Yard.

We were sitting talking with Bob when he was called away to listen to what an informant had to say. On his return, he sat down with a puzzled

smile on his face.

Joe smiled. 'What's going on? He's up to something, Jim, I know that look.'

'I've just got a bit of info from the man. "There's a Robin coming out on a foggy night." What the hell is all that about?'

Bob, a canny Scot from Forfar, always played his cards close to his chest. 'I can assure you my man is not into bird watching, and besides, Robins don't fly in the fog. Is it a code for something? Unfortunately, my man can't tell me.'

Joe looked up from his own bird,

the Famous Grouse. 'Robin Hood?'

'It's more likely a Robin Bastard,' said Bob as he leant back in his chair.

We talked this over for a few moments and then Bob supplied us with some more information. 'From what I can gather, there's a bird called Dorothy involved.'

Joe looked up. 'That's a pre-war name. This has got to be an old bird. Where do you think she comes from?'

'I'm not sure, but it will be London. My informant is very iffy, but I should get a bit more tomorrow,' and with that Bob stood up.

The following day we all met up in

South London to carry-on with the observation. Within minutes of us starting, Bob received a radio message asking him to contact his man again.

On his return he was deep in thought. 'My man tells me Dorothy has only been trying to get hold of bolt cutters. Who the hell is she, and who the hell is she getting them for? If she's an old bird she's not getting them for herself. The whole thing sounds very iffy. It may be she's dead straight, but we have to find out who she is. But I can assure you, if my man's got an interest, she's up to no good. This isn't straight. What does an old bird, once again assuming she is an old bird, want with bolt cutters?'

On my return to Scotland Yard, I mulled the conversation over in my head, and in the office I spoke to Bob and Joe.

'Guv, I've had an interest in the Foxtrot One One case and I've got a feeling Harry Roberts' grandmother called him Robin. I think she even mentioned it on a TV interview when she appealed for Roberts to give himself up. Yes, I'm sure she did.'

Bob was off his chair and down to the Criminal Records Office. After about twenty minutes he returned carrying a bulging file under his arm. He put it down on his desk. The heading was HARRY MAURICE ROBERTS. Bob had a quick look through it and gave a wry smile. He then locked the file in his drawer and pointed to me.

'Right you... book out to South London, you're with me and Joe. Show 'Observations in the Book'. I'm going to buy you a steak!'

We arrived at The Royal Oak public house in Clapham High Street. Its specialty was a large steak sitting on a bed of crisps with a grilled tomato on top; we got stuck in!

'We'll make a detective of you one day, Smithy. I know who Dorothy is,' said Bob, with a thankful smile on his

face.

'Go on, Guv'nor.'

'It's Harry Roberts' mother, and who did you say Robin was?'

'I think it's Roberts... I'm sure Robin was his Gran's pet name for him.'

Bob raised his glass. 'Spot-on, I'll bet the old cow's going to get him out. Drink up, we're going to stop her farting in church!'

Joe sucked air in through his clenched teeth. 'Nice one my son.'

The following day I was hidden in the back of my observation van watching Dorothy, aged seventy-three, the mother of the evil Harry Roberts, at her home address, a flat in Augustus Street, Camden Town, London. At about 11.00am, as she left, I ran off a few pictures using a Nikon with a 400 mm Nova Flex system. She was followed on foot to Camden High Street in North London.

Was this the woman who had appealed on TV for Robin to give himself up after the killings?

She had a headscarf tied under her chin, her red hair sticking out with a 'kiss curl' hanging over her forehead. She walked down the road with not the slightest idea she was being followed, or that I was photographing her every move. She eventually entered an ironmonger and tool supplier. I followed her in, and just behind me came Joe, who like myself, had been a joiner before joining the Met. We could blend into this environment... we could speak the language.

'Can I help you?' an assistant asked.

I walked over as near to Mrs Roberts as I could without her seeing me and spoke to the man behind the counter.

'Do you have any inch number-eight round-head brass screws?'

'Just a minute,' and with that he walked away.

