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The Establishment and Development of the New Police in Halifax,  
1848-1914.

Jane Posner, BA (Hons), MA.

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.

The University of Huddersfield

November 2014

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses the establishment and development of a new police force in Halifax, considering the question through the tenures of the chief constables from its inception in 1848 to the start of the Great War. It considers what existed before the police, how effective that was and how much actually changed after the incorporation of the borough. The early chapters explore the extent of the hostility to the new regime and at what point and how far it came to be accepted. The structure of the force is examined and through it the recruitment and turnover of men and the development of a career pattern for promising candidates. The later chapters assess how the force changed and consolidated towards the end of the nineteenth century, developing a shared sense of pride and camaraderie as policing became a recognised career for a working-class man. The question of how far the role of chief constable was influential in the formation and determination of policing in Halifax is considered, along with the careers of individuals, illustrating that the situation was both complex and fluid.

The overall argument of this thesis is supportive of Swift's contention that local, not national considerations underlay the reform of the new police and continued to dominate the aims and focus of policing in the boroughs throughout the nineteenth century. Borough chief constables were accountable to locally elected councillors and their actions reflected the concerns of the ratepayers. The history of borough police forces is embedded in the social, economic and geographical priorities of local government.

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## **Abbreviations**

HAS:	Halifax Antiquarian Society
HCM:	Halifax Council Minutes
HWCM:	Halifax Watch Committee Minutes
P.P.:	Parliamentary Papers
TNA:	The National Archives
WRCC:	West Riding County Constabulary
WYAS:	West Yorkshire Archive Service

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# Introduction

## Historiography

The establishment of the ‘new police’ in England was effectively brought into being by a series of Acts of Parliament, beginning with the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act, overseen by the Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, which saw the creation of the Metropolitan Police in London.<sup>1</sup> Further legislation over the next three decades required other large cities, such as Manchester and Birmingham, to establish police forces, and gave county magistrates the opportunity to do the same in all or parts of their county.<sup>2</sup> The 1856 County and Borough Police Act finally required all counties and boroughs to establish their own forces and created the HM Inspectors of Constabulary to inspect these annually, with the sweetener of payments to those deemed efficient.<sup>3</sup> In return for the government dropping clauses which would have given them the authority to direct chief constables and ask for reports whenever they needed them, forces were also required to make statistical returns on the state of crime in their area to the Home Office. This laid down the framework for the new police of the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century, with control of county forces under the magistracy and borough forces under local control. However, the establishment of the new police forces was beset by controversy at the time and continues to cause debate among historians. These arguments have generally centred on three themes: the reasons for the establishment of the new police, the reaction to them, and how efficient these new forces were.

In examining the history of policing, three major schools of thought emerged. In the early part of the twentieth century, the orthodox, or ‘Whig’ view of police history, as exemplified

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<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Police Act, 1829 (10 Geo 4 c 44).

<sup>2</sup> The Police Act, Manchester, 1839 (2 and 3 Vic c 87). The County Police Act, 1839 (2 and 3 Vic c 93).

<sup>3</sup> Forces certified as efficient received one quarter of the cost of police pay and uniform. This was increased to one half in 1874 under the Police (Expenses) Act (37 and 38 Vic c 69).

by Reith and later by T.A. Critchley, was a celebratory look at the British ‘Bobby’, the foremost officers in the police hierarchy and a policing system that was advocated as the best in the world.<sup>4</sup> The assumption was that the founding of the new police was a logical and harmonious progression of reform. These versions, particularly that by Critchley, accepted the nineteenth century reformers’ views that presented the parish constables and watchmen as part of a corrupt, inefficient system in decline and unfit for purpose.<sup>5</sup> It was claimed to be unable to deal with a rise in criminality and the problems caused by industrialisation and the rapid shift to urbanisation. The various police acts were shown to be a logical reaction to the situation, with each act of legislation pushing forward the progression, driven by the clear vision of those involved, a rational response to increased crime. Peel’s seminal Metropolitan Police Act, 1829, establishing a police force for London, was depicted as a rational, necessary reform. This served as a prototype, which was then disseminated, with a few minor setbacks, to the rest of the country, providing a timely check to the rise and spread of criminality. It was presented as the result of widespread agreement between politicians and the public that reform was needed and welcomed. The assumption was also that, as the rich could afford to hire their own gamekeepers and watchmen, and that the middle classes banded together to form voluntary protection societies, it was the poor that stood to gain the most from an organised and efficient police. The new police were seen to be based on the metropolitan model and presented as preventive, efficient and competent.

This traditional view of the police was always unsatisfactory, presenting a simplistic account with the emphasis on progress, which was driven by leading politicians and reformers. This Whig view began to be criticised, most notably by Ruth Paley, who cast doubt on the

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Reith, *The Police Idea* (Oxford, 1938).

T. A. Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales* (Constable edition, 1978), p.xv, pp. 314-5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *A History of Police*, pp. 55-7, pp.64-5.

influence of such writers as Henry Fielding and Patrick Colquhoun in shaping public demand for a reform of policing. Her research into policing in London before the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act showed provisions that, whilst fragmented, were by no means as inefficient or inadequate as previously thought.<sup>6</sup> Jenifer Hart questioned the assumption that the Metropolitan Police were so effective that they forced criminals out of London and so initiated police reform in the boroughs in 1835, which in turn provided the impetus for the rural police in 1839. Her article queried the efficiency of the reform of the borough police, pointing out that changes were slow to be implemented in many areas and the level of efficiency in many towns was still low in the 1850s.<sup>7</sup>

The second, Marxist, school of thought, as exemplified by Robert Storch, placed the creation of the new police forces into the broader context of the class and power structure of the nineteenth century. It portrayed the policeman, not as the servant of the people, but as an instrument of the bourgeoisie to suppress and control the working class, enforcing a new code of moral behaviour and circumscribing previous legitimate leisure activities. The new police faced persistent, often violent, opposition from the working class to this repression, which over the nineteenth century did not fade, but transformed into political resistance via industrial disputes.

Storch examined northern industrial towns and revealed the deep antagonism fuelling the numerous anti-police riots and conflicts against the 'plague of blue locusts' that resulted, and argued for a consensus amongst the propertied classes, of the need to control the day-to-day activities of the working class.<sup>8</sup> He illustrated the ratepayer elected councils' use of the police

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<sup>6</sup> R. Paley, ' "An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System"? Policing London Before Peel', *Criminal Justice History*, 10, (1989).

<sup>7</sup> J. Hart, 'Reform of the Borough Police, 1835-1856', *The English Historical Review*, 70, No. 276 (1955), p. 421.

<sup>8</sup> R. D. Storch, ' "The Plague of Blue Locusts": Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840-57', *International Review of Social History*, XX (1975), pp. 61-90.

to enforce a moral code and the resentment and resistance this brought from those on whom it was inflicted.

This model of social control and ‘conflict’ policing, whilst a necessary revision from the consensus view, was also over simplified and had limitations, taking no account of areas where the resistance quickly died down and the new police were accepted, albeit reluctantly.<sup>9</sup> The reality was more complex and varied, with evidence that a large part of the ‘respectable’ working class had more property than previously and, as the most likely victims of petty crime, had a much more ambivalent view of the police. The working class was not a cohesive body and as Swift pointed out, depending on circumstances and personal situations, they could be pro or anti the new police as it suited them.<sup>10</sup>

Like the earlier ‘Whig’ view of the police force, the revisionist view broadly accepted that this new police constituted a more efficient, organised body than was previously in place and that this improvement in policing was necessary for enforcing a new moral code. This assumption was questioned by Paley, who, whilst she accepted that the watch forces in London were fragmented, pointed out that this meant they were much more flexible and responsive to local needs. Nor were the individuals all decrepit, with records suggesting watchmen were subject to an upper age limit and had to supply character references<sup>11</sup>. When instituted, the ‘new police’ were often fewer in number and higher in cost to the parish.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See studies by R. Swift, ‘Urban Policing in Early Victorian England, 1835-86: a reappraisal’, *History*, 73, (1988), comparing the responses to the introduction of the new police in Exeter, York and Wolverhampton.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., ‘Urban Policing in Early Victorian England, 1835-86’, pp. 236-7.

<sup>11</sup> Paley, ‘“An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System”?’’, p.104.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., ‘“An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System”?’’, pp.114-116.

Stanley Palmer has argued that police reform was a response to popular radical movements such as Chartism and Luddism, rather than to a rise in crime.<sup>13</sup> Paley has some sympathy with this view of the public order function of policing, pointing out that the creation of the Metropolitan Police was a covert way of supplementing army numbers and was not intended to discourage crime, but to ‘regulate and prevent social indiscipline (including, one suspects, manifestations of lower-class political discontent).’<sup>14</sup> Jenifer Hart also agrees that concern over Chartist threats to public order was the catalyst to reform in 1839.<sup>15</sup>

Other research has led to criticism of the concept of social control, questioning the idea of the police as ‘domestic missionaries’.<sup>16</sup> Whilst certain forces, such as the one in Huddersfield, under Superintendent Heaton, had a moral coercive direction, many others actively disapproved of such moral crusades. The direction of the various borough police forces largely depended on the composition of the watch committee and the views of the chief constable. Attitudes to social control could and did vary over time within the same force. Over various studies it has become clear that nationally, citizens of all classes used the law and the police when it suited them to achieve their own objectives. This latest school of thought, much of it drawn from studies of provincial communities has concentrated on the variations between forces, undermining the Whig view that the Metropolitan model was rolled out nationally. Clive Emsley, whilst having reservations about the inefficiency of the old parochial system and the superiority of the new, has emphasised how various factors, such as the attitude of local authorities, the quality of recruits and the effectiveness of the

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<sup>13</sup> S.H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1789-1850* (Cambridge, 1988), pp.286-289.

<sup>14</sup> Paley, ‘“An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System”’, p.121.

<sup>15</sup> Hart, ‘Reform of the Borough Police’, p. 426.

<sup>16</sup> R. D. Storch, ‘The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-80’, in R. J. Morris and R. Rodger (ed.), *The Victorian City: 1820-1914* (London, 1993), pp. 281-306.

previous system, have affected policing in different parts of the country.<sup>17</sup> This cultural variation has been taken up by others to show that there was a lack of uniformity in the way that policing was applied and received, with both continuity as well as change evident in the switch to the new police.

Roger Swift developed this theme in a comparative study of Exeter, York and Wolverhampton.<sup>18</sup> Previous histories had concentrated upon the Metropolitan Police and the burgeoning industrial centres of early Victorian England. Little attention had been paid to police reform in smaller urban towns and areas bypassed by the Industrial Revolution. In York, incorporation had little effect on the force, with the big change coming after 1856, when the force was increased to qualify for the government grant. The provincial Exeter force, established after the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, remained unaltered until the riots of 1847 and in 1856, to retain a degree of independence, refused to apply for the government grant. It was industrial areas like Wolverhampton where the greatest progress in reform was made, where incorporation in 1848 resulted in a police founded on the county force, led by the former county Deputy Chief Constable. What Swift found, and later studies endorse, was that there was no homogeneity in either the pace or application of police reform, nor in its reception or efficiency.<sup>19</sup> Each police force owed more to the structure and influence of local government than national policy, and the experience of policing could differ widely between industrial and rural areas and older, conservative cities in decline.

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<sup>17</sup> C. Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead, 1991), pp. 248-9.

<sup>18</sup> R. Swift, "Urban Policing in Early Victorian England, 1835-86: a reappraisal", *History*, 73 (1988), pp. 211-237.

<sup>19</sup> See Michael Winstanley's article, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham, c.1826-56', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 86, 1990, pp.17-35. Also unpublished theses on Leeds, Sheffield and Hull: D. Churchill, 'Crime, Policing and Control in Leeds, c. 1830-1890', Open University, 2013 and C.A. Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield, 1817-74', University of Sheffield, 1998, D.R. Welsh, 'The Reform of Urban Policing in Victorian England: a study of Kingston upon Hull, 1836-1856', University of Hull, 1997.

This approach has been reinforced by work by David Taylor on Middlesbrough, a booming industrial town with more than its fair share of problems brought on by its rapid expansion.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst conforming to neither Whig nor Marxist interpretations, Middlesbrough experienced resistance to and resentment of the new police and Taylor charts these changing attitudes and the eventual emergence of a career police force. What emerged was a product of Middlesbrough's unique growth and the chief constables that shaped it.

The early problems of high turnover encountered by all police forces due to dismissals, drunkenness and resignations gradually gave way to a more stable workforce and the development of an 'esprit de corps'. Carolyn Steedman explores this process of professionalisation in the county forces, predominantly those of Staffordshire and Buckinghamshire, tracing the type of working-class man who joined the police and the background that he came from. Steedman found that the county forces preferred to employ working-class men from an agricultural background, who were seen as physically fitter, more deferential and accepted the notion of a natural hierarchy and their place in it. Their move to join a county force left them outside the community which they were to police and dependent on their employment for a sense of belonging. These men occupied the lower ranks of the police, rarely rising above the grade of sergeant, their careers marked by a gradual progression through the classes of constable. The officer ranks were staffed by permanent men in contrast to the high turnover in the lower ranks, men who Steedman classes as 'failed businessmen'. This reflection of the hierarchy in rural areas was not replicated in borough forces, which had a greater degree of social mobility, despite employing men from a similar background.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> D. Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town. The Development of the Police in Middlesbrough c.1840-1914* (Basingstoke and New York, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> C. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The Formation of English Provincial Police Forces, 1856-80* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, 1984).

Taking the professionalisation of the police into the twentieth century, Joanne Klein's work looks at the period up to the start of the Second World War and examines the lives of the constables on the beat in three major urban forces, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham.<sup>22</sup> The research looks at the range of duties of the ordinary working-class constable and how he reconciled the ideal of what a policeman should be according to the textbooks and the real circumstances on the beat. Klein's study details the effects of donning a police uniform and the influence that individual personalities such as the chief constable could have on the bobby on the beat.

The growing body of research all combines to emphasise the complexities and variety of responses in different parts of the country and differing types of communities. The experience of a rural area might be very different from that of a 'frontier' town such as Middlesbrough, yet there might also be similarities in attitudes and responses. Recent research on other towns has highlighted this lack of uniformity. R.D. Welsh's work on Hull demonstrated how political change in the leadership of the town led to the removal of a corrupt and inefficient system, with its replacement, a full time police modelled directly on the Metropolitan Police and led by one of its erstwhile officers. Dissatisfaction with the previous arrangements led to sweeping change and unusually for a municipal town, to efficiency valued above economy.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, Oldham's Police Commissioners were hampered by the ratepayers' reluctance to fund policing. Oldham, like Halifax, was politically radical and underwent rapid urban growth in the early nineteenth century. It relied on military assistance to deal with industrial unrest and in the interests of economy kept its policing arrangements to a minimum, resulting in a body of men too small to be effective.

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<sup>22</sup> J. Klein, *Invisible Men. The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, 1900-1939*, (Liverpool, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> D.R. Welsh, 'The Reform of Urban Policing in Victorian England: a study of Kingston upon Hull, 1836-5', Ph.D., University of Hull, 1997.

The deficiency, for those who could afford it, was supplied by local initiatives where individuals and groups funded private watchmen to guard their own property. Michael Winstanley's study of the town showed that the watch was only increased in 1841 to avoid the imposition of the Rural Police, a consequence which eventually occurred in 1847, after the justices lost patience with the Police Commissioners' inability to deal with industrial disturbances.<sup>24</sup> As in Sheffield, this prompted the town to petition for incorporation to regain control of its police and their cost. After incorporation, continued parsimony kept the force below prescribed Home Office minimum levels and the watch committee resisted Home Office pressure until 1874, when the increase of the government grant to 50 per cent meant it cost less to augment the force than to keep it at the same level. Whilst Hull and Oldham had very different approaches to policing, neither was exempt from strike action by the men in 1853, albeit unsuccessfully, in an attempt to improve their pay.

The Borough of Leeds was also driven by the need to keep expenditure to a minimum. A night watch was established by a local Act of Parliament in 1815 and further improvements were made over the next twenty years, but penny pinching restricted the size of the force. Churchill's research revealed that, unlike Hull, the establishment of the new police in 1836 masked continuities in personnel and practice with the night watch continued as police under the new system.<sup>25</sup> Sharp cuts in manpower were only alleviated after the 1856 County and Borough Police Act, which led to a fifty per cent increase in personnel to patrol the out-townships.<sup>26</sup>

Sheffield established a watch in 1818 and created a Day Police in 1836. The force had disciplinary problems, but was largely effective. C.A. Williams' findings showed that a

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<sup>24</sup> M. Winstanley, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham, c. 1826-56' in *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 86, 1990, pp.17-35.

<sup>25</sup> D.C. Churchill, 'Crime, Policing and Control in Leeds, c. 1830-1890', Ph.D., Open University, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> County and Borough Police Act, 1856. (19 and 20 Vic c 69).

campaign for further reform polarised the political factions of the town and consensus was only reached when the justices decided to apply the 1839 County Police Act to the town.<sup>27</sup> Although the threat turned out to be illusory, it forced the ruling elite to unite in a petition for incorporation. The parish constables were replaced by an underfunded new police, which gradually grew more efficient despite politically motivated criticism by the Democrats. The loss of the government grant in 1862-4 made Sheffield the last large borough not to qualify for the grant, due to underfunding and a series of misunderstandings between the council, the watch committee and the Inspectors, which resulted in the force not expanding to the size necessary to maintain the police: population ratio.

The above studies illustrate that there is no 'one size fits all' definition, with the only common theme being that local events and concerns were the determining factor in the type of police that each area developed and attempts to draw general conclusions are fraught with difficulties. Robert Reiner has undertaken the task in a book mostly devoted to twentieth century policing, which gives an overview of the various historical arguments, finding both the Whig and revisionist views as too structuralist and does justice to both in a 'neo-Reithian/revisionist synthesis'. He emphasizes the success of the police reformers, but points out that policing was 'embedded in a social order riven by structural bases of conflict, not fundamental integration' and could therefore be sympathetic or oppressive.<sup>28</sup>

This thesis seeks to contribute to the cultural debate by an analysis of policing in Halifax between 1848 and 1914, considered through the tenures of the Chief Constables. They, and the Watch Committees they served, were the major influences on the management, the direction and the character of the Halifax force, although the level of their authority and

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<sup>27</sup> C.A. Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield, 1818-74', Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 1998.

County Police Act, 1839, (2 and 3 Vic c 93).

<sup>28</sup> R Reiner, *The Politics of the Police* (Oxford and New York, 2000), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p.45.

control fluctuated throughout the nineteenth century. There is a surprising lack of detailed work on the smaller industrial towns and this research is intended to help redress this. The focus of this study, like Swift's and Taylor's, is local, but contributes to the wider debates on the creation of a policed society in Victorian and Edwardian times and provides a useful addition to the study of cultural variations. Halifax has its own 'Reithian' history of the police, a pamphlet written at the time of the force's amalgamation into the West Yorkshire Constabulary, which marked the end of the Halifax Borough Police Force. It was written by PC J. Wild, a serving police constable, in 1968, and prefaced by a foreword by the then Chief Constable.<sup>29</sup> It is a chronological record of the Halifax force, with its main emphasis on the twentieth century. Whilst accurate, it attempts no analysis of the history and is content to follow the prevailing theory of policing as a necessary and logical improvement of the past, with the watch system described as 'archaic' and the Metropolitan Police as 'the first major step forward'.<sup>30</sup> Since PC Wild's account was written, the focus of research has changed to try to fit together the jigsaw of individual local experiences into a more coherent picture. The 1848 Act of Incorporation was the initiative for Halifax to set up its own police force and unlike many other forces in growing industrial towns, it had a remarkably stable hierarchy with only five chief officers from its creation until 1943, with three of them notching up over twenty years' service each. This stability enabled the Halifax police to weather many problems that beset other forces, providing a continuity that aided the formation of a professional ethos. The history of Halifax policing cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of its demographic and geographic background, which influenced (and impeded) the town's expansion.

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<sup>29</sup> Constable J. Wild, *The Halifax Borough Police* (1968). Copy held in Halifax Antiquarian Library ref: HAS (B):11:3.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, *Halifax Borough Police*, p.3.

## **Background**

Halifax was one of the many new urban industrial towns that expanded rapidly during the industrial revolution, drawing in workers to fill the increasing numbers of factory jobs. Halifax, and its surrounding countryside, forms the largest parish in the country, but between 1851 and 1871 the town increased its share of the total parish population from 16.9 to 37.8 per cent as the labouring classes migrated to the towns. This demographic expansion was reflected in other urban industrial communities across the country. Halifax never grew to the dimensions of many of its immediate neighbours such as Leeds and had lost its ascendancy in worsted production, held since 1750, to the rapidly expanding city of Bradford. However it had a diversity of trades and manufactures other than textiles, which meant that the later downturn in worsted production did not affect its economy as badly as that of some of its neighbours.

Halifax was hindered from greater expansion by its geography, the rough hilly terrain restricting the expansion of its road, rail and canal networks well into the middle of the nineteenth century, far behind the infrastructure already in place for its competitors, such as Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield. This geographical isolation also fostered pockets of lawlessness, particularly throughout the late eighteenth century. The notorious Cragg Vale Coiners, a gold coin clipping and counterfeiting group who murdered an excise man in 1769, resulting in a government enquiry, were an example of the limited law enforcement in the Parish of Halifax. The Chartist movement had strong support in the town, which endured into the 1850's and throughout the early part of the nineteenth century there were disturbances and riots, particularly at election times, ending in the Plug Plot disturbances of

1842 where troops were attacked by the mob and had to be reinforced by cavalry from outside the area.<sup>31</sup>

The growing concern over the disorders and the perception of an increase in criminality, often fuelled by alarmist stories in the local and national press, form the background to the establishment of the police in Halifax, but this study will show there were varied opinions on the effectiveness of the existing system and the need to replace it with a more organised body. This is the first of a number of themes explored in this thesis. The system in use, prior to Halifax's incorporation as a Borough in 1848 will be examined and the reasons for its summary removal considered. As more recent studies have shown, efficiency was not always the key consideration. Control of law enforcement in Halifax prior to its incorporation in 1848 was not straightforward and contributed to problems in policing the town and the wider parish. Conflict between the separate bodies responsible for the Halifax Watch and the Parish Constables was one of the incentives behind those attempting reform in the following years.

Halifax conformed to the attitudes of many Victorian towns dominated by middle-class rate payers and their elected representatives, as in Swift's studies of York, Exeter and Wolverhampton.<sup>32</sup> Their overriding concern was control of their own civic bureaucracy, especially the police force and thus their ability to keep costs to a minimum. Halifax petitioned regularly against any legislation that was seen as an attempt to increase centralised control. The incorporation of the town in 1848 was seen as an opportunity to retain control over its own affairs and budget. Likewise, Sheffield also chose incorporation to avoid

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<sup>31</sup> They were so named in 1842, when mill workers went on strike after wages cuts. The strikers disabled the factories by pulling out the plugs on the steam boilers. After a large meeting in Halifax by strikers on 15 August, 17 men were arrested and taken to the station under military escort to be sent before Wakefield magistrates. On their return the soldiers were ambushed and attacked by an angry mob. Order was only restored after the troops opened fire. Full accounts of the events are described in C. Howe, *Halifax 1842. A Year of Crisis*, (London, 2014), pp. 91-9.