Joe stood behind me looking at some tools. We could both hear the

conversation Mrs Roberts was having with the other shop assistant.

'I don't know what all the measurements mean, they're for a friend.' She looked puzzled. What an actor.

The elderly shop-assistant was holding an order form in his hand, doing all he could to help the poor old soul.

'It's not the size that's the problem. It's the hardened cutting edges. We are having to have them made up specially. What are they for?'

'Your screws, mate, how many?'

My assistant arrived back and interrupted my listening.

'Just twelve.'

What a time to come back with my order. He put the screws into paper bag, I paid and walked out. Joe was left to listen to the rest of the conversation. Afterwards, we met up in the coffee shop at Euston Station.

'Well?' said Bob.

'She is buying cutters all right. They have to have specially hardened edges. She has placed an order for them, but that's all I could get. I had to leave.'

I looked at Joe.

'Yeah that's right, Guv'nor,' said Joe.

Once again he breathed in through his clenched teeth and let out a sigh.

'The shopkeeper talked about the bolt cutters. I picked him up, saying they would cut through reinforcing rods with no problems. Then she comes out with some old bollocks that they are for her nephew who's working in Scotland and is coming back in a few weeks. The geezer said they should be ready by next week.'

The next week we kept her house in Augustus Street, Camden, under observation. She did not leave the house on many occasions, but when she did it was to do the usual type of shopping.

It was confirmed that Harry Roberts was in Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight.

We could not make an approach to the prison just in case he had inside help; highly unlikely, but no chances could be taken.

On Wednesday, 22nd November, 1972, at about 11.00am, Mrs Roberts left her address. She was followed by us and another member of the team, Detective Sergeant Fred Parish. Fred was born in South London, in the Walworth Road. He became a fireman in the area, and then became a police officer working in the area where he had been born. This was most unusual in the Met, as most of the recruits had come from outside the London area.

Fred was a great practical joker. As CID officers we were required to keep a diary of daily events and expenses. Due to the nature of the work carried out, the entries and locations did not always reflect 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. I wanted the name of a pub to refer to with regards to meeting an informant.

'Anyone know a pub near the Elephant and Castle?' I called out.

Fred looked up from his desk. 'The Ring of Feathers.'

'Cheers, Fred,' and with that I neatly printed in my diary THE RING OF FEATHERS and neatly underlined it. The office was silent.

'Fred, where is The Ring of Feathers?' I waited, pen in hand.

'Round the duck's arse!'

The office exploded in laughter. I spent the next ten minutes trying to erase my last entry.

Dressed in overalls, Fred followed Mrs Roberts down the road and straight in to the ironmongers.

'Good morning love, oh, yes, I remember you. You've come about the cutters?' the assistant asked.

How could the assistant not remember her, dressed in a waterproof

coat and flat shoes, complete with a headscarf? She didn't exactly blend into the shop. She looked at him. 'Are they ready?'

'Came in this morning, love.'

Fred stood as close to her as he could and ordered a broom. Not just any broom. It had to be a special size!

'How long are the shafts, guv?'

The shop assistant looked him up and down. 'As long as you like, mate.'

'How do you mean?'

While carrying on this ridiculous conversation, Fred was watching the bolt cutters being wrapped in brown paper.

'I don't understand what you mean,' said the puzzled shop assistant to Fred.

'They are going to be used by a little short-arse guy.'

'Well, you can cut it to any length you want, guv, or he can hold further down the shaft.'

By now the shop assistant is getting a little pissed off, but this didn't put Fred off.

'Do you do telescopic shafts?'

'Fucking telescopic? Are you taking the piss mate?'

In the meantime, Mrs Roberts was walking out of the shop with a neatly wrapped parcel containing the bolt cutters. Fred had her under observation, but was still carrying on the banter with the shop assistant.

'No, I think I'd better leave it and measure the guy who's going to use the broom. Thanks anyway, mate,' and with that Fred started to walk out of the shop. The shop assistant looked at Fred. 'Yes, that might be a good idea.'

Fred left the shop with the assistant mumbling to himself, 'Bleeding, telescopic broom handles. What next?'

We followed Mrs Roberts back to her flat and the premises were kept

under observation for the next few days. We could not let these bolt cutters out of our sight.

Thursday, 30th November, 1972 was a visiting day at Parkhurst Prison. Mrs Roberts left her home address at about 9.00am. She was wearing a fur coat, trousers and had what now appeared to be the obligatory headscarf on. She was carrying a small shopping bag with a brown paper parcel sticking out of the top.

We followed her as she travelled on the train to Southampton. There, she got off and entered a toilet on the platform, where she remained for approximately ten minutes. Now, there was no trace of the parcel sticking out of her bag.

After she walked off, Fred went straight into the toilet and after a few minutes caught up with us.

'She's dumped the brown paper in the bog, I've got it. It's the brown paper that had wrapped the bolt cutters. I've searched the place, including the cistern. The cutters are not in there, she's got to be carrying them.'

Part of the team had earlier travelled down and was waiting with their vehicles at the Isle of Wight ferry terminal. Mrs Roberts got onto the ferry; we followed. We noticed she was walking with a limp. Joe sat next to me on the ferry. We were both out of sight of her.

Joe looked at me. 'I'll bet you a pound to a pinch of shit, that they are strapped to her leg!'

After the ferry berthed, she limped off and got into a taxi. She was followed by the rest of the team to Parkhurst Prison.

At the prison, she got out of the taxi and entered the red-brick building. Parkhurst dates back to 1805, when it had been a military hospital. It was transformed to a prison some years later. In 1847 a new wing was built by the prisoners, who dug the clay

and made the bricks. Now there's an idea for our overcrowded prisons today. One shift working twelve hours and the night shift working another twelve, while the others keep the beds warm for their return.

After Mrs Roberts' visit with her son was over, she left still walking with a limp, got into a taxi and went back to the ferry terminal. She got out of the taxi. The sea air must have done her the world of good as the limp had now gone.

Bob Watt stayed behind and reported the incident to the Hampshire Police prison liaison officer, who thanked him for our assistance and stated they would deal with it. At this time, Mrs Roberts was getting onto the ferry and was 'nickable'.

Hampshire Police decided this was not advisable and we should let her go. A search was carried out inside the prison. The usual visiting area had been getting refurbished and visitors had been taken to a classroom. This classroom was searched without success. A prison officer remembered that Mrs Roberts had asked to use a toilet. The only toilet available, due to the refurbishment, was one that was being used by males and females alike. This was searched, but once again nothing was found. However, next to the toilet was a cupboard. When this was searched, the bolt cutters were found in a bucket with a floor mop draped over them.

Roberts' cell, number 218, was searched. His bed was removed, and behind the head of the bed it was noticed that two small holes had been drilled in what appeared to be plaster. These holes were large enough to allow a darning needle to get through. It was soon to be discovered that this 'plasterwork' was in fact plywood fitted into the plaster and painted. It was undetectable apart from the two small holes, which

were, in fact, keyholes. A small piece of metal was inserted into these holes and turned. The plywood, measuring approximately 20 inches by 20 inches, could then be removed. This revealed a tunnel, where 20 courses of bricks had been removed, leaving another two inches of brickwork on the outside of the prison.

This could have been pushed out, and would have given access onto a flat roof and freedom for the killer. Inside the tunnel was found a pair of sunglasses, a compass, a pair of wire cutters, a short-bladed dinner knife with a sharpened end, a homemade wooden brace, some drill bits, a gas lighter, newspaper cuttings containing maps of the Isle of Wight, a list of addresses, a business reply card containing details of replica guns, a file, and four five-pound notes. An imitation pistol was also found. This had been made from shoe leather and dyed black. In dimmed lighting there is no doubt this imitation could easily have been mistaken for the real thing. The most sinister thing found was a list of witnesses who had given evidence at his trial. Some of the names had been highlighted.

In the tunnel between the brickwork were found steel re-enforcing rods, which had been inserted during construction and were waiting to be cut. We had no doubt that these were what the cutters was for.