<sup>32</sup> Swift, "Urban Policing in Early Victorian England", pp.229-31.

increased centralised control after petitions against legislation were considered to have failed. Earlier moves towards incorporation had been obstructed by opposing political factions afraid of conceding power to the other side, until the town finally opted for a charter to avoid the threat of the imposition of the county constabulary.<sup>33</sup>

The thesis will move on to examine the years following the establishment of the force to explore the early problems it encountered. As in many areas, the new force was not welcomed wholeheartedly, but the resistance was spasmodic and individual attacks on policemen are problematic, not always being attributable to resentment of the increased control. There is evidence to support many of the latest studies, that police were mainly used to enforce a long, new list of council by-laws aimed at controlling ‘nuisances’, but that those who made use of them were not just the middle class but a rising number of the ‘respectable’ working class intent on improving their own environs.

In common with most studies of new police forces, Halifax had early problems with recruitment and the calibre of men the job attracted. The high initial turnover due to drunkenness and disciplinary offences gradually gave way to a more settled workforce, with promotion often gained by applying to other forces, to get around the fact that Halifax’s force was relatively small, thus restricting opportunities for advancement. However this was no smooth Reithian progress.

In the 1860’s the Borough more than doubled in size, taking in the adjoining townships of Ovenden, Skircoat and Southowram.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the police had increased from its initial number of twenty-five to a force of sixty-nine men. The first two Superintendents had previously served in the Watch and between them notched up 24 years’ service, giving a

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<sup>33</sup> C. A. Williams, ‘Police and Crime in Sheffield, 1818-74’, Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 2 for the extension of the borough boundaries.

strong leadership, which went a long way towards the formation of a stable police force. They were succeeded by the first officer to hold the rank of Chief Constable; his tenure lasted a mere four years, after which he resigned in the wake of accusations of police brutality.

The following Chief Constable, Charles Pole, restored the force's reputation, dealing firmly with the rowdier elements in the town and was credited at his retirement in 1903 with having made Halifax a more respectable place. It is clear that the attitude and quality of the man in charge of the force, and the composition of the watch committee behind him were the deciding factors for the direction a force took. Their outlook had more effect on how strongly control was exerted than any government initiatives or directives and confirms Swift's view that the community itself determined the nature of its policing. Victorian councils managed to retain close jurisdiction over their local forces and the course they took reflected their aims and aspirations. The revisionist view of forces such as Huddersfield as architects of social and moral control is certainly true for certain areas at certain times, but the picture is clearly much more individualistic than that, reinforcing Emsley and Taylor's 'cultural' argument.

The main unpublished sources used in this thesis were the Trustees minutes, the minutes of the Halifax Borough Council and those of the Watch Committee.<sup>35</sup> The latter, particularly in the early years are quite detailed, only tailing off to record basic details in the 1880s. Much can be filled in by cross referencing Watch Committee disputes with Council minutes. Regrettably, no Conduct Books have survived and often the minutes make tantalising reference to incidents which are not explained, or do no more than record the final decisions, not the discussions that have taken place. Some of these incidents can be 'fleshed out' from reports in the local papers, although allowance has to be made for the differing political bias

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<sup>35</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS), Calderdale, Halifax.  
Halifax Meeting of Trustees 1780-1849, HXM 36-40.  
Halifax Council Minutes 1848-1914, HXM 1-35.  
Halifax Watch Committee Minutes (HWCM) 1848-1914, HXM 185-200.

of these publications.<sup>36</sup> They also allow a different slant on the state of local crime and the conduct (good and bad) of the police. The annual reports of the Chief Constable are intact only for the 1880s and 1890s, but give his views of crime and its causes in the Borough.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, the views of the ordinary policeman are rarely heard. Using the press and accounts in the minutes, some attempts can be made to rectify this. There are few personal details recorded in later minutes, but by using the local censuses between 1841 and 1911, the lives of some individuals can be tracked at ‘snapshot’ intervals, giving place of birth, previous employment and, if leaving the force, later employment.<sup>38</sup> It is also possible to tentatively trace the development of an ‘esprit de corps’, by mapping the whereabouts of individuals and how early members often lived close to and with each other. As the town developed and ‘respectable’ working class housing was built to the north and west of the town, the police moved also, embedded as part of the community from which they originated. Finally, the voice of those who bore the brunt of policing, often Irish, mostly male and single, remains silent. As in so many areas, sources give only indirect hints of their viewpoint and Halifax is no different in giving no direct voice to these people.

The purpose of this research is to examine the situation in Halifax prior to Incorporation and consider how the change in legislation affected the establishment of a ‘new police’ force, how it was set up and the problems that were encountered in the early years. The move towards a professional force, with its own ethos, how much it was influenced by what had gone before, is looked at through the prism of the five head constables. The work of David Wall, which places chief constables into a historical perspective, provides valuable

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<sup>36</sup> *Halifax Guardian* and *Halifax Courier*.

<sup>37</sup> Statistical Returns. Halifax Borough Police 1880-1898. Has (B) B:11:3.

<sup>38</sup> TNA, HO107, 1841 England Census, HO107, 1851 England Census. RG9 – RG14, 1861-1911 England Census.

comparison with the position in Halifax.<sup>39</sup> While commenting on the lack of studies of chief constables as an ‘elite group’, Wall provides an overview of the changing nature of the role through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>40</sup> His research covers the selection and appointment processes of the chief constables and highlights the differences between the county and borough approaches. Determinedly amateur, the former was mainly concerned with social background, discipline and the maintenance of order, whilst the boroughs were more influenced by policing experience and the detection and prosecution of crime.<sup>41</sup> The nature and stature of the role of borough chief constable changed over the nineteenth century. Initially, merely a trusted servant of the watch committee, the growth of responsibilities from the maintenance of order and control of crime, to include emergency services such as the fire brigade and ambulance and civil functions such as inspectors of nuisances, lodging houses and cattle diseases, enhanced the social status of the office of chief constable. Through his statistical analyses of the backgrounds and careers of the individuals who held office, Wall illustrates the changes and the growth towards professionalism and argues that with internal recruitment, chief constables became less aligned with the county or municipal elite and more representative of the people they policed.<sup>42</sup> His examples of the career trajectories of the borough chief constables strike a chord with the promotion paths of Halifax officers, several of whom went on to become chief constables elsewhere and illustrate the connections made between borough forces as men moved to gain advancement. The impact of the head constables and the Watch Committee on the type of force that emerged is considered in the light of the above. How much did the flourishing industrial areas, the expanding population and the rowdy nightlife of the late nineteenth century affect the kind of response the police

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<sup>39</sup> D.S. Wall, *The Chief Constables of England and Wales: The socio-legal history of a criminal justice elite*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998), p.2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., *Chief Constables*, p.237.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., *Chief Constables*, p.240.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., *Chief Constables*, p.300.

made? These are the issues that will be raised in the following chapters. These local economic, social and geographical elements were the dominant factors in the formation of the Halifax police force and its gradual progress to professionalisation.

# Chapter 1

## Out with the Old and in with the New?

The last fifty years have seen significant changes in the way Victorian policing is viewed. The “Benthamite march of progress” as exemplified by Reith and Critchley, was revised by the conflict and control model of Robert Storch, which emphasised the use of the police to impose social discipline.<sup>1</sup> Later research has viewed this as one-sided, not reflecting the nuances evident in different areas. The work of Roger Swift, whose comparison of the experiences of York, Exeter and Wolverhampton supported a cultural viewpoint, came to the conclusion that individual police forces varied widely according to the background that they emerged from, those with a tradition of policing having a greater continuity between the old and new police.<sup>2</sup> This view is borne out by the example of Halifax and supports Ruth Paley’s assertion that the old watchmen were not as inefficient, nor the new police as effective as previously thought.

There are parallels between the experiences of Wolverhampton and Halifax in the first half of the nineteenth century, not least that they obtained their Charters of Incorporation and established a Borough police force in the same year.<sup>3</sup> Although smaller than Wolverhampton, Halifax was a rapidly expanding town, the population rising from 8,886 in 1801 to 25,159 in 1851 and 65,510 in 1871.<sup>4</sup> The expansion was fuelled by the migration of former domestic workers into the town’s many factories, the woollen and worsted industries being predominant. Also swelling the population were large numbers of immigrants from outside

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<sup>1</sup> Storch, ‘The Policeman as Domestic Missionary’, pp. 281-306.

<sup>2</sup> Swift, ‘Urban Policing in Early Victorian England’, pp. 211-237.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Hargreaves, *Halifax (Lancaster, 2003)*. Census returns for 1801 and 1851, p. 74 and p. 127.

the parish, particularly the Irish. Although the town depended primarily on textiles, by the 1820s, it had yielded its ascendancy in worsted production to Bradford, which was increasing in size even faster than Halifax. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, Halifax was impressing outsiders with the diversity of its manufactures, which besides textiles, included dyeing, card making, carpet making and the beginnings of a machine tool industry.

The Parish of Halifax, the biggest in Yorkshire, covered 120 square miles, divided into three divisions, of which the Halifax division, which included the town, was the largest. The responsibility for its policing prior to 1823 lay with two Parish Constables and their deputies, elected by the Vestry, sworn in at the Court Leet of the Manor of Wakefield and directed by the Wakefield County Magistrates. Local manufacturers, leading ratepayers and tradesmen paid for the added protection of a Society for the Prosecution of Felons, for a fee of one guinea.<sup>5</sup> The Society was formed in 1796, with between sixty-two and one hundred and five members up to 1821, when it saw fit to extend its provisions from Halifax to include five other townships in the Parish. Peter Bramham points out that the West Riding magistrates were dubious about the effectiveness of Prosecution Societies, but its extension in Halifax to a larger area may have indicated a more robust local initiative and reflected the increasing industrialisation of the surrounding townships.<sup>6</sup> It is unclear when the Society lapsed, but may have been after the introduction of a paid watch in 1823, since no further records for the Halifax Society survive after 1821, despite other local prosecution societies in the Parish surviving into the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Major disturbances in public order, such as Chartist

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<sup>5</sup> Halifax Society for the Prosecution of Felons. Deed of Constitution 1821. HAS 624.

<sup>6</sup> P. Bramham, 'Parish Constables or Police Officers? The Development of a County Force in the West Riding', *The Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 7 (1987), pp. 69-70.

<sup>7</sup> Sowerby Bridge Society for the Prosecution of Felons, Minutes and Accounts 1844-1925. WYAS (Calderdale) SPL 284-289.

demonstrations in the 1830s were dealt with by recourse to the military, an approach also followed in Wolverhampton during riots in 1835 for a by-election.<sup>8</sup>

Ruth Paley has argued that the old system of policing in London, before the Metropolitan Police, was not as inadequate as previously thought and it was unlikely that the new police were more efficient than the old.<sup>9</sup> On a provincial level, Swift's study of Exeter, York and Wolverhampton, concludes that policing in the early nineteenth century was not co-ordinated, with a wide variety of bodies, including parish vestries, magistrates and improvement commissioners responsible, with a corresponding level of efficiency depending on the local communities' perceived needs.<sup>10</sup> This chapter enquires into how effective the old watch system in Halifax was, and whether the new police that replaced it were an improvement.

### **The Watch**

It was the growth of the Halifax Township and its rapidly urbanising population that caused the leading ratepayers in 1823 to apply for a series of Improvement Acts, which included watching for the first time. The property qualification to become a Trustee was applied to both owners and occupiers of property over £40, enabling many tradesmen and craftsmen to qualify for the first time. This mirrors events in the urban parishes of London, where the watch was re-organised and voluntary service was replaced by a body financed from the rates. As with Halifax, complaints were dealt with by improving supervision, increasing the number of watchmen and re-organising the beats.<sup>11</sup>

The new Halifax watch consisted of a sergeant and six men (increased to ten by Christmas 1823) on duty at night time only, from 10pm to 6am. Initially, the patrols were solely for the

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<sup>8</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', p.213.

<sup>9</sup> Paley, "'An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System'?"

<sup>10</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', pp. 236-7.

<sup>11</sup> Paley, "'An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System'?", p.102.

winter months, but were extended to year round in 1843. The daytime policing of the town was provided by the two Parish Constables, whose duties were normally performed by Deputies. Although the watch was controlled by the Town Trustees, conflicting interpretations of the 1823 Act led to a dispute over jurisdiction of the Deputies. The Constables were selected by the Vestry and appointed their Deputies, who after 1838 were paid by the Town Trustees. The candidates were not always satisfactory and the system was acknowledged to be imperfect, since prior to 1838, it pitted the Deputies against one another in their attempt to earn fees. In 1838, unsatisfactory behaviour by the Deputies led to one being dismissed by the Constables. After an investigation, the Trustees demanded the dismissal of the second Deputy, Fraser, on the grounds of ‘cruel treatment of prisoners under his care’ and ‘drunkenness and profanity’.<sup>12</sup> The Trustees were rebuffed by the Constables, who defended their right of appointment and dismissal. The Trustees retaliated by withholding the Deputies’ salaries (paid from the improvement rates). A stand-off ensued for three months until a threat of legal action from the Constables caused the Trustees to capitulate.<sup>13</sup> This dispute over control had the result of stimulating a short-lived campaign by the local Liberal newspaper to apply for incorporation as a borough. They were opposed by the Tory *Halifax Guardian* on the grounds of expense and the fear that incorporation was being used by the liberals to gain political advantage.<sup>14</sup> The matter appears to have been dropped for lack of widespread support.

Over the next decade, there were conflicting views of the efficiency of the Watch in Halifax, often reflecting opinions prevalent in many towns, that the watchmen were inefficient, aged,

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<sup>12</sup> *Halifax and Huddersfield Express*, 24 March 1838.

<sup>13</sup> G. R. Dalby, ‘The Work of the Halifax Town Trustees from the Passing of the Improvement Act of 1823 to the Incorporation of the Borough in 1848’. M.A., University unstated. 1953, Calderdale Central Library: HT 352 DAL.

<sup>14</sup> *Halifax and Huddersfield Express*, 10 March 1838 to 21 April 1838. *Halifax Guardian*, 10 April 1838.

physically unsuitable and neglectful of their duties. An article in 1833, in the *Guardian* described Jephtha Lane, a watchman, as a ‘deaf old man..... who had to be shouted at when any communication had to be made.’<sup>15</sup> Another letter in 1838 accused the sergeant of the Watch of using his position to work off grudges and conniving at the robberies in the town.<sup>16</sup> Again, in 1842, the paper reported a Mr Walton as saying he could go out at any time during the night and be sure to see two, if not three Watchmen talking together.<sup>17</sup> E. M. Wavell, who became Clerk to the new Corporation reminisced that before 1848, the Watchmen were ‘not only meagre in number, but, to a large extent, below standard physically and in other ways’.<sup>18</sup> However, these last recollections were made nearly half a century later and besides the vagaries of memory over such a period of time, Wavell would have been keen to show the new civic authorities as being an improvement on the old.

Despite two dismissals of Watchmen for drunkenness in 1844, the Watch Committee generally defended its men against complaints and mindful of expense, was reluctant to do more than tweak the existing system.<sup>19</sup> The jurisdiction conflict with the Constables was ameliorated in 1840, when the two sides joined forces to petition the magistrates to exclude the township from the provisions of the County Police Act 1839, which enabled the county magistrates to establish a police force for part of or the entire county. Halifax opposed the forming of a rural police on the grounds that it would be more expensive and no more efficient.<sup>20</sup> A ratepayers’ meeting, which attracted a crowd of about five hundred people, complained of the potential extra cost and lack of control over appointments and finance if

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<sup>15</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 25 September 1833.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 April 1838.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 November 1842.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Centenary Story of Halifax, 1848-1948’, *Halifax Courier* 1948. Calderdale Central Library : HT 942.76 HAR

<sup>19</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 6 January 1844.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. Father Nicholas Hird, ‘From Watchmen to New Police in Huddersfield and Halifax, c. 1820-48: Evolutionary process or radical change?’ M.A., University of Huddersfield, 1999.

such a force were established. Speakers pointed out that many in the Parish were too poor to steal from and that the town was peaceable. Any inefficiency in the current system should be improved, not replaced by a locally unaccountable body. Others expressed the fear that 150 ‘bloodthirsty’ police would be imposed on them and said that despite problems with the Watch, the Trustees should look how to improve the existing system.<sup>21</sup> Their views were in tune with the other manufacturing districts in the West Riding, which petitioned strongly against the Rural Police and influenced the West Riding magistracy, who voted against introducing a rural force because of the cost, citing declining crime rates.<sup>22</sup> In Staffordshire, the magistrates, concerned by industrial agitation, took a different view and applied the County Police Act to the whole county. This had the result of establishing a new police force, with Wolverhampton as its headquarters, until the town obtained a Charter of Incorporation in 1848, the same year as Halifax. The borough police force was then recruited from the county police and headed by the man who had been their Deputy-Chief Constable.<sup>23</sup>

In 1843, the improved relationship between the Constables and the Trustees resulted in a joint committee to consider improvements to daytime policing, which was felt to be unsatisfactory, since the Deputies spent most of their time serving precepts. The Trustees had no power to appoint a day police, which was not covered by the 1823 Improvement Act and any changes had to be in conjunction with the Deputies. The result was the establishment of two Daytime Police, with a supernumery to cover absences, a Night Police of above twenty and a new Watch Committee set up to oversee its organisation. A year later, the Committee were able to claim ‘the Police now established is in a good degree efficient’ and that ‘the number of cases

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<sup>21</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 5 September 1840.

<sup>22</sup> Bramham, ‘Parish Constables or Police Officers?’, p.70.

<sup>23</sup> Swift, *Urban Policing in early Victorian England*, pp.216-7.

of misdemeanours within the limits of the Borough has materially diminished'.<sup>24</sup> As Swift found in Wolverhampton, improvements to the Watch in the years before incorporation succeeded in satisfying some of the concerns of the middle-classes.<sup>25</sup> In 1844, in what appears to be an attempt to create a more professional force, the Watch Committee appointed a superintendent and two sergeants to assist him, to keep the men 'up to the spirit of their duty'. The rules and regulations governing the force were printed and handed out to the men and the beats were reorganised.<sup>26</sup> This mirrors the action taken by the London parishes before the introduction of the Metropolitan Police, where small-scale initiatives to improve the quality of the watch were the usual response to problems and complaints.<sup>27</sup> The improvements in Halifax appear to have been successful, as in 1846, the Watch Committee reported 'there has been no robbery committed within this boundary for upwards of fifteen months'.<sup>28</sup> This seems unlikely, since no doubt unreported offences occurred in the slums of Halifax, but the Committee were probably concerned only with incidents which affected the more respectable inhabitants of the town. Since prosecutions had to be funded by the victim and were expensive, justice was rarely available to the poor, except where unofficial action and retaliation was taken to recover property.

The watchmen's primary duties, as laid down in the 1823 Improvement Act were to

exert themselves in the prevention of fires, and also of murders, burglaries, robberies, and other outrageous disorders and breaches of the peace; and to apprehend and secure.....all felons, malefactors, rogues,

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<sup>24</sup> Halifax Trustees Minutes, HX/T/M, 3 April 1844, quoted in Hird, 'From Watchmen to New Police'.

<sup>25</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', p.213.

<sup>26</sup> Dalby, 'The Work of the Halifax Town Trustees'.

<sup>27</sup> Paley, "'An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System'?", pp.111-113.

<sup>28</sup> Halifax Trustees Minutes, HX/T/M, 7 January 1846, quoted in Hird, 'From Watchmen to New Police'.

vagrants, vagabonds, idle and disorderly persons, disturbers of the public peace, prostitutes and night walkers.<sup>29</sup>

They had strict beats to patrol and had to call out the hour when passing the house of a Watch Committee member, so that a check could be kept on them. In 1840, the *Halifax Guardian* gave the yearly cost of the watch as £700, with the weekly pay of a sergeant of the watch, quoted two years later as 15s per week.<sup>30</sup> With this low wage, watching was not expected to be the men's sole employment, and they supplemented it with other small day jobs and perks, such as early morning alarm calls. There was also no prohibition on employment for a watchman's wife. There seems little doubt, however, that the watchmen themselves were not chosen for their youth or fitness. Deaf old Jephtha Lane, of whom the *Halifax Guardian* had complained in 1833, had been promoted to sergeant by 1842 and was again criticised, this time by the Trustees. He was defended by the Watch Committee, who claimed he was 'trustworthy, with many good properties'.<sup>31</sup> The regular complaints about the men gossiping together indicate that they took the opportunity to duck out of their duties when possible and the dismissal of two men in 1844 for drunkenness showed they were not averse to taking comfort on the job.

Despite these occasional complaints about efficiency, there was no overwhelming level of dissatisfaction with the policing of the town in the years leading up to Incorporation. The *Halifax Guardian* regularly carried reports of arrests by the Watchmen, as in March 1848, when they brought two Irishmen before the courts, charged with assault and being drunk and disorderly. Drunkenness appears to be the main reason for problems in the town at night and the Watch Committee reported in 1847 that

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<sup>29</sup> An Act for paving, lighting, cleansing, watching and improving the Township of Halifax and for supplying the same with Water. 1823. (1 Geo. 4 c 90).

<sup>30</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 24 August 1840 and 8 October 1842.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1842.

Not a single robbery of any importance has taken place during the year, and were it not for the drunkenness and its attendant vices, the town would be very little disturbed.<sup>32</sup>

Complaints by the middle classes were responded to by improvements to the existing Watch and latterly, an attempt to 'professionalise' the men without going to the expense of forming a 'new police' force. Even after the formation of the new police, the old Watch were claimed to have been efficient with one councillor stating that

the Trustees never found any deficiency in the police after they had appointed Messrs Spiers and Rawson, the town was well managed by these two officers.<sup>33</sup>

Where a breakdown of law and order, such as the Plug Plot Riots of 1842, did occur, the response was to call in the military.<sup>34</sup> Even in 1848, when a Chartist meeting on Skircoat Moor, claimed by the *Halifax Guardian* to number over 20,000 people, raised fears of trouble, a troop of Dragoon Guards was sent to supplement the special constables and local Halifax troops and preserve the peace and protect property.<sup>35</sup> The fear of riots led to a demand for troops to be stationed permanently in Bradford and Halifax, but it was never considered either possible or appropriate that a police force should control such problems, not least because the cost of any military support fell to the government, not the parish. Any dissatisfaction with the watch system resulted in cries for its improvement, not its replacement. The new police were seen as expensive, externally controlled and militaristic. Such a body would have been seen as an incitement to trouble in Halifax, known for its strong Chartist sympathies. It is significant that the only time that the new police were

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 9 January 1847.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 2 February, 1850.