Mrs Roberts appeared at Winchester Crown Court on 21st March 1973, where she pleaded Not Guilty to helping her son in a plot to escape from Parkhurst Prison. She pleaded Not Guilty to taking a pair of cutters into the prison on 30th November the previous year with intent to facilitate the escape of Harry Roberts.

It was disclosed at the trial that it would have taken Roberts two to three months to construct the tunnel, which had been his second attempt to

escape by the same means.

Mrs Roberts was represented by John Mortimer QC. When giving evidence, she wept as she told of her fortnightly visits to the Isle of Wight to take her son a little food and cigarettes. She said, 'I visited him because he is my son, but he did not confide in me. He used to say I was too old.'

In his closing speech for the defence, Mr Mortimer said: 'He had collected a veritable armoury of escape equipment without her help. Are we to believe he needed the help of a septuagenarian, arthritic cook to come hobbling in with one of the implements?'

Despite the wealth of evidence that Bob Watt's team had collected, the Hampshire Police, for reasons best known to them, never called any Met Officer to give evidence in this case. The jury found Mrs Roberts Not Guilty.



This is an extract from *Undaunted: My Life as Policeman and Private Eye* by Jim Smith, available now from MangoBooks.co.uk.

JIM SMITH joined the Metropolitan Police in 1962 and was posted to H Division, where he learned the job before joining the newly-formed Special Patrol Group and being involved in operations across the Met's district from surveillance of Soho's porn barons to the hunt for cop killer Harry Roberts. In 1968 he transferred to the Criminal Intelligence Department at New Scotland Yard, working on hundreds of cases over the next six years, during which time he earned the British Empire Medal for gallantry for his part in ending the terrorist siege of the Indian High Commission in 1973. Jim's career within the Met brought him into contact with the full range of criminals and criminal activity - including, ultimately, corruption within Scotland Yard itself. He was targeted by a group of officers there who engineered his transfer out of Scotland Yard, and eventually leaving the job he loved to spend more than 40 years working as a private investigator.

Sweet Fanny Adams

By DR PETER MOORE

On 24th August 1867 an eight-year-old girl was abducted and brutally murdered at Alton in Hampshire; her name was Fanny Adams.

It was a hot and sunny afternoon. Fanny was on her way to the flood meadows to play with her sister and her best friend. On the way they met Frederick Baker, a 29-year-old solicitor's clerk. He had only lived in the town for about two months, but

they had seen him at church meetings. He was wearing a frock coat, light-coloured trousers and a tall hat. He gave the children a halfpenny each to spend on sweets, picked blackberries for them and watched them play. After an hour, two of the girls went home leaving Fanny with Baker. When she refused to go with him to a nearby village he picked her up and carried her into a hop garden.



Alfred Swaine Taylor. Photograph by Barraud & Jerrard, 1873

At 5.00pm a neighbour named Mrs Gardner saw the two girls playing and noticed that Fanny was missing. They told her that she had gone off with a man. She went to look and met Baker, who said that he often gave money to children but did not know anything about Fanny.

By 7.00pm she had still not returned home so her mother and friends started a search. Thomas Gates, a veteran of the Charge of the Light Brigade, was tending to crops when he found Fanny's head stuck on two hop poles. The remains of the rest of her dismembered body were found scattered around.

When her father was told he took a loaded shotgun to look for the culprit, but neighbours managed to stop him. The next day a large crowd from the town collected her scattered remains and found a blood-covered stone, which may have been the murder weapon.

After visiting the crime scene and hearing the story, the Police Superintendent Cheyney set off to find Baker. It was 9.00pm, but Baker was still at work and denied any involvement. After further enquiries throughout the town Cheyney arrested Baker on suspicion of murder. A crowd had gathered outside the solicitor's office, and so Baker had to be smuggled out of the back door.

At the police station he was found to possess two clean knives. There was blood on the wrists of his shirt. His trousers appeared to have been soaked to hide bloodstains. He then

claimed that he had been drunk but this was denied by all the witnesses.