<sup>34</sup> Howe, *Halifax 1842*, pp.91-9.

<sup>35</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 22 April 1848, p8.

suggested as a replacement for the old system, the impetus was over who controlled the officers and their cost, not their efficiency, or lack of it. Evidence from other towns supports the accepted view that policing in the early nineteenth century was not co-ordinated and the levels of efficiency varied from one area to another. Leeds established a watch in 1815, under the control of the justices, who were empowered to levy a watch rate and appoint a chief constable. Like Halifax, improvements were made to the watch through various local acts of parliament, until the establishment of a new police in 1836.<sup>36</sup> Sheffield's Improvement Act of 1818 also established a night watch in response to a perceived increase in crime, but local citizens also set up and paid for their own watchmen in areas outside the jurisdiction of the Act.<sup>37</sup> Ruth Paley's research showed that London's policing before 1839 was fragmented between various authorities, but that this was not always detrimental to efficiency, since it allowed for speedier local responses to problems and the level of coverage was higher under the old watch than the new police.<sup>38</sup> There was no overall body responsible and policing was administered by any one of a number of agencies, including magistrates, improvement commissioners and the vestry. Oldham's leading residents promoted their own private measure, the Oldham Police Act of 1826, which established a police force for the town, supervised by a Police Commission which was accountable to the ratepayers.<sup>39</sup> Industrial districts faced problems which old style methods of policing were unable to control, whilst rural areas, where crime remained low, were more likely to be satisfied with existing approaches to law and order.

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<sup>36</sup> Churchill, 'Crime, Policing and Control in Leeds', pp.46-50.

<sup>37</sup> Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield', pp. 67-70.

<sup>38</sup> Paley, "'An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System'?", pp.95-130.

<sup>39</sup> Winstanley, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham', p.21.

## The New Police

The eventual establishment of the new police in Halifax was a direct consequence of ratepayer fears that Lord Morpeth's Health of Towns Bill in 1847 would be made statutory and that the town would cede more control over their affairs to the government. This was eventually to become the Public Health Act 1848, which established a Central Board of Health, with corporate boroughs retaining their own responsibility for drainage, nuisances and water. An Act of Incorporation was seen as the only way to retain jurisdiction. Public opinion in the town, across the political spectrum, was that the powers under the Bill were too great to entrust to any, but a locally-elected body and that 'as the Town Commissioners provided by Lord Morpeth's Bill would not be such a responsible body, an application for a Charter of Incorporation becomes indispensable'.<sup>40</sup> The move had cross party backing, with even the *Halifax Guardian* changing sides to support the petition. The local magistracy was not in favour of incorporation, no doubt because it would undermine their control in the district, but was not hostile, preferring to remain neutral. Within the week, a further meeting was held and a vote in favour of obtaining a Charter of Incorporation was passed. Huddersfield and Wakefield were also known to be trying for a Charter and the feeling was that Halifax's municipal pride was at stake. This was unlike the situation in Wolverhampton, where police reform was an integral part of the town's campaign for incorporation.<sup>41</sup> Sheffield also had a robust dialogue on the need for incorporation and the pride of the town and policing were important aspects of the debate.<sup>42</sup> This was not the case in Halifax, where all parties were broadly in agreement about the need for a Charter. Although Halifax had a lengthy dispute on the probable need for and potential cost of civic regalia, such as gold

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<sup>40</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 1 May 1847.

<sup>41</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', p. 230.

<sup>42</sup> C.A. Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield, 1818-74', Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 1998, p. 87.

chains and maces, the repercussions for the policing of the town, if the Charter was granted, were never raised and it simply was not an issue in the debate for Incorporation.<sup>43</sup>

Halifax's Charter was granted on 24 March 1848, amid a backdrop of Chartist activity throughout the country. In April, a large demonstration, believed to number 20,000 people, was held on Skircoat Moor and large numbers of special constables were sworn in 'to hold themselves in readiness for the protection of property and the preservation of peace'. They were supplemented by the Halifax troops and a troop of Dragoon Guards. In the event, the procession and the meeting passed off peacefully and the specials and the troops were stood down.<sup>44</sup> It was against this background in May that an acrimonious election for town councillors took place. Although the influence of Halifax's absentee landed gentry had declined, to be replaced by a rising entrepreneurial elite whose fortunes were derived from the Industrial Revolution, it was not these leading ratepayers who dominated the first Borough Council. The Trustees of the Improvement Act had expected that even with the establishment of Halifax as a borough, they would continue to dominate the town's affairs. This was the case in Sheffield, where the same people who had controlled the town's affairs prior to incorporation continued to do so afterwards, with even the composition of the Watch Committee remaining largely unaltered.<sup>45</sup>

In Halifax, all who paid the poor rate were now entitled to vote and large numbers of townspeople, especially those with small businesses, found themselves in a position to change the status quo to more radical politics, much to the dismay of the Tory *Halifax Guardian*, which wrote,

That there is a party ready to monopolise the government of the borough and carry out a narrow minded policy we are fully aware; and if they are

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<sup>43</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 8 May 1847.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 April 1848.

<sup>45</sup> Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield', p.128.

suffered to worm themselves into place, the ratepayers will bitterly rue that they ever signed the petition for granting the charter.<sup>46</sup>

The election confirmed the *Guardian's* fears as the newly elected council was composed of mainly radicals and four Chartists, with only a handful of Whigs and Tories and was hailed as a triumph for nonconformity and radicalism.<sup>47</sup> This did not sit well with some of the leading members of the town, three of whom refused the offer to be the Mayor. Their number included carpet manufacturer, John Crossley, who felt so strongly about the lack of gentlemen on the council that he declined even to be an Alderman.<sup>48</sup> The by-elections which were held following the election of aldermen further bolstered the representation of the Whigs and nonconformists. The Act of Incorporation meant that Halifax was obliged to establish its own police force, under the jurisdiction of the council. The political nature of the new council influenced the type of police force that Halifax was to have. In a pre-election speech, one councillor stated that candidates should be careful of the public purse, not spending money

...in crowding the streets with policemen; . . . it might do very well for some parties to have an increased number of policemen in the town, because by that means they might save the expense of employing private watchmen; he did not think that more than a fair proportion of policemen were required for the peace of the town. At Halifax everybody knew each other and when anything wrong was done, they knew who'd done it.<sup>49</sup>

The police were seen by many of the radicals as a body that would support the major local industrialists, both politically and financially, by acting as unpaid private police. Part of the impetus to limit the numbers of police was to avoid the misleading impression of a private army, which might be controlled by the elite for their own benefit. This fear of local factions

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<sup>46</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 29 April 1848.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of Councillors.

<sup>48</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 3 June 1848.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 May 1848.

controlling the new police was not limited to radicals, as Bramham points out.<sup>50</sup> The West Riding magistrates were aware that sections of the ratepaying public were wishful of enforcing economy, even at the expense of efficiency. Fears of factions controlling police forces went even higher, with military commanders expressing doubts about their independence. Naturally, the other reason to curb the size of the force was to limit the cost, since minimising expenditure was uppermost in the minds of most ratepayers. Despite the distrust of a professional police force, most of the radicals, many of whom owned small businesses, wanted a small force to defend their property and deal with vice and crime, provided it gave value for money.

Unlike other towns that vacillated over the establishment of their police force, Halifax had elected its Watch Committee by June 1848. Jennifer Hart notes that the nineteen boroughs (including Halifax), which were incorporated between 1835 and 1853 were, unlike earlier corporations, more expeditious in establishing their police forces, usually within two years.<sup>51</sup> Halifax was quicker than most and wasted little time in using its incorporation as an opportunity to finish the moves made in previous years towards professionalisation, although the appointments were not quick enough for Sir George Grey, who wrote to complain of their tardiness.<sup>52</sup>

There were reservations expressed by some councillors, about the independence of the Watch Committee, with some of the radical members demanding it be made up of the whole council, to avoid it being dominated by one faction. The fears of a militaristic force, controlled by the industrial elite as their private army were never far from the surface. Councillor Ingham, one of the radicals, was afraid that the Watch Committee would appoint ‘twenty or thirty day police – a regiment of police’, but these moves were defeated and a committee of ten

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<sup>50</sup> Bramham, ‘Parish Constables or Police Officers?’, p. 69.

<sup>51</sup> Hart, ‘Reform of the Borough Police’, p. 416.

<sup>52</sup> HWCW, 25 August 1848, HXM 185.

councillors, Ingham amongst them, was approved.<sup>53</sup> In addition the Watch Committee also included the Mayor and two Aldermen. Six councillors were radicals and one a chartist, which is probably why the Council were comfortable with allowing the new Watch Committee a free hand to establish the police force. The Committee met to discuss the criteria for the new force and it was agreed that the principles of an efficient force included strength and vigour of body, activity of habit, good moral character and a regular course of discipline, constantly maintained. Candidates were to be aged 25-35, not less than 5 feet 8 inches tall and literate.<sup>54</sup> This effectively excluded many of the old Watch, who were either too small, too old, or as in the case of four who applied for the sergeants' posts, illiterate. Their applications for posts were not considered, nor were they helped by an earlier article in the *Guardian* describing how one of them, who 'acted on the true Dogberry principle', had arrested the wrong man.<sup>55</sup> Although not quite 'the refuse of the workhouse', the old Watch were not young men in their prime and had probably been kept on to avoid paying Poor Relief.<sup>56</sup> It is clear that the Committee took the opportunity to make a clean sweep of the old Watch in favour of a younger, fitter, more professional body of men, although not all the Council were in favour of younger officers, some complaining that they would have to be paid more than the old Watchmen. After their final night of duty on 12 November 1848, the old Watch was out of work and many were soon destitute. The Borough Council denied them pensions on the grounds that they had never employed or sacked them and the Trustees claimed they were not responsible since they no longer had any powers. Jennifer Hart points out that this 'remnant of dual control' between the Improvement Commissioners and the new Watch Committees often led to disputes, though more usually between the new authorities

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<sup>53</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 24 June 1848.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 August 1848.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 July 1848.

<sup>56</sup> The phrase is Edwin Chadwick's, quoted in Paley, "'An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System'?", p. 104.

and the magistrates. In Halifax, there was a public outcry about the old Watchmen's poor treatment, which led to a collection being taken and distributed amongst them.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, they were not offered alternative employment and many had to fall back on the Poor Relief.

The Watch Committee decided on a force of twenty-five men, comprising a Superintendent, an Inspector, a Detective, four sergeants and eighteen police constables. This was smaller than the old Watch, which by 1848, comprised two day police and a night watch of twenty-one men, five supernumeraries, two sergeants and a superintendent. However, the Watch had more men patrolling the town, whilst the police had more men as officers. The new force's men were younger and fitter, therefore expected to be more efficient in their duties and the reduced number was in keeping with the Council's wish not to appoint 'a regiment of police'. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, had no requirements as to the maximum or minimum number of police necessary per head of population, unlike the County Police Act, 1839, which recommended one officer per 1,000 inhabitants. Since the borough's population three years later, in 1851 was 25,159, the size of the new force was in keeping with the latter's proposals. Despite Hart's comment that the Home Office gave no advice on numbers, the new force drew criticism from the Home Secretary, who wrote to say that the proposed number seemed insufficient.<sup>58</sup> His views were deeply resented by the Watch Committee, one of whom commented that

...the uncalled for interference of Sir George Grey savoured much of that government policy now becoming fashionable – that of meddling with everything and mending nothing.<sup>59</sup>

The Watch Committee reply to the Home Office pointed out that they had previously been served by 'a much less efficient body of men' and that they 'were unanimously of the opinion

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<sup>57</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 6 January 1849 and 9 June 1849.

<sup>58</sup> Hart, 'Reform of the Borough Police', p.418.

<sup>59</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 28 October 1848.

that the number twenty five were amply sufficient for all ordinary purposes'. Nonetheless, Sir George Grey may have been found to have a point, since the number of constables was increased by four less than a year later.<sup>60</sup>

Although the new Watch Committee was keen to improve the calibre of the ordinary men, some of the improvements of recent years were felt to be satisfactory. It was considered that the management of the old watch had been competent, with one councillor stating that 'the town was well managed by these two officers'.<sup>61</sup> Complaints about the watch had continued to be about the inferior quality of the watchmen and Alderman Craven, in response to declarations of sympathy for their harsh treatment, said that improvements were needed and 'that the old watchmen were inefficient; some of them were deaf, and others old and lame'.<sup>62</sup> Not surprisingly, given the make-up of the new council, no consideration was given to the appointment of an ex-military man to lead the force, since such an appointment would have played to the fears of the radical and Chartist elements. Instead, the Committee appointed Thomas Spiers, the current Deputy Constable, as Superintendent, commenting that in that post, 'the discharge of his duties has been unexceptionable'.<sup>63</sup> Although not a local man, Spiers had plenty of experience, the 1841 census showing him as a policeman in Leeds before moving to Halifax to become Deputy Constable. His knowledge of the methods and discipline of a much larger force had been used to try to improve the old Watch. Also retained was James Rawson, whom the Council classed as 'well known and respected' to be the Detective Police Officer.<sup>64</sup> Born locally, he had been an experienced detective in Halifax for the previous ten years and was credited with the conviction of over two hundred and fifty

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<sup>60</sup> HWCN, 25 August 1848, HXM 185.

<sup>61</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 2 February 1850. This referred to Deputy Constable Spiers and James Rawson, one of the policemen.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 October 1848.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 August 1848.

<sup>64</sup> HCM, 16 August 1848, HXM3.

felons.<sup>65</sup> Despite having to re-apply for their jobs to the new Borough Council, their immediate re-appointment indicates a certain level of satisfaction with their performance up to 1848. Adding to the experience at the upper levels of the force, another local, John Pearson, ex-Manchester police and previously Constable of Skircoat, an adjoining township, was appointed Inspector of Police.<sup>66</sup>

In her article on the borough police, Hart comments that it was not uncommon for provincial watch committees to retain existing officers in the higher and lower posts, despite their suitability, or lack of it. This resulted in continued inefficiencies, from ‘tenderness to old servants or to avoid the expense of compensating them for loss of office.’<sup>67</sup> Had the Trustees dominated the make-up of the new council, it is possible that the men from the old Watch would not have been dispensed with, but kept on as the new police, with the changes being purely cosmetic. The new Halifax Council had no such scruples; the senior officers retained were experienced, having been brought in originally to improve efficiency. It was the lower echelons of the old Watch that were seen to be wanting. Towards them, the council showed no tenderness, ruthlessly discarding every single one and refusing compensation. The advertisement for the sergeants’ and constables’ jobs attracted 178 applications, which were whittled down to a short list. Unlike Hart’s speculation that few inquiries were made about candidates at provincial levels, the Halifax Watch Committee minutes list each of the final candidates’ age, height, previous occupation, residence, family and literacy. Each candidate was interviewed by the committee and had to provide testimonials, the successful ones also undergoing a medical, which one candidate failed, despite being ex-Manchester police. Enquiries were clearly followed up, as John Copley, a supernumery was dismissed in March 1849 for having lied about his age, with the evidence cited as a Baptism certificate, obtained

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<sup>65</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 27 May 1848 and *Halifax Guardian*, 8 July 1848.

<sup>66</sup> HCM, 9 June 1848, HXM 3.

<sup>67</sup> Hart, ‘Reform of the Borough Police’, p. 420.

from a local church.<sup>68</sup> Although many of the old Watch applied for positions, none were taken on, despite an attempt by some of the Watch Committee to have them shortlisted. Other towns did retain members of the old system when policing was reorganised. Swift's research on York and Exeter showed that the changeover in both those towns was largely cosmetic, with members of the Watch joining the new police forces.<sup>69</sup> Oldham, despite being twice the size of Halifax in 1851, was reluctant to fund a police force and on the eve of incorporation in 1849, the force had only six constables, supplemented by five lamplighters and two others, who doubled as supernumeraries.<sup>70</sup> Even after incorporation, the existing force remained, increased to twelve men and eight lamplighters, who were then classed as third class constables. There was little attempt to improve the quality of the men or the discipline. The introduction of the new police in Leeds and Sheffield also meant the continuation of existing personnel. In Leeds, although this entailed the beginning of the first full-time, twenty-four hour patrols, the night watch continued under the new system as the night police and the officers in charge were unchanged.<sup>71</sup> Sheffield, too, transferred the men from the Improvement Corporation to the new Borough Council and swore the men in as police officers.<sup>72</sup> Hull implemented the most fundamental change, sweeping away the remnants of the old, much criticised system and replacing it, root and branch, with a Metropolitan style police, who were recruited along Metropolitan guidelines and under the charge of an ex-Metropolitan inspector as chief constable.<sup>73</sup> In Halifax, as in Hull, the stringent new criteria for recruits ensured the exclusion of the Watchmen from the selection process.

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<sup>68</sup> HWCM, 2 March 1849.

<sup>69</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', pp. 217-18.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, HO107, 1851 England Census. Pop. Halifax : 25,159. Pop. Oldham : 52,818.

Winstanley, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham', pp. 21-2.

<sup>71</sup> Churchill, 'Crime, Policing and Control in Leeds', pp. 51-2.

<sup>72</sup> Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield', p.128.

<sup>73</sup> Welsh, 'The Reform of Urban Policing', p. 32.

The successful candidates were all local men apart from two, who hailed from Rochdale and Leeds. They came from a variety of employment backgrounds, mainly unskilled and semi-skilled. A third had been in the textile industry and were currently unemployed, whilst four had been shoemakers. Only two of the new constables had previous experience, in the Manchester Police, unlike Wolverhampton, where the ex-military Chief Constable ran the force on paramilitary lines and actively recruited men who had previous army or police experience.<sup>74</sup> There is no evidence at this stage in Halifax to support Steedman's findings that Watch Committees recruited men from rural areas, favouring agricultural labourers above men from other backgrounds, nor did they favour single men over married.<sup>75</sup> On the contrary, the Watch Committee made a point of recruiting local men, possibly because of the radical influence on the Council, which may have viewed rural outsiders as susceptible to the influence of the town's elite. More likely, the attitude that criminal behaviour was confined to a small, known minority, where they 'knew who had done it', meant that local police were considered to be more effective in identifying and catching offenders. No doubt, since several of the constables had been without work for some weeks before applying to join the police, the opportunity to remove claimants from the Poor Relief also played a part in choosing local men. Unlike London, Wolverhampton and some of the rural police, where the officers' posts were dominated by ex-army men, the use of locals and the retention of senior men who were already familiar, may have contributed to the acceptance of the force by the people of Halifax. There was, however, some attempt to bolster experience and discipline amongst the men who would supervise the constables. Nine applicants were shortlisted for the sergeants' posts and while the four ex-Watchmen were rejected, those selected had either police or army experience.<sup>76</sup> The new force was given new uniforms, a pamphlet of instructions, and

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<sup>74</sup> Swift, *Urban Policing*, p.218.

<sup>75</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*.

<sup>76</sup> HWCM, 28 July 1848, HXM185.

paraded before the Mayor, who warned them that the public expected a greater degree of protection than previously. They went on duty on 13 November 1848, causing the *Halifax Guardian* to comment, ‘we have rarely seen a finer body of men’.<sup>77</sup>

The decision not to keep on any of the old Watch and the recruitment of constables with little or no experience of policing meant that the majority of the new police had no idea what the job was to entail or what was expected of them. They were given no training and their only guidance was from the pamphlet of instructions they were given, and from their officers, who did have previous experience in other, larger forces. This was not unusual, with most new police forces leaving the men to find a way to satisfy the expectations of their Watch Committee whilst coping with the practicalities of the street. A constable was supposed to exercise his ‘discretion’, but the interpretation of what this meant could vary greatly from force to force. Carolyn Steedman found that county forces prized obedience above all and discouraged men from making their own judgements, preferring that they took instruction from their superiors in all eventualities. However, the Metropolitan policeman had a greater capacity to act independently.<sup>78</sup> The Halifax Watch Committee, outside the constraints of the type of crime they wanted pursued, appear to have given their constables considerable leeway to decide how to deal with offenders in practice, approving the use of persuasion to defuse situations. There is no evidence to suggest that Halifax approached the Metropolitan Police or other large forces such as Manchester or Leeds for guidance on the establishment of the new police. Nor did they wish for any government advice or assistance. Mr John Holt, a member of the new Watch Committee, drew applause from fellow councillors when he criticised Sir George Grey’s views on the proposed size of the force and declared that ‘if it was found after repeated trials that they really could not manage their own affairs, then they might seek

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<sup>77</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 11 November 1848.

<sup>78</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p. 147.

government assistance'.<sup>79</sup> Thomas Spiers' previous experience at Leeds and the views of the Watch Committee appear to have been the guiding element to the direction, modus operandi and efficiency of the police, since there was no single model for the new force to follow.

From the start, the emphasis was placed on discipline. All officers were issued with leaflets explaining the regulations, and were subject to regular drills and parades. This does, however seem to have been the limit of their training and they were left to use their own discretion on how exactly they were to carry it out. The night duty was from 10pm to 6am, with day shift from 6am to 10pm giving the town its first twenty-four hour patrols. The bulk of the constables were to be on the night duty, with the Superintendent, the Detective (plain clothes) and two constables available during the day. The men were to have no outside employment, were not allowed under cover or to drink alcohol whilst on duty and were not to accept any reward or gratuities. They needed permission to leave the Borough and were to live in reasonable proximity to the town. Officers were reprimanded in July 1849 for having moved too far away and were ordered to move closer at the discretion of the Superintendent.<sup>80</sup> Every man was given a copy of the Borough's by-laws, which needed enforcing. These were extensive and the details filled sixty-five pages, but the Halifax townspeople were assured by the *Guardian* that, 'the adoption of this vast mess of small legislation need not, however, excite much debate, since it is mostly borrowed from the approved laws of older boroughs and refers to nuisances which all will agree in desiring to prevent or remove'.<sup>81</sup> It was however doubtful whether all the inhabitants of Halifax did agree, particularly the small shopkeepers, who had to be regularly reminded of the need to keep the causeways clear.

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<sup>79</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 28 October 1848.

<sup>80</sup> HWCM, 6 July 1849, HXM185.

<sup>81</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 9 September 1848.

## Discipline

As was common in all police forces at the time, drunkenness was one of the most frequent disciplinary offences. The job was tedious and boring, often cold and arduous, so it was not surprising that any opportunity for refreshment was taken up. As early as 8 December 1848, the first cases of drunkenness were before the Watch Committee. The old Watch had not been immune to the same problem, with two men being discharged, in 1844, for ‘taking liquor to excess’.<sup>82</sup> The early minutes gave the men’s excuses and expressions of contrition, with the Committee’s note that they were first offences, warranting only a reprimand or fine. However, by the time the offenders were back again, the Committee’s views were less sympathetic and the first dismissal for drunkenness was in January 1849, barely two months after the new police went on duty.<sup>83</sup>

**Table 1.1**

### **Reasons for Leaving the Force 13.11.1848 – 14.7.1851.**

Dismiss: Drunkenness	7
Dismiss: Insubordination	1
Resigned	9
Ill-health	1

In common with most new police forces, drunkenness was a regular disciplinary problem, but the Committee rarely dismissed a man on the first or even second offence in the early years. William Simpson, who joined in September 1849, was found drunk in North Parade in May 1850. It was his second offence, but he expressed his regrets and a determination not to re-offend, handing over a pledge of abstinence. The Watch Committee noted that his family was

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 6 January 1844.

<sup>83</sup> HWCM, 5 January 1849, HXM 185.

‘under very peculiar circumstances’ and fined him 10s. However, when he was unfit for duty through drink just over a month later, there were no more chances and he was dismissed.<sup>84</sup> Later, attitudes would harden in an attempt to reduce instances of indiscipline. There were occasional cases of insubordination, but these were usually linked to the constable being ‘in liquor’. The Watch Committee was generally fairly lenient and any extenuating circumstances would usually mean a reprimand with no fine. During Superintendent Spiers tenure, eight men were dismissed, seven of them for being drunk. One man left through ill-health, but half of those who left, resigned.

## **Pay**

The wage for a constable was seventeen shillings a week (twenty shillings for a sergeant) and this was not increased until 1853, despite requests from the men. This was not an unreasonable wage locally for an unskilled adult male. Angus Bethune Reach’s investigations for the *Morning Chronicle* gave overlookers wages in Holdsworth’s Halifax mill as being between fifteen and twenty two shillings, fifteen shillings for weavers and twelve shillings for woolcombers.<sup>85</sup> It was not therefore surprising that ex-woolcombers and weavers were amongst the first applicants for the new force, since unlike policing, these jobs were subject to lay-offs and variable hours in addition to low wages. Regular checks were made with other Yorkshire and Lancashire forces to ensure wage levels were about the same. However, gratuities, (despite being forbidden) that were sent to the Watch Committee for men who had performed useful services were often allowed to be kept by the officer.<sup>86</sup> On several occasions, an officer off sick was allowed full pay, but this was at the discretion of the Watch

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 14 May 1850 and 25 June 1850, HXM 185.

<sup>85</sup> C. Aspin (ed.), *The Yorkshire Textile Districts in 1849*, (Blackburn, 1974), pp. 11-23.

<sup>86</sup> HWCM, 27 November 1849, HXM 185. Superintendent Spiers instructed to remind the men that the regulations prohibited them receiving any reward or gratuity.

HWCM, 24 December 1849, HXM 185. Sgt Brier allowed to keep 5s given to him for warning Hall and Clarkson of their fire. PC Bentley 1s for removing two drunks.

Committee. After the force had been in operation for a year, the Committee ordered an investigation into sick pay and found that sixteen of the men had joined sick clubs. A subcommittee consulted with the men and it was agreed to form a sick club which would pay four shillings a week in the event of illness. The Watch Committee considered this to be inadequate and agreed to pay an additional five shillings for a maximum of four weeks. In future, all gratuities would be paid into this fund. The news was 'embraced by the men in the best possible spirit', as well they might, since many other forces were not as forward thinking or concerned with the men's welfare.<sup>87</sup> Middlesbrough, who established a new police force in 1841, did not set up a sick fund until nearly twenty years later in 1860.<sup>88</sup> Halifax, despite the radical inclinations of the Council, was surprisingly clear-sighted and efficient in the setting up of their new police. Unlike many boroughs, they wanted value for money, but did not penny-pinch and were committed to treating the men at least as well as in any other comparable force. In doing so, the Halifax Watch Committee was often more considerate in their dealings with the new force, than other towns where frugality was prevalent. Bradford, which obtained a Charter of Incorporation the year before Halifax, intended to pay their constables on night duty 15s per week and considered uniforms unnecessary, until persuaded otherwise by the new chief constable. Even then, each man had to deposit £3 before receiving his uniform.<sup>89</sup> Some forces supplied a part uniform, while others made the men pay for it themselves. Sheffield economised on uniforms, with only the day police being supplied with them. The night police had to make do with hats and greatcoats only until 1859.<sup>90</sup> The Halifax Watch Committee, using the criteria of good quality and low price, purchased complete uniforms for the men, from trousers and dress coats, to shoes, hats, belts and overcoats. Only the lamps, rattles and capes were retained from the Watch, since they were

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<sup>87</sup> HWCM 19 February 1850, HXM 185.

<sup>88</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p. 39

<sup>89</sup> G. Smith, *Bradford's Police*, (Bradford) pp. 15-16.

<sup>90</sup> Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield', p.129.

considered good enough to last for some time. Civic pride was evident in the smallest detail, the buttons, belt plates and collar ornaments, bought from a Birmingham manufacturer, bore the new Borough crest. The Watch Committee reported with exaggerated civic satisfaction that 'there is no force in the kingdom whose Police dress and appointments will surpass those of our own establishment for durability of character and neatness of appearance.'<sup>91</sup>

### **Patrolling the Streets**

By September 1849, a report to the Home Office showed that the force had been increased to twenty-nine men, an additional four constables having been recruited. From the start, the 'new police' had been a visible presence on the streets of Halifax. Although there were day police under the old Watch, the number had been increased since the advent of the new force. Robert Storch emphasizes the social and moral aspect of the new police and claims that the working classes in industrial areas resented their presence and the interference in their lives, particularly in areas previously unpoliced.<sup>92</sup> In Wolverhampton, the new police cracked down hard on the working-class areas, provoking resentment. In Halifax, the old Watch had already been responsible for dealing with disorderly behaviour, but the enforcement of the numerous by-laws which the Borough Council had introduced was new. In Halifax, the reception of the new police was mixed, with many of the middle class approving of their role and signalling their appreciation of warnings of fire or unsecured premises with a gratuity. Superintendent Spiers was under the direction of the Watch Committee and the minutes frequently note instructions to him, from them. As Storch points out, the police outside London were more subject to local control and their remit reflects the attitudes and moral enthusiasms of the local elite.<sup>93</sup> The first mayor, John Baldwin, was the chair of the local committee for the Protection of Women and his concern about the growing evil of prostitution meant that the

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<sup>91</sup> HWCW, 25 October 1848, HXM185.

<sup>92</sup> Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary'.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

suppression of brothels was always on the police agenda. Other committees within the Council also supplied duties, such as the delivery of handbills for the Sanitary Committee, warning shopkeepers to keep their frontages clear.<sup>94</sup> The implementation of the Council by-laws was one of the main concerns of the Watch Committee and the Superintendent was frequently reminded to enforce them. Rather than use heavy-handed methods, the police tried to obtain compliance by educating the inhabitants about their new responsibilities. They distributed leaflets explaining the new laws and warned those who ignored them of the consequences. Only after this, did they prosecute offenders. This caused some friction with tradesmen, but there were no exceptions and the police were seen to treat all equally. Indeed, Councillor Cadney was summonsed for a serious health hazard in the shape of a large heap of manure, which he allowed to be deposited in his yard by the town's street sweepers. Incensed, Councillor Cadney appeared before the magistrates, supported by the Council's Sanitary Committee, to declare that 'the alleged nuisance is no nuisance and they alone (the Sanitary Committee) are the arbiters of what is right and what is wrong in the borough!' Unfortunately, the magistrates disagreed and the Councillor was ordered to remove the hazard.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, since the case was publicised in the local paper, the local inhabitants could see that not even the councillors were exempt from their own by-laws.

The local paper published many instances of assaults on the new police in Halifax from the very beginning. The attempts to enforce the new by-laws caused immediate friction, especially with the working class. Less than two weeks into the new regime, the paper reported an assault on a police constable, who remonstrated with a man 'committing a nuisance on the causeway'.<sup>96</sup> The same edition reported that a constable had been sent to move on some disorderly persons, one of whom 'turned very obstreperous and assaulted the

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<sup>94</sup> HWCM, 22 January 1850, HXM185.

<sup>95</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 18 November 1848.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 November 1848.

police'.<sup>97</sup> In neither case was the police intention to arrest the offender, until they became violent.

Most assaults were made by drunks, but there was a small, but significant element that appeared to have a personal grudge against the new force. The Halifax police had several run-ins against the 'Dangerous Classes of Haley Hill', who seem to have been unused to any challenge to their activities and felt strongly aggrieved by police interference.<sup>98</sup> In September 1849, PC Schofield was sent to arrest John Robinson, but was faced with a group led by three men marching 'in military order' down Haley Hill towards him. One threatened to knock his brains out if he did not get out of the way, which he did, but then heard the man say 'halt – stand at ease' to the others. Schofield proceeded on to make his arrest, backed up by a fellow constable. The three leaders came back and assaulted both officers, rescuing the prisoner, who escaped with handcuffs on. When the case came before the magistrates, who appeared rattled by the military aspect of the assault, a fine of £3 each or a two months' prison sentence was imposed on all four men 'to stand as an example'.<sup>99</sup> On another occasion, two woolcombers who were part of the Haley Hill Gang were arrested for being drunk and disorderly. Their friends attempted a rescue, which failed and the most violent of the gang, 'Red Ike' was brought before the magistrates for assaulting the police.<sup>100</sup> These assaults were most frequent in the first eighteen months after the new police took over, but declined after that, either because the ringleaders were in gaol or because they realised that continued confrontation was pointless and evasion more effective.

Although there were several instances of group assaults on the police and attempted rescues of prisoners from them, not all the locals stood by and watched. In several cases the police

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 25 November 1848.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 1 September 1849.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 1 September 1849.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 1 December 1849.

received assistance from members of the public, including a woman. PC Schofield was waylaid and assaulted by convicted thief, John Lightowler and four or five others. Despite a severe beating, Schofield hung on to Lightowler and with the assistance of a woman neighbour, managed to get him to the cells. It seems likely that Lightowler had a personal grudge against Schofield, since he was deliberately targeted.<sup>101</sup>

It would also be mistaken to assume that the antipathy to the police was endemic to the working class. Swift points out that the gap between the respectable and rougher elements of the working class was the widest, with former finding the increased surveillance of the police and the protection of themselves and their property more acceptable than the latter.<sup>102</sup> An illustration of this was when PC Magson arrested a drunk who had assaulted a youth. The drunk was rescued by his companions, but the youth, keen to see his assailant face justice, followed them and gave information to the police on their whereabouts.<sup>103</sup> Certainly, a section of the adult male working class, especially the Irish contingent, resented the extension of the police authority, but they were not necessarily tolerated by their English neighbours. The magistrates were not the only ones to consider the Irish as little better than savages. The *Halifax Guardian* described a running battle between Irish navvies and the police on pay night which left the lower town in ‘continued uproar’. The drunken Irish used pokers and like weapons against the police who received ‘prompt assistance’ from several of the inhabitants, who saved them from being more roughly and seriously handled. The streets were only cleared when a ‘piquet of soldiers’ were fetched from the barracks to assist.<sup>104</sup> This was the nearest the town came to serious disorder after the introduction of the new police.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 23 December 1848.

<sup>102</sup> Swift, ‘Urban Policing in Early Victorian England’, p. 232.

<sup>103</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 14 April 1849.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 3 November 1849.

A significant proportion of the working class were prepared to use the police and their powers to improve their own lives and environment. The Watch Committee was open to approaches by any Halifax resident who wanted to complain of a problem in their area. The occupants of Cross Field, a squalid slum area, complained of a landlord letting his premises to prostitutes and the Superintendent was directed to investigate, resulting three months later in prosecutions against brothels.<sup>105</sup> This was by no means the only time this occurred, with the respectable working class using the police to clean up their neighbourhood. Common complaints were against gangs of youths hanging around on the causeways using obscene language and the police were usually sent to move them on.

In Huddersfield, Superintendent Heaton used the police force in directed attacks on traditional working class activities and haunts, targeting drinking, gambling and illegal sports, although as David Taylor points out, there were relatively few anti-police incidents.<sup>106</sup> Heaton's activities were violently resented and resisted by those at whom they were aimed, but he was not typical of the usual police approach and local opinions on his 'crusade' were mixed.<sup>107</sup> The *Leeds Mercury* approved of Heaton's methods, but the *Halifax Guardian*, (mindful of the Tory brewing interests) was firmly against, often listing cases where the magistrates had dismissed or criticised prosecutions. The paper reported that Heaton was over vigilant and keen on 'trivial assaults and immoderate punishment', reserving especial scorn for his persecution of publicans, since

notwithstanding the frequent exposures of the frivolous cases which have been brought under the notice of the bench by the new superintendent, it would appear as if he had declared war to the knife against any person dealing in ale and spirituous liquors.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 2 December 1848 and 31 March 1849.

<sup>106</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p. 196 (1).

<sup>107</sup> Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary', p. 287.

<sup>108</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 September 1848 and 14 October 1848.

The Halifax Watch Committee had no ambitions to mount a moral crusade along the lines of Huddersfield and the police had a realistic approach to policing, possibly dubious of the long term effectiveness of a hard line attitude. This seems to have been effective, as five months after the new police took to the streets, the Council notes that their ‘exertions have been satisfactory, not only to the Committee but, there is reason to believe, to the public generally.’<sup>109</sup> The reports in the paper suggest that the police tried firstly to educate the townsfolk about the by-laws that would be enforced. Handbills were distributed to shopkeepers about keeping causeways clear and to cab proprietors about Hackney cab regulations.<sup>110</sup> Crime prevention was applauded, the *Guardian* reporting approvingly of an officer asking two quarrelling drunks if they had fourteen shillings. When they asked why, he responded that if he had to arrest them that would be the cost of the fines payable.<sup>111</sup> They departed quietly! The police preferred to use persuasion where possible to defuse situations rather than inflame them by making arrests, probably a wise strategy when facing a group of drunks alone. PC Cordingly quelled a disturbance in Broad St and persuaded some drunks to go home, which so impressed a bystander that he gave him a gratuity of 2s-6d which the Watch Committee allowed Cordingly to keep.<sup>112</sup> This pragmatic approach was not confined to Halifax. In Middlesbrough, under Superintendent Saggerson, drunks were often encouraged to get themselves home, only being arrested if they caused trouble.<sup>113</sup>

On occasion, the police found themselves defending arrests they had been reluctant to make. The magistrates were not always supportive of the middle-class attempt to improve the moral

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<sup>109</sup> HCM, 4 April 1849, HXM 3.

<sup>110</sup> HWCM, 22 January 1850, HXM185. Handbills to be distributed re keeping frontages clear.

HWCM, 16 April 1850, HXM185. Copies of the by-laws re Hackney Carriages to be issued to cab proprietors, with the warning that the Council intended to enforce them.

<sup>111</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 27 January 1849.

<sup>112</sup> HWCM, 8 January 1850, HXM 185.

<sup>113</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p. 95.

tone of the town and were unwilling to let the law be distorted for that end. The police had made arrests at the insistence of a member of the public, who clearly did view them as ‘domestic missionaries’, there to enforce a new standard of social discipline. In one such case, a local solicitor insisted that a constable arrest a drunk, but the sergeant later explained to the magistrates that ‘the police did not consider it their duty to take a man into custody for that alone, if he were quietly walking on the streets as this man was’.<sup>114</sup> In another case, after numerous complaints from middle-class churchgoers about groups of young men standing in the road and using offensive language, the police arrested three men in the carriageway, who refused to move on. The magistrates again felt the case should not have come to court, arguing that it was stretching the law too far to inflict a penalty for standing in the street. Superintendent Spiers agreed and said he had no desire to push the matter further.<sup>115</sup>

There is also evidence that the new police were portrayed, at least to the middle classes, with sympathy for the less fortunate and their ‘social worker’ aspect highlighted. In October 1849, a vagrant was arrested for stealing bread, but the police were so concerned about his ‘fallen condition’ that he was given, what would today be termed a ‘makeover’. He was washed, given a haircut and new clothes and the mayor was so moved by the story, he offered him a job. The *Guardian* observed of the police that

it was gratifying to observe how many – who are associated by daily occupation with loathsome forms of vice and of wretchedness, as they are exhibited among the most fallen and depraved of our race – were interested in this endeavour to give an air of respectability to this outcast of society.<sup>116</sup>

Also in October, a drunken old woman was found ‘surrounded by bad characters’ and the officer took her into custody to take care of her. He pressed no charges against her and she

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<sup>114</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 29 September 1849.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 September 1849.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 October 1849, p. 5.

got off with paying 3s for her night's lodging.<sup>117</sup> On another occasion, two officers found an unconscious woman in the street. They took her to the station and fetched the surgeon to her aid, resulting in her full recovery.<sup>118</sup> This version of police activity appears to have been a genuine concern for the less fortunate and in direct contrast to their more unpalatable duties. There is little evidence of the hardness of purpose and lack of sympathy to be found only a few miles away in Huddersfield and may have helped towards a more general acceptance of the new police in Halifax.

Nevertheless, the force was not without its critics, mostly on the grounds of cost. In February 1850, members of the Council complained that the expense of the police was too high and should be reduced since 'too many of these gentlemen parading the streets will be looked upon with suspicion and the rates unwillingly paid'.<sup>119</sup> However, many other councillors spoke in favour of the reasonable cost and increased efficiency of the new police, whose beats were so long they could barely get round them in time. The motion to reduce the costs of the force was defeated by eight votes.

In July 1851, Superintendent Spiers resigned to take up a post as Superintendent of Parish Constables with the West Riding Petty Sessional Division. He oversaw the transition to the new police and appears to have been considered very competent, but there is little mention of him as an individual and it is hard to assess how influential his personality was on the force, especially after such a short time. He seems to fit best into Steedman's assessment of a borough chief officer as 'a faithful head servant' to whom some powers could be delegated.<sup>120</sup> The Watch Committee retained control over pay, discipline, recruitment, leave and where the emphasis lay in dealing with crime and social problems. Despite leaving for

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 21 April 1849.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 2 February 1850.

<sup>120</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p. 46.

another police post, the 1861 census shows Spiers working in a cotton factory in Liverpool, so even as a senior officer, there was no guarantee that a man would become a career policeman.<sup>121</sup> The Watch Committee supplied him with glowing testimonials, ‘with much pleasure’ and promptly appointed Inspector John Pearson ‘who has so ably filled the office of Inspector,’ to the vacant post, whilst taking the opportunity to define the duties of the job more fully.<sup>122</sup> This internal promotion was consistent with the Committee’s actions throughout. There was no attempt to bring in an outsider with more widespread experience and it would appear they were entirely satisfied with the structure of the police force and keen on the continuity of leadership, stating that the ‘force contained officers competent to discharge the duties required’, which bore out the impression that they wanted someone who would follow orders.<sup>123</sup> This policy extended to other ranks. When two of the sergeants resigned to take up other police posts in 1850, they were also replaced by internal promotions from the ranks, as was the newly vacant post of Inspector. New recruits came in at the bottom, but it was clear there was a route for promotion, albeit opportunities were limited by the size of the force. Higher up the ranks, advancement for salary and status was obtained by a move elsewhere and the Watch Committee expressed pleasure when this happened, possibly feeling that approval of their recruits reflected well on the Halifax Police Force. This attitude soured, somewhat, when several constables applied to and were accepted by the new West Riding Force in 1856, which had a policy of recruiting men with experience from other forces. Subsequently, any application by an officer for an appointment in another force without previous consent of the Committee was deemed equivalent to a resignation.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> TNA, RG9, 2652, 87, 1861.

<sup>122</sup> HWCM, 1 April 1851 and 15 July 1851, HXM 185. *Halifax Guardian*, 19 July 1851.

<sup>123</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 19 July 1851.

<sup>124</sup> HWCM, 22 December 1856, HXM 186.

At the time of Spiers' resignation in July 1851, the force had been in operation for just over two and a half years. Of the forty-four appointments made in this period, nine had resigned, eight were dismissed and one retired through ill health. Of the original twenty-two constables (including the four supernumeries), half were still in the force, three of them having been promoted to sergeant.

**Table 1.2**

**Length of Service of Original Recruits Joining as Constables in 1848 (18 appointed, 4 supernumeries).**

Less than 3 months	3- 6 months	6-12 months	1- 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	10- 20 years	20- 25 years	More than 25 years
1	2	2	6	1	4	0	3	3

Origin: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes

Five of the original recruits left in under a year. Six of the men who joined the force at the start would go on to complete over twenty years' service in Halifax and be the first to draw pensions or gratuities from the superannuation fund. Three of them rose to be inspectors and one was promoted to sergeant. It was a remarkable start, as many towns experienced a far higher turnover due to resignations and dismissals. Oldham's small force of twenty constables had twenty-five resignations and forty dismissals in the first seven years after incorporation.<sup>125</sup> David Taylor also documented the high turnover of men in Middlesbrough from 1854-69, where thirty per cent of recruits resigned and Carolyn Steedman did the same for the county forces.<sup>126</sup> Few could boast of members of the original force remaining to make a career in the police and claiming a pension. Hull was one force which did have long serving

<sup>125</sup> Winstanley, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham', p.24. In the same period, 1849-56, with a force of twenty-five (twenty-nine by 1856) Halifax had twelve dismissals and twenty-six resignations. HWCM.

<sup>126</sup> Taylor, *Policing in the Victorian Town*, pp.39-43. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp.92-6.

police by 1847, where out of 116 men, fifty-two had over three years' service.<sup>127</sup> Like Hull, Halifax had a continuity of leadership and officers that, at the upper echelons at least, would continue for the next two decades, giving the force a stability that helped it weather increasing problems with the recruitment and retention of personnel.

## **Conclusion**

The establishment of the new police in Halifax may have been smoother than in other industrial towns because of the political composition of the first Borough Council. Storch wrote that leaders of the working class political movements were concerned at the use a reformed police might be put to, viewing them as an instrument of political oppression.<sup>128</sup> Given the composition of the first council, it was unlikely that the working class in Halifax could harbour such concerns. The new councillors were predominantly radicals with a significant number of Chartists amongst them, mainly small tradesmen and shopkeepers. Opinions on the size and cost of the police were sharply divided. They were themselves suspicious of a new police and keen to ensure that its control, through the Watch Committee, was subordinate to the Council, but, nonetheless, they were not dilatory in establishing a force. It was the same Councillors who passed the vast batch of by-laws and through various committees, asked the police to enforce them. It would have been difficult for the working class of Halifax to challenge the legitimacy and aims of the police, when it was established and controlled by radical Councillors whose election victory had been hailed as 'a triumph' by veteran Chartist, Benjamin Wilson. Many of the 'respectable' working class were in agreement with the 'tidying up' of the town and as we have seen were not backward in using the police to improve their own neighbourhood. The town was a burgeoning industrial centre that was beginning to sprawl outwards to the north and south, described by the manufacturer,

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<sup>127</sup> Welsh, 'The Reform of Urban Policing in Victorian England', p.136.