When Cheyney searched Baker's office he found a diary. The entry of 24th August was: "Killed a young girl. It was fine and hot." Baker was remanded in custody to Winchester Prison.

Under the law there had to be an immediate coroner's inquest. This was held by the deputy county coroner, Robert Harfield, at The Duke's Head Inn opposite Baker's office. Fanny's young friend told the jury that he had given her money, but she could not identify Baker, although did correctly describe his clothes. When she told the court that he had given her a halfpenny Baker corrected her, saying "No, three halfpence." He may have been a horrific murderer, but he was not mean. Fanny's mother then explained how she had seen Baker when she went to search for her daughter.

Next to give evidence was Mrs Gardner, who had helped Fanny's mother look for her. She had seen Baker, who claimed that he had left Fanny at the gate to play. He also told her "The reason why I speak so is that an old gentleman has been giving halfpence to the children for no good purpose." Baker was given the chance to cross-examine the witnesses but refused.

Two months later a woman mentioned in a pub that her son had come home at the time and told her that he had seen Baker come from the hop garden with hands and clothes covered in blood.

In October the clothes and knives were sent to a forensic expert, Professor Taylor at Guy's Hospital in London. Alfred Swaine Taylor had been appointed as the Hospital's first lecturer in medical jurisprudence, although his main expertise was in toxicology and poisoning.

The forensic report from Professor

Taylor showed that the blood was human, but he said he would have expected more blood, although an inexperienced person could dismember the body in about 30 minutes. The cuts had been made while the body was still warm, and she had been both cut and torn to pieces. There was no evidence of sexual abuse.

In Court the local GP, Dr Lewis, thought that the cause of death was a blow to the head with a stone, but he agreed with the forensic team at Guy's that the knives he had with him were too small to have cut the body up.

In prison Baker continued to deny the charge, and said he hoped that the guilty person would be found.

The trial was on 5th December. The defence challenged the identification of Baker, especially by Fanny's young friend, pointed out that the knives were too small for the grisly job and then claimed that Baker was insane anyway. His father had been violent, a cousin admitted to asylums, his sister died of 'brain fever' and he had attempted suicide after a failed love affair. The diary entry was as a result of his insanity. The most dubious argument was that the lack of a comma after the word "killed" did not make it a confession.

The Judge, Justice Mellor, did ask the jury to consider a verdict of 'Not responsible by reason of insanity' but they were not impressed. They returned a verdict of Guilty within fifteen minutes.

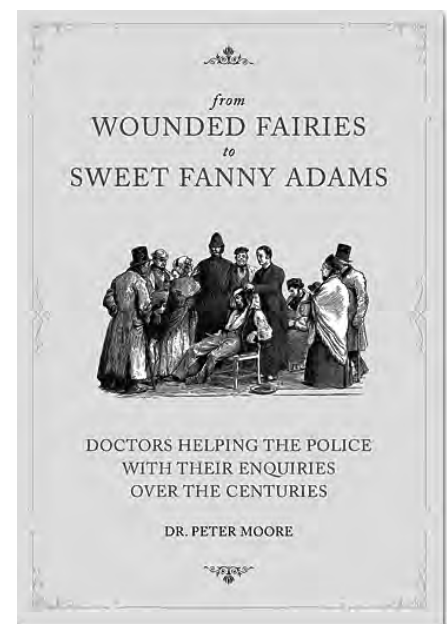
After the verdict Baker wrote to Fanny's parents from prison asking for forgiveness, saying that he was sorry for what he had done "in an unguarded hour". He was hanged outside Winchester Jail on Christmas Eve in front of a crowd of 5,000.

The case should be famous, or infamous, for the brilliant forensic work of Professor Taylor or the detective work of Superintendent

Cheyney. Sadly, it is still famous because the popular press called the victim "sweet Fanny Adams" and her initials were F.A. When the Royal Navy produced repulsive tinned mutton in 1869, the sailors, with a sick sense of humour, suggested that the tins contained the butchered remains of Fanny Adams. 'Fanny Adams' soon became slang for anything useless and then evolved to meaning nothing; 'Sweet FA'. The meaning was probably helped by the fact that 'Fanny Adams' are not the only words with the initials F.A. Mess tins in the Navy are still called 'Fannys'.