<sup>128</sup> Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts', p. 66.

Edward Akroyd, as ‘a growing lad, thrusting his arms beyond his sleeves and his legs out of his trousers’.<sup>129</sup> Woollen weaving and worsted combing remained cottage based industries until the late 1840s, when technological advances facilitated the transition to factory production. The pressure on the machinery of local government for water, lighting, paving and cleansing meant that the Councillors felt under pressure to control the way in which the inhabitants lived, to minimize the nuisance caused by the crowding together of large numbers of people, animals and industry. The radical nature of the Council was not to last, with subsequent elections gradually reducing their numbers, although the Liberal, nonconformist members, mostly from the business elite, remained in the majority. The *Halifax Guardian* smugly commented that ‘the evil of having a town council mainly composed of illiterate and ignorant bigots is beginning to cure itself’.<sup>130</sup> Nonetheless, they had influenced the nature of the new police before relinquishing control.

As Swift suggests, it was the nature of the local government which underlay the organisation and direction of the new police force. The Council’s radical nature and suspicion of an independent police meant that local men were used at all levels, with no one new being brought in with outside experience or ideas. The one exception, the Superintendent, had already been in Halifax for four years and was well known. The basic structure and aims of the force had already been established before the town obtained its Charter. The Town Trustees had used the Improvement Act to establish a Watch, which had been improved each time there were complaints about its efficiency. There had been no demand for a new police force in the run up to incorporation and the Watch seems to have been fairly satisfactory, having been strengthened by the introduction of experienced police officers. The weakness of that body lay in the inadequate physical condition and illiteracy of the Watch. The new force

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<sup>129</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, p. 124.

<sup>130</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 3 November 1849.

was an opportunity to improve the calibre of the men and the Watch Committee grasped it with both hands. The Watch had patrolled the town, keeping property safe and arresting rowdy drunks, but the new police had much wider objectives, which encompassed the physical and moral improvement of the town, through the enforcement of new by-laws. Nonetheless, the emphasis was on persuasion and education in order to avoid aggression and confrontation. The new Council kept the police numbers to a minimum, strongly resisted outside interference and advice and subjected the Superintendent to close control and direction. Unlike Heaton, in Huddersfield, he was not allowed to choose his own direction, but took instruction from the Watch Committee, who controlled all aspects of the force apart from the day-to-day routine. By the time Superintendent Spiers resigned, the Halifax police force was firmly established and had achieved a wide measure of acceptance locally. Spiers' successor was to provide continuity of purpose and remain under the control of the Council. However, this continuity of manpower and leadership was no guarantee of continued acceptance nor would it exempt it from facing the problems of discipline, recruitment and retention that all forces were to experience over the next few decades.

## Chapter 2

### Consolidation and Expansion

Superintendent Pearson ran the Halifax Police Force for the next twenty years. When he inherited it, the force was in a good situation but when he left, after he was reluctantly forced from office in 1872, it was afflicted with high turnover, poor discipline and accusations of a lack of impartiality. Nevertheless, the difficulties the police force faced as it developed were not entirely of his making. These problems were partly a product of the combined views and influences of the Watch Committees, the Superintendent and the economic and geographical background of the town. A pragmatic, consensual style of policing that was seen as appropriate in the early years gave way to a changing moral climate, as attitudes to drinking hardened, leaving the Superintendent out of step with respectable middle-class opinion. Roger Swift's conclusion from his comparison of York, Exeter and Wolverhampton was that there was no overall uniformity to the way police forces emerged and no inevitable "march of progress". Halifax's experience makes it clear that the efficiency and discipline of a force could just as easily regress. Progress was at best, a bumpy ride.

#### The Transition

When Superintendent Spiers resigned in 1851, the Watch Committee, backed by the council did not advertise the post or solicit applications from within the Force, commenting that it 'contained officers competent to discharge the duties required'.<sup>1</sup> A special meeting of the Watch Committee promptly promoted the Inspector, John Pearson, 'who has so ably filled the office of Inspector' to be the new Superintendent. He was a man with extensive experience, having previously been in the Manchester Police and prior to his appointment as

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<sup>1</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 19 July 1851.

Inspector, was the Constable of Skircoat, near to Halifax. He was a man for whom policing was to become, apparently from choice, a lifelong career.

The Watch Committee Minutes do not record whether or not any other member of the force was considered for Superintendent, but Detective Rawson may have been a candidate, having served 10 years under the old Watch System, the only other member apart from Superintendent Spiers to be appointed to the New Police. He was regarded as experienced, active and successful (in terms of prosecutions) by the Watch Committee and he may have had hopes of becoming Superintendent himself. Four months after Pearson's promotion, Detective Rawson resigned as he had taken a post as an innkeeper, to the annoyance of the Watch Committee, who considered the resignation should have preceded the acceptance of a new job. They insisted on his working a months' notice or forfeiting all arrears of pay. Not all the Watch Committee wanted the minutes to record a testimonial of Rawson's exemplary and satisfactory service, but the majority prevailed.<sup>2</sup> Considering the length of his previous service, the timing and manner of his resignation, it seems likely that Detective Rawson had become disillusioned with his career in the police force.

Whilst the arrival of a new Superintendent might in most forces be expected to be the catalyst for changes in style and direction, or at the very least cause some uncertainty, the fact that Pearson was already in the Force, and party to the establishment of its objectives and procedures in 1848 meant that the transition was relatively seamless. Already known to the men, Pearson simply carried on where Spiers left off. The only uncertainty came from the Watch Committee who advised that 'the duties of the office are under consideration'.<sup>3</sup> However, when the subcommittee reported back in October, it was to advise that the existing instructions should be continued, but emphasized that the Chairman of the Watch Committee

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<sup>2</sup> HWCM, 24 November 1851, HXM185.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 15 July 1851, HXM185.

should be in frequent contact with the Superintendent, who was instructed 'at all times to be most unreserved and confidential in his communications'.<sup>4</sup> The Watch Committee clearly intended to continue its tight control and they, more than any outside factors, influenced the objectives and direction of the early years of the force.

### **Policing by Consent: The Police and the Public**

Research on the new police has led to revisions in the way that policing is viewed. Charles Reith's influential writings that the English police had a unique philosophy, determined by behaviour which produced public co-operation have been challenged by Robert Storch.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis on consensus gave way to a conflict and social control concept as the strength and tenacity of working-class opposition to the new police became apparent. Nonetheless, the view that the power of the police derived from the common consent of the public, rather than the power of the state is not entirely without merit in Halifax. Although there were tensions between the police and sections of community which cannot be ignored, the police did everything they could in the first two decades of the force to make themselves acceptable to the majority of the public.

The impact of new policing varied from town to town. As Swift found in his study, in lightly policed areas such as York or Exeter, largely bypassed by the Industrial Revolution, there was continuity from the 'old' to the 'new' police and the changeover was largely cosmetic.<sup>6</sup> In larger cities, such as London or Leeds, the introduction of new police forces created a great deal of friction and antagonism, particularly with the working classes. David Taylor, charting policing during the dramatic growth of Middlesbrough, found that a more conflict based

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 28 October 1851, HXM185.

<sup>5</sup> C. Reith, *A New Study of Police History*, (London, 1956).

<sup>6</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England'.

interpretation was applicable to that town.<sup>7</sup> In Halifax, a smaller industrial town, overtaken by the rapidly expanding cities of Leeds and Bradford, there was very little conflict. The ‘revisionist’ interpretations of police history, with its conflict and social control model as exemplified by Storch, has limited application to Halifax.<sup>8</sup> There is no evidence of large-scale opposition to the police or the anti-police riots experienced in Leeds in 1844. The Watch Committee would have been aware of Superintendent Heaton’s attempt in Huddersfield to suppress the Guy Fawkes celebration, which had ended in a riot. This had occurred only the week before the Halifax force had gone on active duty in November 1848 and there is no evidence that they had the desire to emulate his actions, but may in fact have taken it as a warning of the problems that an overzealous officer could create.<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning, policing in the town was mainly the enforcement of the large body of bye-laws enacted by the new council under the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act.<sup>10</sup> Although radical in nature and opposed to a police force which could be used as a political or private force, many of the councillors were enthusiastic about self-improvement through education and other means. It was therefore no contradiction that whilst not enthusiastic about a large militant police force, the Council was keen to improve the environment of the town by using the police to enforce the by-laws. These were lifted wholesale from existing laws in older boroughs and were designed to create an ordered and well regulated town. They banned or restricted dangerous practices such as keeping large amounts of gunpowder at a dealers. Others dealt with ‘nuisances’ such as obstructing the causeway, a regular cause of friction between small shopkeepers and the police. Many were aimed at regulating daily trade. Blacksmiths had to conceal the light of their forges from the street, candle houses limit

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<sup>7</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*.

<sup>8</sup> Storch, ‘The Policeman as Domestic Missionary.’

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 296-7.

<sup>10</sup> HCM, 3 December 1849, HXM3. New by-laws formally submitted for adoption under 1835 Municipal Corporations Act, (5 and 6 Wm c 76).

offensive smells from their business and five by-laws covered the registration and running of slaughter houses. These were concerned with the physical improvement of the town's environment, a reflection of its growing population and industrial diversification.

Other by-laws were clearly designed to enact a moral improvement. These included closing all shows at 11pm, prohibiting the supply of liquor to children and the holding of dog or cock fights. The list of prohibited activities was extensive and included no loitering on streets or footpaths, no making of slides and on the streets themselves 'no football, cricket, bowls, fives, pitch and toss, skip ropes, quoits, shinty, gowk or any other game which may be troublesome, offensive, dangerous or annoying to passers-by.'<sup>11</sup>

The radical wish for improvement was to be brought about by the education of the townspeople about their new responsibilities to each other. Many of the Watch Committee minutes record the issue of leaflets to be distributed to shopkeepers and householders advising them of the new rules in an attempt to gain their willing cooperation and the police rarely prosecuted without some advance warning of a clampdown. In 1870, Superintendent Pearson was instructed to check for shops with awnings less than seven feet above the footpaths. Any offenders were to be told they had fourteen days to get the awnings altered or face prosecution.<sup>12</sup> These by-laws regulating trade caused friction with small shopkeepers, who judging by the frequent circulars from the Watch Committee, regularly ignored the rules regarding blocking footpaths and causeways. The Hackney cab drivers also periodically found themselves in breach of by-laws. In 1860, after a circular was issued to all owners and drivers warning them that after Christmas the by-laws would be enforced, the superintendent was given 'the most imperative directions' to report and record every violation. The cabbies

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<sup>11</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 16 September 1848.

<sup>12</sup> HWCM, 25 July 1870, HXM 189.

complained to the Watch Committee about some of the regulations, who declined to make any alteration in the existing laws.<sup>13</sup>

It was the 'moral' improvements which impinged mainly on the working classes, who, living mainly in cramped slum conditions were used to conducting much of their leisure on the streets. Policing by consent was much more difficult to achieve amongst the less respectable working class and the Irish, since educating them into better morals was unlikely to be effective. Throughout the 1850s and 60s the Watch Committee regularly directed the Superintendent to enforce various by-laws with the intention of improving the respectability of the town. Prostitution was a recurrent theme, but even here enforcement was partial, possibly since the police were aware that it was unlikely that they could eradicate it. In 1853, following Superintendent Pearson's report on the increase of 'Houses of ill Fame' the Watch Committee recommended 'increased vigilance', but directed the Superintendent to prosecute only 'the worst cases'.<sup>14</sup> In 1867, they petitioned a Parliamentary Committee to obtain powers for the punishment of brothel keepers.<sup>15</sup> When the Superintendent reported on houses encouraging prostitutes and thieves in 1863 and was asked to name the owners and agents of such properties, members of the committee quickly called for a vote to ensure that he did not do so.<sup>16</sup> No explanation was given for this strange decision, but it may be that while the Committee deplored prostitution, some of them may have been the owners of the slum properties where it was taking place and did not want to be publically named as such. The 1851 Ranger Report on the health of the town had revealed that a number of the Council

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 31 December 1860 and 14 January 1861, HXM186.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 10 October 1853, HXM185.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 9 September 1867, HXM188.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 23 February 1863, HXM188.

members owned slum property and were not particular about the type of tenants, or the conditions, as long as the rent was paid.<sup>17</sup>

Anything of a potentially indecent nature was kept under police supervision and prosecuted if found to be in breach of the law. In 1859, the Committee requested a report on ‘the proceedings carried on at the large room ... called the Colosseum’ and in 1861 wanted an eye kept on ‘a show of low character’ in the market. The Market Committee was requested not to allow any future shows of this kind.<sup>18</sup> Further attempts to increase local control over these types of entertainment were made, including a resolution to the Secretary of State that no place be allowed to present dramas, singing or dancing without a licence from JPs.<sup>19</sup>

A request to a Parliamentary Committee to insert provisions in a Bill to restrict gambling in public, reveal another of the Council’s concerns.<sup>20</sup> Frequent directives from the Watch Committee concerned gambling, which the Council was keen to clear from the streets and beer houses. This seems to have been a largely cosmetic exercise, since it is likely that the result was merely to drive the gamblers further out of the town and into more secluded places. This supports Storch’s findings that the working-class response to attempts at moral reform was evasion, rather than acceptance.<sup>21</sup> In Huddersfield, Superintendent Heaton’s ‘crusade’ did not eradicate gambling and Sunday drinking, since the WRCC, which took over in 1857, found those offences still very common.<sup>22</sup> In 1867, the Town Clerk was instructed to prosecute persons for gambling in West Park and in 1872, after complaints from the

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<sup>17</sup> W. Ranger, *Report To The General Board of Health On A Preliminary Inquiry Into The Sewerage, Drainage And Supply Of Water, And The Sanitary Condition Of The Inhabitants Of The Town Of Halifax In The County Of York*. (London, 1851). Alderman Craven, Alderman Booth and Councillor Balme all gave evidence to the inquiry about the houses they owned in slum areas.

<sup>18</sup> HWCN, 20 June 1859, HXM186 and 11 February 1861, HXM188.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1865, HXM188.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 August 1867, HXM188.

<sup>21</sup> Storch, ‘The Policeman as Domestic Missionary’, pp. 288-293.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘The Plague of Blue Locusts’, pp. 85-6.

Cemetery Committee, the Superintendent was told to deal with persons gambling in the woods above the cemetery.<sup>23</sup> There were also suspicions that gambling was taking place in pubs and beer houses, although with a complicit landlord, this was harder to prove.

## **Drink**

Inevitably, a large part of a policeman's duties involved dealing with the sale of alcohol and the effects of its consumption. The regulation of disorderly houses, inns opening past closing time and drunks on the street were recurrent themes in instructions from the Watch Committee to the Superintendent. Certainly, there were regular cases brought in front of the magistrates, but how effective the police were in controlling the trade is problematic. The sheer frequency and recurrent nature of the cases throughout the 1850s and 60s suggest that it was a losing battle. Not the least of the problem was the policeman's inclination to accept alcohol from the landlords, making them complicit, or at the very least, likely to turn a blind eye to late hours and gambling. The rapid growth of the Temperance Movement, both nationally and in Halifax, meant pressure was frequently put on the Watch Committee to exert more control over the inns and beerhouses. Established in the 1830s and closely allied to the non-conformist chapels, the movement sought to influence the spread of beerhouses and inns both nationally and locally. *The London Standard* reported in February 1860, that Halifax Temperance Society had their MP present a petition against licensed eating houses selling alcohol.<sup>24</sup> Locally, it was active in opposing the extension of licensing hours and the granting of licenses. A public house license could only be revoked if the holder did not conduct his premises properly and prior to the Wine and Beerhouse Act 1869, beerhouse licences were beyond the jurisdiction of the magistrates. By 1869, beerhouses in the Halifax

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<sup>23</sup> HWCM, 15 July 1867, HXM188 and 19 June 1872, HXM189.

<sup>24</sup> C. D. McDonald, 'The Temperance Movement in Halifax: 1832-2010' in *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, (2012), p.121.

area totalled 448 compared to 299 public house licences.<sup>25</sup> The new act provided the justices with the means and incentive to reduce the number of licences and in the sessions held in August 1869, twenty-six licences were removed, mostly for harbouring prostitutes. The Temperance movement no doubt hoped to see further reductions and campaigned for full penalties against landlords who infringed the conditions of their licences. The popularity of the movement can be gauged from the report of a gathering by the Band of Hope Society in Halifax in 1872, which paraded through the town, taking fifty minutes to pass a given point. The *Leeds Mercury* claimed it to be one of their most successful demonstrations and estimated that it had been attended by at least 15,000 people.<sup>26</sup>

This crusade for moral improvement through the enforcement of the law was a common element of the Temperance Movement throughout the country, something noted by David Taylor in his work on Middlesbrough, where the campaign was waged through the press.<sup>27</sup> Not all Chief Constables were susceptible to pressure from the movement and Saggerson in Middlesbrough, who took a pragmatic view, found himself in conflict with the local temperance movement because of his reluctance to arrest every drunk.<sup>28</sup> In 1860, the Halifax Temperance Society conveyed a resolution to the Committee that ‘this meeting deems it the duty of the Watch Committee to give instructions to the police to visit the licensed drinking-houses in their several beats and to summon every publican who has a drunken person on his premises’.<sup>29</sup> They clearly hoped to influence the Watch Committee into more rigorous action. Despite the memorial by the Temperance Society to the Watch Committee, the latter gave no

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<sup>25</sup> P. W. Robinson, ‘Ale, beer and public house closures in the Halifax area 1635-2010’ in *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, (2012), p.80.

<sup>26</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 30 July 1872.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> D. Taylor, *Crime, Policing and Punishment in England, 1750-1914*, (Basingstoke and London, 1998), p. 82.

<sup>29</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 3 March 1860.

special instructions to the Superintendent along those lines, which may suggest that although they wanted drunks off the street, they were more reluctant to tackle landlords.

### **Assaults on the Police**

Unfortunately, alcohol was often a factor in many of the situations the police found themselves dealing with. Newspaper reports of assaults on the police often stated that the defendant was “in liquor”. Consequently, it is difficult to assess the genuine level of animosity against the police in the early decades after they were established in 1848. There are no accounts from the individuals themselves, only the newspaper articles and occasional reports in the Watch Committee minutes. Certainly, assaults on police on the beat were not uncommon, mainly by drunks being removed from public houses or involved in brawls. It is difficult to determine if these assaults were due to genuine dislike of the police, or simply of anyone intervening, since bystanders who tried to intercede were also assaulted. There were other assaults which were clearly of a more vicious nature. They nearly always involved the working class and frequently the large Irish community, who were mostly grouped in the worst slum areas of the town. PC Hooson was assaulted by ‘several Irishmen’, three of whom were convicted and fined £5 each.<sup>30</sup> Remarks of a derogatory nature about the Irish by the magistrates, allied to problems in Ireland itself, mean it was likely that the local police viewed this minority as intractable troublemakers and lumped the more respectable and rougher elements together as one. Consequently, it is possible that attitudes and responses to transgressions by the Irish community were harsher than to the local majority, from whom the Halifax Police were predominantly recruited.

However the Irish immigrants were not the only ones to assault the police. PC Calvert was awarded £1-12-6d for wounds and injuries on duty and when PC Wilson was assaulted in

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<sup>30</sup> HWCM, 14 March 1859, HXM186.

1866, the Watch Committee was keen to ensure the offender was prosecuted.<sup>31</sup> However, the minutes frequently record payments to members of the public injured whilst going to the assistance of the police. In 1857, Charles Carter was awarded £1 for ‘severe personal injuries’ after responding to police requests for assistance in an arrest. He had been unable to work for several days.<sup>32</sup> Foster Calvert received a sovereign ‘to recompense personal injury, loss of hat and damage to a lamp in assisting a policeman assaulted by several roughs’. His assistance resulted in the attackers being charged and convicted.<sup>33</sup> Since we know of these people only because they needed to claim recompense from the Watch Committee, it is likely there were others who went to the assistance of the police, whose aid was never recognised. It is impossible to know what motivated these men to assist the police, but it suggests that the police force was not universally hated, but viewed by some citizens in a positive way. Although assaults on individual policemen were a regular hazard, there were no anti-police riots or any concerted attempt to confront the police and the attacks seem to be the result of ‘lashing out’ in response to police intervention. Storch cites incidents of mob assaults on police in the Halifax area, so it is clear that antagonism existed, but these events were outside the borough boundary and involved the WRCC, who emerged with their own ethos and objectives and were under the direction of the West Riding magistrates.<sup>34</sup> They had a division stationed in Halifax, led by ex-Superintendent Spiers after 1856, but had no jurisdiction within the borough. They were recruited from an extensive area and were probably not local to the area they patrolled, unlike the Halifax Force. Peter Bramham’s examination of the establishment of the WRCC found that by 1857, 40 percent of the county force was born outside Yorkshire and mainly drawn from industrial rather than agricultural

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 4 September 1865 and 17 December 1866, HXM188.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 19 January 1857, HXM186.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 9 February 1863, HXM188.

<sup>34</sup> Storch, ‘The Plague of Blue Locusts’, pp.86-7.

labour forces.<sup>35</sup> They would be less likely to have any links or sympathies with the local inhabitants when it came to enforcing the law and the WRCC encouraged the isolation of their men from working-class culture.<sup>36</sup>

Whilst the Council took a dim view of assaults on the men, they also punished inappropriate levels of retaliation by police officers, who were only supposed to act in self-defence, lest the violence undermined their public support. Physical force was supposed to be used only in extremes, after persuasion and warning had failed and then only minimum force, but dealing with aggressive individuals could make an officer forget to be restrained. Sergeant Beaumont was reprimanded for assaulting a drunken man, after he had been arrested for causing a disturbance in the street. He had hit him 'rather violently with his stick'. At the same Watch Committee meeting, PC Turner had a complaint of assault made against him by a member of the public and was found to have 'very much exceeded his duty'.<sup>37</sup> The Mayor warned him of the need for caution, which along with the leniency of their response to the complaint, suggests that the Watch Committee were aware that a certain amount of violence was a part of routine policing. The police, armed only with truncheons, faced possible assault by members of the public, but were expected to respond to violence with a measured, restrained force, if they were to avoid criticism by their superiors and the magistrates. David Taylor mentions that most forces adopted a more active response when faced with members of the public who were aggressive, since both police and antagonist usually came from a working-class culture where brawn and muscle were the way to impose authority.<sup>38</sup>

It was not until October 1867 that the Watch Committee bought 30 cutlasses for the men, but this appears to have been because of the threat of Fenian disturbances, since only a month

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<sup>35</sup> Bramham, 'Parish Constables or Police Officers?', pp.73-76.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.76

<sup>37</sup> HWCM, 2 September 1851, HXM 185.

<sup>38</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.88.

later the Home Office loaned them revolvers and instructed the magistrates to swear in one thousand special constables for the defence of the town.<sup>39</sup> Despite this, there is no evidence that the cutlasses were ever used on patrol. They are not mentioned in press reports, nor are there signs that more were ordered when the size of the force increased and it seems likely that they remained in reserve in case of need. Other forces also had cutlasses, but seem only to have used them in exceptional circumstances, as in Middlesbrough, where frequent riots in the dock area led to two constables being issued with them.<sup>40</sup>

Different strata of Halifax society had different complaints about the new police. The lowest levels of the working class were the most closely policed and most prone to react in an aggressive manner. The respectable working class were also likely to have contact with the police, who they often disliked, but they were equally disposed to use them to help in times of trouble, or to improve the respectability of their neighbourhood. When Henry Backhouse, in a drunken rage went to his father's, broke windows and assaulted him, Mr. Backhouse senior, a respectable joiner, sent for the police, who arrested and charged the son. In using the police to control his son, Mr. Backhouse told the magistrates that Henry 'had got past his management entirely' and he would leave him in their hands.<sup>41</sup> The same edition of the *Halifax Guardian* also recorded the prosecution of three men charged with playing toss halfpenny on a Sunday behind Dawson's mill. These arrests had been made in response to 'loud and long complaints' from the residents of Haley Hill, an area that housed some working class who were inimical to the police.<sup>42</sup> It would appear that some residents were attempting to improve the character of their neighbourhood.

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<sup>39</sup> HWCM, 21 October 1867, HXM 188.

<sup>40</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p. 80.

<sup>41</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 12 March 1853.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 March 1853. See also Ch. 1, p.55, 'The Dangerous classes of Haley Hill'.

In 1851, in a move to make justice available to all, the Mayor persuaded the Watch Committee to authorise suspension of payment for serving a writ in cases of poverty. This would enable even the poor to obtain justice, not just those able to pay.<sup>43</sup> The middle class were most inclined to view the police in a positive light. Their complaints were usually about the cost of the force or that the police were not doing enough to control the least respectable aspects of the town, by curbing prostitution, drinking and brawling. They complained about areas not being sufficiently policed, such as the inhabitants of the North Ward, who wanted a policeman deployed exclusively for that area. After discussion, the Watch Committee felt the existing arrangements to be satisfactory, but for all that, directed Superintendent Pearson to give 'immediate especial attention to that district'.<sup>44</sup> Voters and ratepayers had to be mollified. The inevitably rising cost of these rates were a perennial source of complaint amongst the ratepaying classes, although after the first couple of years, the grumbles became generalised and not specifically directed solely at the cost of the police force. In 1870, the Halifax borough rate was the lowest in Yorkshire, except for Doncaster and had changed very little since incorporation.<sup>45</sup>

The original remit of the new police force was to prevent crime and to enforce the laws of the borough. By the time Pearson became the Superintendent, the role of the police had become much more flexible, with the force being a convenient body to undertake many other functions, often at the behest of the various council committees. Carolyn Steedman has noted that the county police forces from 1856 onward were used by magistrates to perform work other than their traditional function.<sup>46</sup> In addition to keeping the peace, the county forces were required to perform administrative duties created by local statutory bodies and central

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<sup>43</sup> HWCM, 24 November 1851, HXM 185.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 April 1855, HXM 186.

<sup>45</sup> E. Webster, 'The Borough of Halifax, 1848-1900' in *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society* (2000), p. 113.

<sup>46</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.53.

legislation. These functions were not confined to the County Police. Halifax Borough Council readily used the police force as a convenient body onto which they could load any tasks that did not readily fit within their authority, or where a council committee needed men to establish information. They considered the policemen to be servants of the Council from whom they needed to gain maximum use. These extra tasks were not performed for free, either for independent organisations, or for other Council committees. A charge was usually levied to help defray the costs to the rates. The critical reports of the sanitary condition of the new borough in 1850 and 1851 meant that the council's attention was mainly focused on environmental improvements, especially to the water supply and the town was subject to drainage and street widening schemes. Indeed, one of Superintendent Spiers first duties was to provide a detailed report on all cellar dwellings for William Ranger's inquiry. In 1852, one of the sergeants was reported as having spent sixty days supervising the naming of streets and numbering of houses.<sup>47</sup> This substantial amount of time was billed to the Board of Works at £10-10s. These tasks were to be undertaken in addition to normal duties and the continuing expansion and rebuilding of the town meant that this activity recurred periodically, the Superintendent being instructed in 1865 to report all un-numbered houses and un-named streets.<sup>48</sup> Many of the extra burdens imposed on the force were clearly seen as applicable because the policemen covered most of the borough on their beats and were therefore able to report problems. Part of the Halifax Police remit was to report faulty gas lamps and insufficient gas supply to the local gas company.<sup>49</sup> The Watch Committee complained to the Board of Works that 'public lamps not being lighted rendered it more difficult for the Police

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<sup>47</sup> HWCM, 16 February 1852, HXM185.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 18 May 1865, HXM188.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 16 January 1854, HXM185. Superintendent Pearson sent a Lamp Report to the Board of Works detailing 716 lamps out and 93 that were deficient. Also he reported a deficient supply of gas in the Caddy Field neighbourhood to the Gas Committee in 1855. HWCM, 2 April 1855, HXM186.

to protect the town... than in the depths of Winter'.<sup>50</sup> Since darkened areas of the beat were seen as dangerous and a cover for illicit activities, it probably made sense for the local constable to report these promptly. It seems that the local inhabitants also assumed that street lighting was under police supervision and the Watch Committee frequently had to refer petitions for such to a sub-committee, (the Lighting Committee) which was properly responsible, as in 1855, when the residents of Back Gerard Street requested an extra lamp.<sup>51</sup>

National legislation also required administrative functions by the local police. Members of the force were variously appointed to be Inspectors of Nuisances, Hackney Carriages and cattle diseases, all to report to the Superintendent.<sup>52</sup> These additional responsibilities all required time away from the primary objective of preventing crime and in 1865, the Watch Committee held discussions with the Chair of the Markets and the Sanitary Committees as to whether the Markets Inspector and the Inspector of Nuisances should remain members of the police force.<sup>53</sup> Samuel Magson, an original member of the force, had been appointed Market Inspector, but by 1865 his responsibilities were so time-consuming that he was unable to perform any police duties. Regrettably, the content of the talks is not recorded, but the upshot was that the Inspectors remained part of the police force and in 1877 after nearly thirty years' service, Magson was awarded a pension from the superannuation fund.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 24 May 1852, HXM185.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 16 April 1855, HXM186.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 28 October 1851, HXM185. Samuel Magson appointed Inspector of Nuisances. HWCM, 12 March 1866, HXM188. 5 constables appointed under Cattle Diseases Prevention Act, 1866. HWCM, 14 December 1868, HXM188. Sgt. Wood appointed Inspector of Workshops, Hackney Carriages, Licensed Brokers and Licensed Music Rooms. HWCM, 22 October 1872, HXM189. Detective Birkinshaw appointed to inspect places licensed for sale and storage of Petroleum and gunpowder. Responsibility for inspecting common lodging houses was only transferred from the Sanitary Committee to the Watch Committee in 1873.

<sup>53</sup> HWCM, 12 June 1865, HXM 189.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 14 May 1877, HXM 189.

Chris A. Williams' exploration of the use of police officers for private purposes shows that this was a continuation of practices common before the introduction of the new police.<sup>55</sup> The hiring out of sections of the new police to private individuals continued in Halifax as it did in other forces. However, the Watch Committee was careful to whom it supplied the men to avoid accusations that they were providing ratepayer-funded watchmen to protect the property of wealthy individuals, which had been one of the protests voiced about the new police in 1848. Complaints by mill owners that their buildings were not sufficiently watched were investigated and usually refuted, but no requests were recorded in the minutes from such men for private service.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that they knew that such a request would not be acceded to, unlike in Middlesbrough, where David Taylor found that during the 1860s a substantial proportion of the force was employed as privately paid police officers.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, there were other assignments which were variously added to regular duties, such as policing local events and leisure activities, including fairs, theatres, horse racing, circuses, horticultural shows, elections and official openings of municipal parks and buildings, to name but a few. Most of the organisers of these sporadic events requested a police presence to control crowds, reduce horseplay and discourage pickpockets and the Watch Committee usually granted the request on payment of the 'usual terms'. As these were over and above the normal duties, the men were expected to be supplied with refreshments if necessary and any gratuity from the organisers was paid to the Watch Committee to distribute and not direct to the men, thus keeping them under their officers' command, not the hirers.

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<sup>55</sup> C. A. Williams, 'Constables for hire: the history of private 'public' policing in the UK', *Policing and Society*, 18, 2008, pp.193-95.

<sup>56</sup> HWCW, 13 May 1851, HXM185. Messrs Holmes complained to the Watch Committee that their paper mill was insufficiently watched, but were told that it was covered on one of the beats and regularly checked.

HWCW, 29 August 1853, HXM185. Cllr. Gaukroger complained his card manufacturing business was not being watched. Patrols were extended to cover his property.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, pp. 37-8, Table 3.1.

Any gratuity was usually split between the men involved and the sick fund (or after 1860, the superannuation fund). Thus, in 1852, when a gratuity of £2-10s was received for the services of the police for two days at West Hill Park Racecourse, the Watch Committee decided 24s was to be split between the men on duty and the rest went to the sick fund.<sup>58</sup> However, in 1853, a gratuity of £1 for the attendance of the police at an Assembly Rooms dinner went straight to the sick fund.<sup>59</sup> It was in the interests of the Watch Committee to supply at least one constable at these events, since the presence of large crowds, especially at fairs and the races was a magnet for thieves and troublemakers and it was considerably better to nip problems in the bud at the outset, rather than be called in when events were getting out of hand. The men remained under the control of the Superintendent and to have the extra duties paid for by the event organisers was a bonus, seen as good business practice. Halifax Watch Committee rarely missed an opportunity to charge for these extracurricular services, even when the client was another council committee and during the 1850s and 60s variously charged for holding the keys to private lock ups, supplying PCs to the railway during construction, supplying a PC for the park on Sunday and collecting the returns of the Juvenile Census.<sup>60</sup> All these extra events were short-term services, apart from supplying a man to the park, which became a permanent feature and was paid for by the Parks Committee of the Council. They were also only for small numbers of men at a time, usually two or three, presumably because Halifax's small force could not support a large number of men deployed on other duties without a detrimental effect on the beats. Any requests for large numbers, such as that from a Mr Crowther for ten men at his race ground were refused.<sup>61</sup> These additional constables, however do support the argument that the new police were there to

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<sup>58</sup> HWCM, 30 August 1852, HXM185.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 1 August 1853, HXM185.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 14 January 1867, HXM188. The Watch Committee fixed the charge for holding the keys to private lockups at 20s per year.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 9 May 1853, HXM 185.

protect employers' interests, although the Halifax Watch Committee was careful to ensure it supplied assistance only for short or specified periods and for a small number of men, to avoid such accusations.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to all these extra duties, from 1851 the Watch Committee was to establish and run a Fire Brigade, although it was not until June of 1853 that Superintendent Pearson was also appointed Superintendent of the Fire Brigade. A further step came in July, when the Watch Committee decided that the firemen could act when necessary as additional day policemen and in November, when the new fire engine arrived, Superintendent Pearson was made responsible for their training.<sup>63</sup>

Clive Emsley states these welfare tasks were part of the policeman's role in supervising the social class most likely to be involved in crime, but considers it too cynical to view them as solely using these causes to establish social control.<sup>64</sup> At Halifax, the Watch Committee's keenness to 'hire out' the force smacks of a determination to get value for money from men who could be doing extra tasks while patrolling a beat and provided a justification to those who saw the police as 'a parcel of men doing nothing'.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, these service functions were of benefit to the local community, particularly the respectable working class and Roger Swift has suggested that they may have made the police role more acceptable to those whose normally regarded the police with antipathy.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Williams, 'Constables for hire', p. 198.

<sup>63</sup> HWCM, 6 June, 18 July and 21 November 1853, HXM185.

<sup>64</sup> C. Emsley, *The Great British Bobby. A history of British policing from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present* (London, 2009), pp.168-9.

<sup>65</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 19 August 1848.

<sup>66</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', p.232.

## **Resistance to police legislation**

In the early 1850s, the government attempted to introduce legislation which provided a more centralised and efficient system for policing. It was only partially successful since the reform faced fierce opposition, particularly from the boroughs, which saw it as an attempt to wrest control away from local authorities. The Halifax Watch Committee, as in neighbouring Huddersfield, was fully involved in the opposition to the legislation and spent a great deal of its time and energy on any measures which it deemed likely to undermine the local control and financing of the borough police. The Watch Committee minutes reveal the network of contacts and cooperation between different boroughs as they combined to oppose the legislation, pressure which was highly effective. Thus, in January 1854, Wakefield Council wrote to the Committee warning of a House of Commons report recommending legislation to absorb Borough Police into County Police and pay them from the rates.<sup>67</sup> The Committee thanked Wakefield Council for its vigilance and recorded 'its decided disapprobation of any transference whatever from the authorities in Boroughs of the management of the Police Force', arranging for the Mayor and a deputation to call on the town's M.P., Francis Crossley, to make known their disapproval.

A further letter was received from Portsmouth Council, which was organising opposition to the changes and it was advised of the Committee's action hitherto. In June, the subject was again under consideration after the Mayor attended a meeting with other dignitaries from several municipalities, with the Council agreeing to present a petition against the bill to Parliament.<sup>68</sup> Despite considerable adjustments to the bill by the government, they were not

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<sup>67</sup> This was Palmerston's Police Bill, 1854, which recommended that smaller boroughs should be amalgamated with counties and larger boroughs adopt a similar system of management and control to the counties. Both meant loss of control for the local authorities.

<sup>68</sup> HWCM, 2 January 1854 – 16 June 1854, HXM 185.

enough to mollify the opponents. The pressure applied by the combined campaign was successful and the bill was withdrawn.

The question of a police reform surfaced again two years later, when the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey introduced a bill into Parliament in February 1856. This reform was deemed necessary owing to the imminent repatriation of the Crimean regiments after the end of the war and the threat it might bring to domestic order. Clive Emsley considers that the County and Borough Police Act of 1856 ‘faced nothing comparable to the furious opposition of two years before’.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, the Halifax Watch Committee viewed it with ‘considerable apprehension’ and set up a sub-committee to examine its provisions, communicate with other boroughs and consider measures to oppose it.<sup>70</sup> They and the other boroughs acted quickly to counter any attempts to weaken their authority and their previous efforts had made them aware of the considerable clout that acting in concert gave them.

The bill included provisions which gave the Home Office the right to direct the police in their duties and to demand reports from the chief constable when required.<sup>71</sup> It also included the boroughs in the payment of a County Police rate. The Watch Committee were concerned by what they saw as undue haste to push forward the bill and urged that the second reading be adjourned for ‘mature consideration’. The Mayor and the Watch Committee Chairman were despatched to meetings of the various corporations in London in order to object to the principles of the bill, but also to endeavour to exempt the boroughs from paying for the County Police. The boroughs’ deputation met with Sir George Grey and the second reading of the bill was temporarily postponed. It is clear from the Watch Committee minutes that Halifax was in constant contact with other councils and continued to oppose the bill through meetings, deputations and pressure on Francis Crossley, M.P. The combined action again had

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<sup>69</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p.53.

<sup>70</sup> HWCM, 11 and 18 February 1856, HXM186.

<sup>71</sup> County and Borough Police Act, 1856 (19 and 20 Vic c 69)

the desired effect, with word arriving on 17 March 1856 that the government had withdrawn the sections of the bill affecting the boroughs, again leaving local police forces under local control. The Halifax Watch Committee kept up the pressure via memorials to the government and visits to the M.P. until it was sure that the boroughs would be exempt from the County Police rate.<sup>72</sup>

The bill was seen as an attack on the autonomy and economy of the local authorities. Since Grey was prepared to make concessions which exempted the boroughs from the County rate and left local authority untouched, he was able to get the County and Borough Police Act through Parliament.<sup>73</sup> There were provisions of the new Act which had not been opposed, but Carolyn Steedman argued that they affected the boroughs more than they perhaps realised.<sup>74</sup> The creation of a government Inspector of Constabulary and the payment of a grant to each force certified efficient gave the Home Office its first opportunity to influence the provincial forces through their finances. Carolyn Steedman disputed claims that the act of 1856 had only a limited impact on the boroughs and argued that the first municipal inspections had an immediate impact on numbers and organisation. This claim is supported by the situation in Halifax.<sup>75</sup> Although there were no fundamental changes, the inspectors could make recommendations that would affect police numbers, criticise the accommodations for policemen and offenders and advise upon the discipline and methods of the force. This inevitably resulted in a certain measure of uniformity, which had not previously been the case. The chief constable was obliged to send statistical returns to the Home Office on vagrants, licensed premises and other criminal statistics. The local press reported the

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<sup>72</sup> HWCM, 11 February 1856 – 11 April 1856, HXM 186.

<sup>73</sup> Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, pp.115-6. The proposals to abolish smaller police forces and to give the Home Secretary the power to make regulations for the borough forces were dropped. See also Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, pp.510-516.

<sup>74</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p. 42.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.42.

inspector's visit and the public were made aware of any criticisms and shortcomings. Boroughs which would have rejected the perceived interference of the Home Office were induced to comply with the incentive of the government grant, which amounted to a quarter of the cost of the men's wages and clothing. Not all boroughs accepted the grant at first, Gateshead, Sunderland and Southampton declining to take it, but pressure from the electorate, who were also the ratepayers, meant that all eventually capitulated.<sup>76</sup>

The first inspection of the Halifax force, by HMI Colonel Woodford, previously Chief Constable of Lancashire, took place in March 1857.<sup>77</sup> The Inspector's report stated that the force was 'a very respectable and efficient body of men' with a uniform of 'a very good quality and well made' and the records were 'kept in a very clear and orderly manner'.<sup>78</sup> The Watch Committee minutes told a slightly different tale, clearly based on conversations with the Inspector, who apparently professed himself 'highly satisfied and pleased with the state of the police', but added several provisos, which showed that he had concerned himself with all aspects of the force. According to Watch Committee minutes, he suggested an increase of six men to the force (four for day duty, two for night), but his official report states that the force's complement had been increased by six men, to thirty-five, the previous September, although at his visit it only numbered twenty-nine. Since the minutes for September 1856 had no mention of an increase and the Watch Committee officially augmented the size of the force to 35 and recruited an extra six men in the aftermath of the Inspector's visit, it seems possible that Col. Woodford was backdating the increase so that it appeared the force was simply under complement and would therefore qualify for the government grant.<sup>79</sup> It is also

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<sup>76</sup> Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, p.121. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.42.

<sup>77</sup> HWCM, 16 March 1857, HXM186.

<sup>78</sup> Reports of the inspectors of constabulary for the year ended 29<sup>th</sup> September 1857, 1857-8, (20) XLVII. 657.

<sup>79</sup> HWCM, 8 September 1856, HXM186. HWCM, 30 March 1857, HXM186.

possible that the Watch Committee were the ones who conveyed that impression to the Inspector. The minutes also show that Woodford recommended that fire guards be provided for the day rooms and that all the truncheons should be a uniform length. The instructions were tactfully given as suggestions since the Watch Committee was not obliged to agree to them and these were not mentioned in the official report. These matters did not affect the grant and were at the discretion of the Watch Committee. The Committee discussed the visit at the next meeting and decided that to accept the grant 'would not entail any obligation on the committee to continue such receipt or enable the government to interfere with the local government of the police' and decided to implement Woodford's recommendations.<sup>80</sup> They seem not to have considered that having set a precedent, it would be almost impossible to back down from doing all that was necessary to qualify for the grant in the future, lest they face the ire of the ratepayers. This wariness regarding the government's motives was felt in many boroughs and Bradford also gave careful consideration before accepting the grant, fearing like Halifax, that receipt of the money might compromise their independence.<sup>81</sup>

The inspection in Halifax the following year again certified the police force as efficient, but called attention to the unsuitability of the prison cells. This did not affect the payment of the grant and other towns, such as Sheffield, which had faced the same criticism, declined to make any improvements. Nevertheless, the Halifax Watch Committee, which only ten years earlier had resented Sir George Grey's 'uncalled for interference', replied to the Home Office that there were plans to build a new town hall where 'every attention shall be paid to the wishes of the government in regard to prison cells'.<sup>82</sup> The introduction of the government grant had fundamentally changed the attitude of the Watch Committee to Home Office intervention, from recalcitrance to compliance.

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 March 1857, HXM 186.

<sup>81</sup> Smith, *Bradford's Police*, p. 30.

<sup>82</sup> HWCM, 20 December 1858, HXM 186.

## **The Police; Recruitment, Discipline and Pay**

Pay, recruitment and discipline took up a significant amount of the Watch Committee's time and it was rare that a meeting did not include either a resignation, the appointment of a supernumery or the hearing of complaints about constables by their officers.<sup>83</sup> The Committee was generally supportive of the Superintendent and his long period of service from 1851 - 1872 meant that the successive Watch Committees knew him well and trusted him to do his job with their guidance, but without undue interference in the practical operation. In 1860, after a complaint to the Watch Committee by a member of the public about changes Pearson had made to regulations affecting Day Policemen, the Committee defended his changes and stated that they would 'support the authority of the Superintendent at all hazards'.<sup>84</sup> This partnership was helped by the continuity of the chairmanship of the Watch Committee, with only six different men holding the position during this period, one of whom, Alderman Swale, was the chair for twelve years and another, Alderman Walsh was chair for five years.<sup>85</sup> They were keen to establish and retain a disciplined, well maintained body of men and responded positively to requests for pay increases and improvements to working conditions. They adjusted shifts to allow the men to attend church on Sunday and in 1860, considered ways to allow police on duty to have their dinners without prejudicing efficiency.<sup>86</sup> For over twenty years, there was nothing to suggest any particular tension between the Watch Committee and the police force, certainly nothing like the problems that arose in Hull, where the watch committee's mishandling of a request from the men for a pay

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<sup>83</sup> HWCM, 11 January -27 December 1869, HXM189. The Watch Committee held 21 meetings in 1869 and appointed 17 supernumeries, dismissed 7 men, disciplined 3 men for various offences and accepted 5 resignations.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 29 March 1860, HXM186.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 1851-1872, HXM185- 189.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 29 March 1860, HXM186.

rise escalated into strike action.<sup>87</sup> Although there were clearly internal political manoeuvrings in some periods, resulting in a chairman that only lasted for the year, for the bulk of Superintendent Pearson's tenure, only two men chaired the Watch Committee.<sup>88</sup> This longevity, both in Pearson's length of office and the direction from the Watch Committee, gave the Halifax police force a stability that many other forces, particularly in industrial areas prone to conflict, could not match. However, this did not exempt it from the problems which afflicted most of the police forces in the 1850s-1870s, namely high turnover, drunkenness and indiscipline.