This is an extract from *From Wounded Fairies to Sweet Fanny Adams: Doctors Helping the Police with their Enquiries Through the Centuries* by Dr Peter Moore, available now from MangoBooks.co.uk.



DR PETER MOORE spent 30 years as a GP, complementing this work with what he calls a 'hobby' – serving as a police surgeon, spending nights and weekends at the police station seeing burglars, examining victims of sexual assault or looking at dead bodies. He says it was better than stamp collecting or gardening, and helped pay the mortgage.

REGULATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BEADLE, 1822

That the duties of a Beadle may be properly discharged it is needful that he be a Man of activity and sobriety: of strength of Body and firmness of mind - undismayed by threats - incorruptible by bribes.

His Duties.

He is to rise early and go to Bed late: and always, except when in Bed, to keep his eyes open.

He is to patrol the town three or four times every day between the Hours of eight and five o'clock: and twice between the Hours of Six and Nine during the summer half year and once between Six and Eight during the winter half year.

In going his Evening Rounds, he is to inspect all Public Houses and Tap Rooms; and if any persons are found Drunk or Gaming in the same, he is to request them to depart.

He is never to tipple himself.

If any paupers, whose names are in the Parish List, are found tippling, he is to cause them to depart forthwith.

He is to cause to quit the town immediately all Persons found begging - all Fiddlers and Players on any Musical Instruments, Ballad Singers, Sellers of Dying Speeches, Songs etc., And Gipsies. Or upon their refusal to do so, he is to convey them to the Black Hole, where they are to remain till next morning.

He is to stop all Pedlars, Petty Chapmen, Dealers in Laces, Threads, Matches, Toys etc. etc. and if they have no Licence he is to convey them before the Magistrate.

He is to impound all Pigs, Donkeys etc., etc. straying within the Town.

He is to report all Persons whose carts or waggons are found without the name and residence of the owner, and also whose waggons or carts are left at the door of any Public House or in the streets without a person to take care of the horses. Also any persons wheeling a barrow upon the footpaths.

He is to inspect all Public Houses twice during the Sabbath Day and see that the latter be shut up every night at 11 o'clock.

He is nightly to inspect all Common Lodging and Sleeping Houses.

He is to report all Persons allowing Public Dances in their houses.

He is to report all Persons keeping their shops open on the Sabbath Day.

He is to prevent or suppress all affrays or riots.

He is to be furnished with a Book in which he is to enter the material Occurrences of every day: the name of every person required to leave the town or conveyed to the Black Hole, together with their ages, Employment or Trade, Residence, Number of Family; whence they came and whither they are going, and the reason for so doing.

He is to deliver all Notices to the Commissioners relative to Meetings etc., and obey the requests of any Commissioner or other Inhabitant or Visitor in putting in force the Laws.



In Memoriam



WPC Bertha Gleghorn
09/10/1910 - 19/06/1944

LEST WE FORGET
Bertha Massey Gleghorn
WPC 128 C Division
Metropolitan Police
9.10.1910 - 19.6.1944

This singular and personal tribute is to honour the sacrifice of London's first Woman Police Constable killed in the line of duty 75 years ago.

On 19th June 1944, Bertha was crossing the yard of Tottenham Court Road Police Station, then opposite this exact spot in Whitfield Street, to take up her duty for the day.

At that moment, unknown to her, a German V.1 missile was falling silently to earth, and exploded as it struck the building, burying WPC Gleghorn under the falling brickwork. She suffered fatal injuries as a result. She was aged 33.

As you pass by on your way to, or from work, please remember Bertha of this memorial which has been presented by those who wish her memory to live on. Please feel free to share this presentation through your social media contacts.

Thank You

19th June 2019 London

Floral tribute to WPC Bertha Massey Gleghorn, the first female Metropolitan Police Constable killed in the line of duty on the 75th anniversary of her death.
See page 11.