### **Recruitment**

Large numbers of men were appointed supernumeries in the Watch Committee minutes. It was clear from various comments that the committee was still applying the criteria laid down when the police force was inaugurated and were interviewing candidates in person and following up testimonials of character. Despite this, in the period from 1851-72, 143 names that appeared in the records, appointed as supernumeries, were never mentioned again. It is not clear if they were deemed unsuitable for the job, either by themselves or their superiors, if their credentials were unsatisfactory, or if they found other, possibly more lucrative work before going on to the beat. Whatever the reason, it appears these men never became actual members of the force. Two thirds of them were appointed in the 1860s, when the turnover of recruits was clearly at its highest.

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<sup>87</sup> D. R. Welsh, 'The Reform of Urban Policing in Victorian England: a study of Kingston upon Hull, 1836-56', Ph.D., University of Hull, 1997.

<sup>88</sup> As previously stated, Alderman Swale was chair for twelve years and Alderman Walsh for five years, from 1852-7. HWCM, 1848-72.

**Table 2.1**

**Length of service of recruits under Pearson**

	<b>Under a year</b>	<b>1–2 years</b>	<b>2–3 years</b>	<b>3–5 years</b>	<b>5–9 years</b>	<b>10–19 years</b>	<b>Over 20 years</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
<b>15.7.1851 to 31.12.1861</b>	25	15	6	5	5	3	10	6
<b>1.1.1862 to 31.8.1872</b>	64	21	9	6	5	4	12	13

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes. (Excludes 143 men who disappear from records)

**Table 2.2**

**Reasons for leaving the force: 1851-72**

	<b>1851-61</b>	<b>1862-72</b>
<b>Resignation</b>	45	67
<b>Dismissed</b>	23	44
<b>Death</b>	1	1
<b>Resignation: ill health</b>	0	3

Of the 209 men that do go on to patrol the beat, 112 resigned and 67 were dismissed. Of the 209 recruits, 89 lasted for less than a year in the job, and a further 36 last less than two years. This is consistent with Carolyn Steedman's findings that the vast majority of recruits in Buckinghamshire left within the first year.<sup>89</sup> This turnover was a constant problem, with relatively inexperienced officers on the beats, prone to drunkenness and indiscipline. However, the force had a hard core of career policemen from the start (although whether this was their intention on entering the force is questionable). Six policemen who enlisted before

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<sup>89</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp. 92-3.

1850 remained with the Halifax police for over twenty years, retiring in the 1870s with pensions. Ten more who joined during the 1850s and a further twelve in the 1860s also served for over twenty years and it is these men who formed the back bone of the police force. John Helliwell Thompson joined the force as a PC at its inception in 1848, was made sergeant in 1851, but despite this applied for a testimonial for the position of Bathkeeper in the new People's Park.<sup>90</sup> He appears not to have got the job, as he remained with the police and in 1870 was promoted to Inspector. He retired from the force, aged fifty-five, in November 1875 after twenty-seven years and was awarded a pension of 20s per week.<sup>91</sup> Robert Midgley Calvert joined the force seven years later, but because the sergeants' posts were occupied by relatively young men, it was fourteen years before he gained promotion and a further seven years before he was made an Inspector.<sup>92</sup> He did not live long enough to claim a pension, dying in 1878 after twenty-three years' service. His widow was awarded a years' pay (£96) as a gratuity.<sup>93</sup> These were the men who gave the force its stability through their experience and longevity.

In the decade up to 1870, the problems of retention of recruits became more acute, with many more men leaving after less than a year. Each Watch Committee meeting was taken up with appointing usually five or six new men, who, despite the careful interviews and vetting of testimonials, rarely lasted beyond a few months. The problem escalated as the decade progressed. One hundred and eleven men left the force between 1862-72, sixty-seven of them resigning and forty-four being dismissed.<sup>94</sup> Over half of them had served for less than a year

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<sup>90</sup> HWCM, 22 July 1851, HXM185. Promotion to sergeant. 4 July 1859, HXM186, Requests testimonial for job of Bathkeeper.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 24 January 1870, HXM189. Promotion to Inspector. 29 November 1875, HXM189. Retirement on pension.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 4 October 1869, HXM188. Promotion to sergeant. 13 November 1876, HXM189. Promotion to Inspector.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 30 September 1878, HXM190.

<sup>94</sup> See Table 2.2.

and one hundred had served for less than five years.<sup>95</sup> The problem peaked in 1870 with seventeen resignations and five dismissals in that one year alone.<sup>96</sup>

This problem of recruitment was common to all forces, with departures mostly from the lowest ranks. The minutes rarely recorded the reasons for resignation, although sometimes it can be implied from previous events. Thus, when Detective Rawson, a long-serving officer, resigned and left a few months after John Pearson was appointed Superintendent it seemed likely that he had hoped for the post himself and was disillusioned with his future prospects in the police.<sup>97</sup> Occasionally, despite unsavoury allegations, an officer was allowed to resign rather than be dismissed. In 1857, Sergeant Greenwood was accused of irregularities and due to his 'long and creditable service', the Watch Committee accepted his resignation and decided not to investigate the allegations, an outcome satisfactory to all, except, no doubt the accuser.<sup>98</sup> Sergeant Greenwood kept his good name and the Watch Committee avoided having to delve into a matter which might reflect badly on the integrity of the police and their supervision of the force.

Much of the time, however, a combination of hard, often dangerous work, poor pay and limited prospects appear to have been the reason for most resignations. Before 1860, when a new three tier payment for constables was brought in, wages only rose from 17s to 18s per week.<sup>99</sup> While many trades such as woolcombing were in permanent decline due to mechanisation, the textile trade in Halifax enjoyed a boom during the period up to 1870. Between 1851-1865 the number of factories in the town more than doubled, with over thirty local firms each employing over 100 workers. The Crossley's carpet factory had a workforce

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<sup>95</sup> See Table 2.1.

<sup>96</sup> HWCM, HXM189.

<sup>97</sup> HWCM, 24 November 1851, HXM185.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 2 March 1857, HXM186.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 29 August 1853, HXM185. Wage rise to 18s. 2 July 1860, HXM186, introduction of three pay grades for constables.

of 5,000 by 1871.<sup>100</sup> This period of prosperity meant that it was easier for the local working man to obtain better paid employment. Many recruits to the police force did not view it as a career, but stop-gap employment while they sought better pay and conditions elsewhere. The Watch Committee minutes frequently show recruits with the same name re-applying for work every couple of years and resigning after a few months. While it is impossible to definitively prove that these are the same individuals using police work as short-term employment it seems the most likely explanation.

After 1860, it became even harder for the Watch Committee to obtain suitable recruits, possibly why a three tier grade was introduced at that time.<sup>101</sup> In addition to the booming textile trade, Halifax was characterised by its growing industrial diversity, which led to its being dubbed ‘the town of a hundred trades’. The founding of engineering, confectionery and machine tool industries were just some of the new enterprises that were developed after 1851 and this diversity offered better paid, more easily available employment.

Another factor affecting recruitment was the first geographical extension of the borough, in 1865, to take in parts of the Ovenden, Skircoat, Northowram and Southowram townships.<sup>102</sup> This tripled the size of the original borough and led to an additional fifteen men being recruited, increasing the size of the force from thirty-seven to fifty-two men. Inevitably, in the short term this meant a higher proportion of raw recruits, rather than experienced men on the beats. This was especially true in the town, since the more dependable, veteran officers were posted in newly rented outstations to police the outskirts of the borough.

The expansion of the borough boundaries also brought an increase in population, more than doubling from 25,159 to 65,510. In addition, the expanding employment opportunities for

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<sup>100</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, pp. 129-30.

<sup>101</sup> HWCM, 2 July 1860, HXM186.

<sup>102</sup> See Appendix 2.

both genders and all age groups encouraged early marriage and high birth rates. John Hargreaves' analysis of the age structure of the borough showed that by 1871, almost one third of the population was under fifteen years of age.<sup>103</sup> The young males that might have joined the police force were settling down at a young age and required higher wages than the police paid to support a family. A third of the local population was too young to apply to join the police, but was of the right age to be gathering in large groups and causing trouble, a recurrent complaint of this period.

The records make it hard to tell if there were plenty of applicants for police constables, but were just not of the right calibre, or if there were so few, that the Watch Committee were forced to accept candidates of a lower standard. Attempts to address just this problem appear to be behind recruitment advertisements in the *Penrith Observer* and *The Scotsman* newspapers in 1866 and 1874. It is not clear why the Watch Committee chose these areas to advertise for recruits. It is possible that the adverts in Scotland were designed to appeal to ex-army members or to the dourer Presbyterian Scot who would eschew drink. It may just be that these areas were perceived to have high levels of unemployment, particularly among agricultural labourers, who were emigrating to far flung parts of the world in search of a better life. Whatever the cause, the advert in *The Scotsman* in 1866 appears to have succeeded initially. The Watch Committee granted third-class rail fare to several applicants from Scotland, provided they remained in the Force for a minimum of three months.<sup>104</sup> However, it is unclear whether any Scots actually made the journey south to Halifax. The lists of supernumeraries over the next few months appear to be local and most quickly resigned

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<sup>103</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, p.129.

<sup>104</sup> HWCM, 2 July 1866, HXM188.

or were dismissed from the force. Additional evidence that the experiment was unsuccessful may lie in the fact that no further adverts were placed in *The Scotsman* until 1874.<sup>105</sup>

Constables leaving the force with little or no notice after the late 1850s were subjected to harsher penalties, indicating that their actions left the existing force stretched beyond its manpower capability. John Johnson was summonsed for neglect of duty, after he enlisted in a line regiment and drunkenly informed the Superintendent that he would do no more duty as a policeman.<sup>106</sup> The Town Clerk informed the magistrates that the Watch Committee had insisted on the prosecution so that officers would understand that they could not leave the force without giving notice. Johnson was fined 5s. Supernumeries who left the force in under two weeks were to receive no pay, and policemen leaving after only a short period of service were made to pay for any alterations to their uniform.

### **Discipline**

All commentators on the early police forces have noted the high levels of dismissals due to drunkenness and Halifax was no exception. Where the offence was improper conduct, neglect or insubordination, drink was usually an exacerbating factor. Between 1851-60, thirteen constables were dismissed for being drunk on duty, while in the following decade as recruitment difficulties increased, this rose to twenty-six. Dismissal was usually the final sanction, after various other penalties were tried. Supernumeries filling in for regular constables, who were found to be drunk, were dismissed immediately, but otherwise a policeman could expect to be dismissed on his second offence. In the early years of 1850s, drunkenness resulted in a reprimand to the constable on the first offence but as the decade continued, the Watch Committee began to impose a fine in addition to the reprimand, varying

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 26 January 1874, HXM189.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 2 January 1860, HXM186 and *Leeds Mercury*, 5 January 1860.

from 2-6d to 10s depending on the severity of the offence and seniority of the man.<sup>107</sup> The fine appears to have been very subjective, possibly influenced by the attitude of the offender and his previous conduct record, or possibly even the level of manpower on the force at that precise time. Thus, in 1866, PC Philemon Mitchell was found drunk and asleep on his beat, was fined 10s and dismissed. Three months later, PC John Mitchell, also drunk and asleep on his beat was merely fined 2-6d and allowed to keep his job.<sup>108</sup>

The Watch Committee also tried suspending officers for a week, but this was quickly discontinued, since it was not an effective deterrent and no doubt led to further manpower shortages. Where drunkenness was compounded by abusive language, insolence or insubordination, dismissal was immediate. The Watch Committee also variously tried reading resolutions to the men about the penalties for being drunk, warning and cautioning landlords who supplied the liquor, demoting policemen down to third class and occasionally prosecuting the offender.<sup>109</sup> Pickles Ogden, missing from his beat for a couple of hours, was found by his sergeant drunk and asleep in a stable. The committee 'declined to interfere in a case so flagrant' and the Town Clark was instructed to prosecute him for gross neglect of duty, so the men would know they were subject to the law, as well as the Watch Committee. He was fined 20s with costs of 9s or a month's imprisonment, yet the Watch Committee did not sack him and he was allowed to resign a couple of weeks later.<sup>110</sup> Whilst drunkenness was a contributory factor in the bulk of the disciplinary offences, there were other causes that indicate a lack of moral calibre running through the force in these two decades, which were

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 3 January 1853, Hxm185, PC Greenwood drunk on duty and reprimanded. 16 March 1857, HXM 186, PC Hooson drunk on duty, reprimanded and fined 2s-6d. 21 May 1860 and 18 June 1860, HXM186, PC Wadsworth and PC Chadwick each fined 5s for being drunk on duty. All were first offences.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 26 March 1866 and 4 June 1866, HXM188.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 2 January 1854, HXM185, resolution of committee to dismiss a man drunk on duty read to men. 18 June 1860, HXM186, letters sent to innkeepers and beersellers cautioning them against supplying alcohol to police on duty.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 2 January 1860, HXM186 and *Leeds Mercury*, 7 January 1860.

an ominous harbinger for the future. Not working a beat, neglect of duty and improper conduct were not uncommon charges, but more serious were charges of dishonesty. PC Ambler was given £7-10s to be kept in safe custody until the following morning, but took the opportunity to abandon his beat, resort to the pub and then at 1am, take a party on to a brothel on the money in his safekeeping.<sup>111</sup> Needless to say, the Watch Committee was outraged and dismissed him. Likewise, PC Fitton was charged with being off his beat and taking a party to the Craven Heifer Inn, resulting in a week's suspension.<sup>112</sup> These two cases do not support the view of a constable as outside his community. Indeed, they both seem to have been very friendly with their community which is no doubt why Ambler was dismissed and Fitton disciplined. In 1860, PC Armer was found to have removed goods from another police constable's house and was dismissed.<sup>113</sup> Another policeman, who was brought before the magistrates, accused of fathering a child, along with a colleague, 'disgracefully connected with the affair', were both sacked.<sup>114</sup> After complaints, in 1862 the Watch Committee had to ban policemen from soliciting gifts at Christmas and New Year, which was no doubt viewed as one of the perks of the job. More seriously, Superintendent Pearson was instructed to stamp out the practice of 'footing' new recruits, which had become prevalent in the force. This was a custom where new constables had to pay a 'fine' of beer to their established colleagues and had resulted in absences from duty, due to drink.<sup>115</sup> The Halifax police force was developing an esprit de corps, and its own traditions, but not the sort that the Watch Committee wanted.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 12 September 1859, HXM186.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 12 September 1859, HXM186.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 3 December 1860, HXM186.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 23 September 1861, HXM188.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 30 October 1862, HXM188.

## Pay

**Table 2.3**

### Pay Scales

	<b>1853</b>	<b>1865</b>	<b>1871</b>
<b>Sergeants</b>			
Second class	-	22s	
First class	21s	24s	28s
<b>Constables</b>			
Third class		18s-6d	21s
Second class		20s	23s
First class	18s	21s	24s
Merit class			25s

Source: Watch Committee Minutes.

After the mid-1850s, the vacancies caused by the upper ranks leaving for promotion dried up and the sergeants, inspectors and detectives who replaced them remained in post for the rest of their careers. Between 1856-72 only six men above the rank of constable left the force, thus creating vacancies for promotions. Several additional posts were created by the expansion of the force, but the constables joining in this period would be able to see little prospect of advancement, at least until the mid-1870s, when retirements would create new vacancies. The Watch Committee were aware of the problems in trying to retain men, but from 1853, when the constables' wages were raised to 18s there was little change until 1860 when a three tier system of wages was instituted after consultation with the Home Office. Unfortunately no specific details are given until 1865, by which time a third-class constable received 18-6d a week and the first-class 21s, amounts which tally fairly closely with the National Median figures for boroughs given by Carolyn Steedman.<sup>116</sup> Sheffield lagged behind Halifax, only paying 17s, which rose to 18s after six weeks.<sup>117</sup> However, the sergeants, now

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<sup>116</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p. 109, Table 5.1.

<sup>117</sup> Williams, 'Police and Crime in Sheffield', p.197.

divided into two classes, fared less well by comparison with the national average, receiving 24s and 22s for first and second class respectively. Thereafter, police wages were reviewed almost yearly, with small increases every couple of years. In 1870, promotion from third to second and second to first class was made automatic after a set period of time, dependent on satisfactory conduct.<sup>118</sup> It usually took twelve months to progress from third to second and a further two years to reach first class. At the same time, a merit class for 'superior service' was introduced, promotion to which was at the discretion of the Watch Committee. Middlesbrough had introduced merit pay in 1864 at the instigation of Superintendent Saggerson to reward men who had been denied promotion and to stem the loss of men.<sup>119</sup> It worked no better in Halifax than it had in Middlesbrough, possibly because Superintendent Pearson made sparing use of it, promoting only two men to merit class.<sup>120</sup> Two years later, another sub division was added, when after three and seven years, a first or second class constable qualified for a further pay increase. This meant a first class constable, after seven years would be paid 26s and despite little prospect of promotion to higher rank, longevity of service was being rewarded, thus encouraging men to make the police a career.

## **Pensions**

Another inducement to a working-class man was the prospect of a pension. The superannuation scheme had been established in 1860, two years before Middlesbrough introduced theirs.<sup>121</sup> It was created as a result of the 1859 Police Pension Act, which extended the possible provision of a pension to borough policemen. It allowed for the payment of a half pension after fifteen years' service or full after twenty-five years and also the granting of gratuities. Since there was no right to a pension, awards were entirely at the discretion of the

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<sup>118</sup> HWCM, 4 April 1870, HXM189.

<sup>119</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.39.

<sup>120</sup> HWCM, 22 August 1870, HXM189.

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.130.

watch committee and attitudes and generosity varied from one force to another. In Halifax, few gratuities or pensions had been awarded since it was under twenty-five years since the force had been established. Only three men had been granted pensions due to ill-health and all had served over twenty years. Clive Emsley writes that the superannuation scheme was badly organised and caused resentment, since parsimonious watch committees used the discretionary element to minimise awards.<sup>122</sup> This unhappiness with the structure of the scheme and its effects was evident even at the highest levels of the police, as becomes plain in a *Halifax Guardian* report on a police conference. After his resignation in 1872, but before he left office, Superintendent Pearson attended the conference in London, along with delegates from other forces. Having been forced to resign before completing twenty-five years' service, he was not eligible for a pension and several other officers expressed sympathy for him,

he being in his own person a victim of the abandonment of the government bill on the subject, having served twenty-four years in the Halifax force and contributed for many years to the superannuation fund in proportion to his office and yet unable to receive a pension unless incapacitated from service.

The fear of being dismissed just as a man was entitled to claim a pension, possibly on a flimsy pretext to save money, resonated with many of the delegates. The subject of superannuation was debated at the conference and the resolution passed

that no man be liable to dismissal without pension (after becoming entitled by length of service) unless convicted of a felony, neglect or violation of duty.<sup>123</sup>

Unlike the fight for improved pay and conditions, which remained mostly localised, the campaign for police pension rights became a national one. However, despite repeated

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<sup>122</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p. 173.

<sup>123</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 3 August 1872.

campaigns through the 1870s and 1880s, it would not be until the Police Act 1890 that a pension after twenty-five years' service was guaranteed.

## **Incentives**

The Watch Committee tried to encourage and reward the men through a series of incentives throughout Superintendent Pearson's tenure, probably in an attempt to reduce the high turnover. In 1851, men were allowed a week's paid leave to attend the Great Exhibition of Industry, as long as no more than four men were absent at a time and the Council raised £80 to be divided amongst the men.<sup>124</sup> This generosity was not uncommon and Huddersfield and Bradford also allowed a week's paid leave of absence to the men of their force to visit the Exhibition.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, the visit was not purely pleasure for some. Huddersfield police were also to take advantage of the visit to go to 'different Police Stations in London to observe the discipline and manner of working in the Metropolitan Police Force'.<sup>126</sup>

Successive committees were open to approaches from the men in attempt to improve their working conditions. Even before Superintendent Pearson took over, a sick fund was established and gratuities from grateful members of the public were paid into it.<sup>127</sup> In 1860, when a superannuation fund was required by new government regulations, the sick fund and future honorariums were paid into the new scheme.<sup>128</sup> When the men requested that they wear caps instead of top hats, the Watch Committee was happy to agree provided they cost no more than the hats. In 1860, as recruitment became more difficult and rates of turnover in the force began to rise, the committee felt that it might be an encouragement to the Police

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<sup>124</sup> HWCM, 30 June 1851, HXM185. Also *Halifax Guardian*, 2 August 1851.

<sup>125</sup> Smith, *Bradford's Police*, p. 30.

<sup>126</sup> Hird, 'From Watchmen to New Police', p.106.

<sup>127</sup> HWCM, 19 February 1850, HXM185.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 August 1860, HXM186.

Force ‘if the policemen and their wives were given a ‘special tea’’. Subsequently, according to the *Bradford Observer*

the whole of the borough police, together with their wives, were treated by the private liberality of the Watch Committee to a very excellent tea and dessert in the council chamber at the Town Hall. The chamber was profusely decorated and the gathering proved one of the best the police have had.<sup>129</sup>

This was clearly an attempt to foster a sense of solidarity and fraternity and appears to have been appreciated, although there is no record of this becoming a regular occasion.

As the 1860s progressed, there were other efforts to encourage the constables to remain in the force and to attend to their educational and moral welfare. Arrangements were made to allow policemen on Sunday duty to attend church, or chapel and after the extension of the borough boundaries, men on night duty in the outlying districts were allowed to leave their beat an hour early. Two cottages were rented in the new parts of the borough, each manned by a constable, who lived there rent free, provided that they were kept open daily as ‘outside police stations’.<sup>130</sup> However, anything that cost money or was seen as frivolous or unrelated to their duties was discouraged, so in 1863, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales’ marriage, the motion to supply the men with wedding favours had little support.<sup>131</sup>

The Watch Committee was not sympathetic to every request from the men, so in 1870, when the men applied for an increase in the number of days’ leave they were allowed, from ten to a highly optimistic thirty-three days a year, it was rejected instantly.<sup>132</sup> A motion by some

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<sup>129</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 19 January 1860.

<sup>130</sup> HWCM, 16 October 1865, HXM 188.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 March 1863, HXM188.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 October 1870, HXM189.

members of the Watch Committee to give the force one day's leave of absence per month was also lost and it was not until June 1871 that this was introduced.<sup>133</sup>

The education of the men was considered important and sometime before 1862 a small library had been established.<sup>134</sup> Throughout the 1860s, money was frequently donated by councillors and philanthropic citizens for its enlargement, with a library committee set up to buy suitable items. Volumes of improving books were a frequent gift from the Mayor and others.

### **Promotion**

The small, though expanding, size of the force meant that promotion prospects were limited. The initial complement had increased by over two and half times, from 25 to 65 men between 1848-1871. These increases were mostly at the recommendation of the government inspector, who found no opposition from the Committee.<sup>135</sup> The Watch Committee had a clear policy of promoting from the ranks and between 1848 and 1870 there is no evidence of any post above constable being filled by any other than a serving policeman in the Halifax force. In the beginning, when the force was small, the main promotion route was to apply for police posts advertised elsewhere. Between 1850-56 no less than thirteen men, including five sergeants and two inspectors left for other jobs in Yorkshire. Since four of them left to become Superintendents of other forces, the ethos and discipline at Halifax was clearly impressive to other Watch Committees, although it may just have been that other towns setting up their own police were happy to poach men who were already trained and experienced. Bradford too, saw many of its officers moving on to senior positions in other forces.<sup>136</sup> After 1856, men may have continued to obtain promotion in this way, but the minutes do not record the

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 12 June 1871, HXM189.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 11 August 1862, HXM188. First mention of the library when a sub-committee is set up to catalogue and consider how best to enlarge it.

<sup>135</sup> See Appendix 3 for changes in the size of the force.

<sup>136</sup> Smith, *Bradford's Police*, p.31.

reasons for resignations. Jennifer Hart concludes that there was very little cooperation and often outright hostility between boroughs, or between counties and boroughs.<sup>137</sup> However, the Halifax Watch Committee was usually pleased to give favourable testimonials to men trying to obtain advancement elsewhere, even though it stripped the force of promising men. When Sergeant Kitson wanted a testimonial the Watch Committee minutes recorded that they had ‘pleasure in certifying that he was uniformly an active, intelligent and skilful officer’.<sup>138</sup> Superintendent Spiers also requested a testimonial and the minutes showed that the committee was ‘unanimous’ in taking ‘much pleasure in acceding to his request’.<sup>139</sup> There is little evidence of hostility to other forces at Halifax and it is possible that the dissemination of officers to other parts of Yorkshire, including the adjacent towns and the WRCC, where ex-superintendent Spiers was in charge of the Halifax Division, blunted rivalries and meant that co-operation was more likely than dissension.

### **Resignation of Superintendent Pearson**

In November 1870, the Watch Committee placed an advert in the *Police Service Advertiser* for a detective officer, the first such attempt to recruit anyone above the grade of constable. Since Detective Benjamin Tempest was already occupying this post, it appears that the Committee had decided to increase the manpower and create a detective department. Subsequently, the Watch Committee appointed John Lawton of the Manchester Police as Detective Inspector and Superintendent of the Fire Brigade and John Birkenshaw of the Leeds Police as Detective sergeant, both of which were new posts in the force. This was the first time that no internal promotion had been made and two men who were not local had been appointed above the rank of constable. In light of future events, these appointments were significant and were the first intimation that the Watch Committee was not altogether

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<sup>137</sup> Hart, ‘Reform of the Borough Police’, p. 423.

<sup>138</sup> HWCM, 27 November 1852, HXM185.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 April 1851, HXM185.

satisfied with the direction of the police force. Although the minutes record no details, the creation of a detective department after twenty-two years, to supplement one individual officer, indicated that the Watch Committee were unhappy with the level of crime in the borough. The police force had always been certified as satisfactory by HMIC, although later there was a suggestion that the inspector had commented unfavourably on the lack of prosecutions against licensees.<sup>140</sup> This must have been in conversation with a member of the council, since there were no adverse criticisms in the official reports.<sup>141</sup> However, as a direct consequence of these appointments, just over eighteen months later, Superintendent Pearson was forced to resign. A relevant factor in his resignation was the growth of the temperance movement and the vigorous opposition of the brewers and licensed victuallers' associations. Halifax and District Wine and Beersellers Association in 1870 had as its guest 'Mr Superintendent Pearson', who 'spoke of the advantage and necessity of publicans and beersellers maintaining the law and respectability of their houses.'<sup>142</sup> Despite this high tone, it was becoming clear that the Superintendent had become rather too closely associated with the local brewing interests and two years later was publicly accused of being so, by Councillor Longbottom, in a letter to the *Halifax Courier*. The Councillor claimed that the Government Inspector had been unable to believe the records, which showed only two public houses had been reported during the year. Longbottom alleged that it was normal practice for cases to be run past Superintendent Pearson, who decided whether they should be entered in the Report Book or not, often refusing to enter certain licensed premises. He was also accused of regularly drinking out-of-hours at a 'notorious' pub. When a constable on duty demanded

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<sup>140</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 22 June 1872. Letter from Councillor Longbottom

<sup>141</sup> P.P., 1870, Reports of the inspectors of constabulary for the year ended 29<sup>th</sup> September 1869, XXXVI.285, p.81.

1871, Reports of the inspectors of constabulary for the year ended 29<sup>th</sup> September 1870, XXVIII. 345, pp.117-8.

1872, Reports of the inspectors of constabulary for the year ended 29<sup>th</sup> September 1871, XXX.1, pp.145-6.

<sup>142</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 October 1870.

access to the lock-in, to report the landlord, the Superintendent was seen whispering at the keyhole to the PC that, 'it was alright'. Councillor Longbottom concluded his letter by stating that the Watch Committee had privately admonished him 'over and over again', considering that the work was done inefficiently and that a close inspection by the Home Office would be damaging. There were 'large changes in staff they could not fathom' and the force was 'wanting in stamina'.<sup>143</sup> This damning letter suggests that the Watch Committee did not know what was going on (or wasn't about to admit it). Carolyn Steedman has commented on Watch Committees, influenced by the brewing interests, interfering with police work, particularly proceedings against publicans and brewers.<sup>144</sup> It seems here that Superintendent Pearson, not the Watch Committee, was ensuring that the liquor interests got off lightly by interfering with the reports made, including tampering with the time of the licensee's offence to mitigate it. It is impossible to tell if members of the Watch Committee knew and turned a blind eye, which given their resistance to demands from the temperance movement, is a possibility. Certainly, despite the liberal/non-conformist bias of the Council, Pearson still had staunch support amongst some of its members who sought to overturn his resignation.

These accusations, were precipitated in March 1872, when at the Halifax Borough Court, the landlord of the Black Bull Inn was charged with allowing dominoes to be played for money. At the end of the case, Inspector Lawton stated that 'in consequence of the obstacles that had been thrown in his way in reference to reporting the Black Bull Inn, he had withdrawn from the force'.<sup>145</sup> This was clearly taken as a reference to interference by Superintendent Pearson. Until Lawton's arrival, there had been no-one to challenge Pearson's methods of running the force, as all the previous and current officers had been trained under him. The magistrates told Lawton that his announcement was not relevant to the court and should be made to the

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<sup>143</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 22 June 1872.

<sup>144</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.424.

<sup>145</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 16 March 1872.

Watch Committee. Nevertheless, this public statement forced the Watch Committee to hold an investigation, which is doubtless what Lawton intended. Witnesses were examined and the meeting adjourned for twenty-four hours, at which point it was announced that Superintendent Pearson intended to resign and so no further enquiry was necessary.<sup>146</sup> Clearly the Watch Committee hoped in this way to brush the matter under the carpet and avoid further publicity, which would only reflect badly on them and the reputation of the police force. The Watch Committee's backing for Superintendent Pearson had been unqualified, until it was clear that to continue to support him would undermine their standing with the ratepaying public, a stance recognised by Carolyn Steedman. She observed that the ratepayers recognised that the head constable of a borough was merely an employee, part of the system of local government and were more likely to blame the Watch Committee which had control, for any shortcomings.<sup>147</sup> Whilst Pearson was mainly held responsible, the Watch Committee were concerned, rightly as it turned out, that they would be seen as neglectful for not having been aware of the situation. They made sure to publicise their misgivings about his leadership, even though no records of censure had ever appeared in the minutes of their meetings. Unfortunately for their attempts to avoid publicity, a war of words, accusations and justifications broke out in the local press, with an opening letter from Mr Thomas Scarborough, Chairman of the Temperance movement. He demanded a full enquiry and complained of infringements by landlords, who were still allowed to retain their licences without opposition from the police, who 'wink at the violations of the law'. He declared: 'that there is great fault somewhere in the management of our police force is admitted on all hands' and demanded to know why the Watch Committee were not aware of what was going on.<sup>148</sup> A supporter of Pearson, who signed himself 'Fair Play', complained that the

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<sup>146</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 4 April 1872. HWCM, 26 March and 27 March 1872, HXM189.

<sup>147</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>148</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 March 1872.

Superintendent had been ‘kicked out like a dog’.<sup>149</sup> Pearson himself wrote a lengthy point by point rebuttal of all charges against him and protested that the council had ‘visited me with a heavy and uncalled for penalty’.<sup>150</sup>

The resignation of the Superintendent split the Council, with a significant number of councillors supporting him. His resignation was accepted after a vote, but only by a majority of three. Attempts by a faction on the Watch Committee to get him reinstated and merely reprimanded for neglect of duty were blocked by the majority and the Superintendent’s post was advertised. A deputation from the men presented a memorial signed by fifty-one members of the force, asking that Pearson’s resignation be reconsidered. How genuine this sentiment was, is hard to gauge, as at a Council Meeting it was claimed that, in private, the men voiced the opposite opinion and had been pressured into the commendation.<sup>151</sup> Pearson himself, despite his protestations in the press, had been quick to resign when an inquiry was made into the allegations, but he may have been given little choice by a Watch Committee demanding damage limitation.

At a Town Council meeting on the 23 July 1872, Charles Clarkson of Whitby was appointed Chief Constable after receiving twenty votes, defeating yet another attempt by supporters to get Pearson reinstated (thirteen votes). Clarkson was to take up the position on the 6 August.

Superintendent Pearson had completed twenty-four years’ service at Halifax, as well as an unspecified period in the Manchester police. On his resignation, he may not have realised that, not having served for the full twenty-five years, the Council would deny him a pension or a gratuity. He may possibly have been verbally promised a pension to get him to resign. The *Halifax Guardian* was certainly under the impression that he was eligible, writing that ‘it

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<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August 1872.

<sup>150</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 15 June 1872.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 August 1872.

is a source of satisfaction to his friends to know that both from age and length of service he is entitled to a retiring pension'.<sup>152</sup>

At a Halifax Council meeting in August, it was confirmed that under the existing Council rules, Superintendent Pearson was not entitled to a pension. The Council laid the blame for their intention to adhere strictly to their local regulations on the government, who had still not dealt with the superannuation question. As Emsley states, such action would have caused uncertainty amongst the local force and it was criticised at a national meeting of chief constables.<sup>153</sup> Several of the councillors were aware of how badly this reflected on the Council and how the rest of the police would view such treatment. If the head of the force could be denied a pension after twenty-four years' service, what chance had the men of being fairly treated? Alderman Wayman summed up the situation, urging the Council to pay Pearson a pension since the men would see that

....whilst there was a determination on the part of the Council to have due discipline, and that all the obligations of public duty should be complied with yet there was an absence of unreasonableness and hard dealing towards them. Thus they might expect a bond of feeling between the corporation and the police, which would be very agreeable and beneficial, and they might expect that service would be more willingly, cheerfully and efficiently rendered.<sup>154</sup>

His plea was ignored and a vote taken to refund the Superintendent's superannuation contributions, amounting to £68-4-0d. Another attempt was made by Pearson's supporters to get him appointed as Assistant Superintendent to Clarkson, claiming his actions had been 'blameworthy but not heinous'. Since the appointment was to be for a year, it was clearly a ploy to allow Pearson to qualify for a pension, but it too was defeated.

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<sup>152</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 March 1872.

<sup>153</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p.173.

<sup>154</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 10 August 1872.

The only other avenue left to Superintendent Pearson to obtain recompense for his length of service was through ill-health. Two days before his resignation was due to take effect, he handed in not one, but two medical certificates, certifying that he was no longer able to perform his duties due to infirmity of body. This sudden disability, which had not previously incapacitated him, plainly struck the Watch Committee as extremely dubious. They insisted that he be examined by an independent expert and referred him to the senior acting surgeon at the Manchester Infirmary, who, to their dismay, duly confirmed a diagnosis of cataracts in both eyes.<sup>155</sup> Thus he satisfied the three conditions for superannuation on the grounds of age, length of service and infirmity. The Watch Committee, which recognised a poisoned chalice when it saw one, prudently declined to decide the amount of Pearson's superannuation, despite a motion to pay him £100 a year, which was lost. They referred the question to the Town Council meeting on the 4 September, where an attempt to deny Superintendent Pearson any pension was lost and he was finally awarded £40 per year. In view of over twenty years' service and a final salary of £200, this was a paltry sum. Only a year before, another police officer, Inspector John Gaukroger, who joined the Borough police at the same time as Pearson in 1848, had retired with a pension of 15/- a week (£39/ year), which was half his final wages of 30/-.<sup>156</sup> The earlier, defeated, motion to pay Pearson £100 a year pension, was more in line with this previous superannuation award. The majority of the Council clearly felt that in light of recent events, Superintendent Pearson was fortunate to be receiving anything and exercised their discretion to award him as little as they could get away with. Only the committed support of a section of the councillors stopped them from reducing it even further. However, the former Superintendent had the last laugh. In spite of the censure of many of the electorate, he was clearly well liked and popular with others. In October 1872, he was put forward as council candidate for North Ward, on the slogan 'For nearly twenty-four years a

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<sup>155</sup> HWCM, 4 September 1872, HXM189.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 May 1871, HXM189.

known public servant', which created huge public interest in the town.<sup>157</sup> By November, he had been elected a councillor amid 'great rejoicing', with a parade, and a brass band.<sup>158</sup> For the next four years, he was to be a thorn in the Watch Committee's side. Five years later, he became a long standing member (and eventually Vice Chairman) of the Watch Committee.<sup>159</sup>

This whole affair clearly split the corporation, with Pearson's staunch supporters in a minority on the mainly liberal council. The situation was further complicated, since the Black Bull was one of several corporation owned public houses, a fact that caused fury in certain sections of the public, who demanded to know why the Council owned any such establishments and insisted that in future there was 'a thorough and satisfactory police supervision with no condonation of offences'.<sup>160</sup>

Superintendent Pearson's attitude and example had no doubt pervaded the force. Cases were only entered into the Report Book if he considered them suitable and likely to get a conviction. His acknowledged leniency to the brewers' trade meant that although drunks were still charged, it was rarer for landlords to be brought before the magistrates. How long this leniency had been going on is difficult to assess. Even under Superintendent Spiers, the police force had taken a pragmatic view of its duties, preferring initially to warn and caution rather than to prosecute. Superintendent Pearson had evidently continued this policy, although the force was always certified as efficient. It is likely that the stability of continuous leadership over twenty years also allowed complacency and laxity to develop, with the bias towards the drinks trade noted by Steedman. How far members of the Watch Committee were complicit is impossible to tell. Certainly some members were suspicious of the methods being used, but the staunch support from certain sections of the Council, possibly Tory, suggest

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<sup>157</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 15 October 1872.

<sup>158</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 2 November 1872.

<sup>159</sup> HWC, 9 November 1877, HXM190.

<sup>160</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 March 1872.

some sympathies lay with Pearson. The Tory newspaper, the *Halifax Guardian*, in an article on his retirement, wrote that ‘Mr Pearson has long been known for suavity of conduct and leniency of temperament’. It further commented on the difficulty of having to ‘steer safely between leniency on the one hand, and undue severity on the other’ and felt it a matter of congratulation that during his tenure, no-one on the force had been sued for damages for exceeding their duty.<sup>161</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The apparent efficiency of the force indicates that superficially at least, the police were performing most basic functions and duties. The above comments by the Guardian suggest that Pearson’s tenure had long been characterised by a relaxed, lenient outlook, with certain interests benefitting from it more than others. The change in public mood over the previous two decades, with Temperance sympathies growing, meant that by 1872, Superintendent Pearson’s approach was increasingly out of step with the majority of the respectable ratepayers and councillors. The appointment of Detective Inspector Lawton may have been an attempt to inject the ‘stamina’ that was felt to be missing. Lawton, with previous police experience, was not prepared to alter his methods and turn a blind eye to certain practices. His frustration with the regime at Halifax resulted in his outburst in front of the magistrates, who rebuked him and said it was a matter for the Watch Committee. However, it had brought the problems into the public domain, no doubt what Lawton had intended, and the Watch Committee was unable to brush the matter under the carpet.

The problems with recruitment are harder to quantify. The Watch Committee appeared to be concerned about the high turnover which had risen steadily from 1867 onwards. They linked the problem to Superintendent Pearson’s lax regime, but perhaps because of their parochial

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 30 March 1872.

attitude, seemed unaware that a high level of resignations and dismissals was a characteristic of all forces in this period. Turnover rates were higher in the boroughs and also higher in the northern counties, making it more difficult for Halifax to keep recruits.<sup>162</sup> The economic and demographic conditions of the town also played their part, as did the fact that promotion within the force was static, despite the introduction of three classes of policeman. Even after Superintendent Pearson's departure, resignations remained high, although this could be due to the effects of a new, stricter regime.

The twenty-one years of Pearson's Superintendency had given the Halifax Police a stability that other forces, beset by changes in the hierarchy, found hard to match. Though his tenure ended in accusations of bias and inefficiency, Pearson ran the police force effectively, but without the zeal which was to be found in some other forces. In this, he was initially supported by the Watch Committee, who, beyond the improvement of the conditions of the town, had little crusading spirit, although this began to change as social attitudes to moral reform altered and pressure was brought to bear by sections of the ratepayers. Over the two decades as head of the police force, Pearson appears to have grown increasingly close to the brewers' interests at a time when the temperance element of municipal liberalism was becoming increasingly influential. Brought down by his manipulation of the reports of offences, Pearson was also blamed for the high turnover of men, probably somewhat unjustly. It would have been difficult to enforce discipline on a drunken policeman, when the Superintendent was known to frequent pubs after hours, but the Watch Committee minutes show regular and mostly consistent punishments. The problems were not limited to Halifax, but common to all police forces at this period and owed more to other circumstances than just the leadership. The upper ranks of the force were from the late 1850s staffed by men who had made the police a career, but could not expect to rise any higher. Their occupation of the

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<sup>162</sup> Taylor, *Crime, Policing and Punishment in England*, p. 90.

ranks of sergeant and above, until their inevitable cycle of retirements began in the 1870s, meant that new recruits could see no prospect of advancement and economic conditions in Halifax meant there were plenty of other more lucrative opportunities. The Watch Committee recognised this and endeavoured to compensate by creating a tiered system of seniority with good conduct and longevity rewarded. The absence of crusading zeal and latterly, the increased tolerance of the liquor trade meant that Halifax had little conflict compared to other industrial towns. There were always drunken assaults and the enforcement of new by-laws caused friction, but the increasingly respectable working classes looked favourably on the improvements to their environment and neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the hardening of reforming attitudes, particularly against the liquor trade and Pearson's ignominious resignation left the Halifax ratepayers with the impression that reform and close supervision was needed for the police force in the future.

## Chapter 3

### A New Broom?

The appointment of a chief constable was often an important watershed in the development of a police force and none more so than in the case of the Halifax police force in 1872. The choice of Charles Clarkson in August, as the head of the force, was clearly meant to be a new start for the Halifax Police, sweeping away the lax attitude, injecting some rigour into its proceedings and pacifying the complaints and fears of a vociferous, but influential section of the ratepayers and voters. The resignation of John Pearson had shown that the head constable of a borough was vulnerable to hostile criticism and was unlikely to retain support from the Watch Committee in such a case. However, Clarkson's appointment was to last a mere four years, unlike the lengthy tenure of his predecessor. Nevertheless, his appointment was a major turning point in the history of the Halifax police, largely because of his zealous enforcement of the law which, whilst delighting most of the middle-class ratepayers, antagonised large parts of the working class. He reformed the police force by promoting men on merit, rather than on long-service, but faced accusations of favouritism from those who were disregarded for advancement. His undoubted abilities were hindered by an abrasive manner, which did nothing to conciliate his critics.

The Watch Committee received thirty-eight applications for the post of Chief Constable and interviewed four candidates. Two of them, Captain Shoubridge of Manchester and Major Wilkinson of Bridlington, were ex-army and the other two were in senior positions in other forces in the North of England.<sup>1</sup> The Watch Committee was mainly interested in candidates who were already experienced as chief constables or superintendents, although they interviewed ex-officers, possibly looking for a stricter, more disciplined regime to combat the

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<sup>1</sup> HWCM, 26 June 1872, HXM 189.

laxity and drunkenness in the ranks. Unlike many other forces however, they preferred a non-military chief constable, as the voting on the council showed, with Charles Clarkson, the chosen candidate, gaining 24 votes, the Major, 1 vote and Captain Shoubridge none at all. This contrasted with the WRCC where the first two chief constables were ex-military, declining in 1869 to even shortlist the only two professional chief constables who applied.<sup>2</sup> The preference for a professional in Halifax may have been a residual prejudice from when the force was first established and the strongly radical council wanted no truck with a police force with militaristic tendencies. George Williams, Superintendent of Detectives at Salford, had come second in the voting, emphasizing that the Council preferred an experienced policeman to an ex-army officer.<sup>3</sup> Williams, like Clarkson was ambitious for promotion and moved on from Salford to become Chief Superintendent at Liverpool the following year, with his vacated post going to Inspector Lawton from the Halifax force. Borough forces tended to prefer a professional head constable and ambitious officers applied to other borough forces in the search for promotion.

The new Chief Constable was born in North Yorkshire, the son of an agricultural labourer and appears to have been an ambitious man. His rapid rise to superintendent and his energetic approach impressed the Watch Committee. One of the new breed of career policemen, who joined as a constable and worked his way up, he eventually completed thirty-three years in the police. The business elite which dominated Halifax Council were not aristocratic and saw nothing incongruous in a talented man rising up from the bottom and it could be argued that this reflected Halifax society. The Crossley family, which owned the largest carpet-weaving factory in Europe, had been weavers in the previous generation. Carolyn Steedman claimed that the county forces followed the model of county society, with the aristocracy and gentry

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<sup>2</sup> Bramham, 'Parish Constables or Police Officers', p.73.

<sup>3</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 6 July 1872.

dominating the magistracy and chief constable posts. However this is disputed by J. E. Leigh in her research on county chief constables, where she considers that although there was some truth in the image of non-professional chief constables from a background of military service, the reality was more nuanced than previously thought, with several county chief constables having risen through the ranks of county and borough forces.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to his career in the police, Clarkson also co-authored a book on the subject, intended to explain the formation, role, workings and hazards of the police to a wider audience, which drew on his own experiences in London, Tees-side and Yorkshire.<sup>5</sup> It lays out many instances of best practice for police forces and the way they were run, but it is never made clear how many of these are Clarkson's own personal views or are a distillation of other chief constables' experiences. The book is obviously written with hindsight, after a career in the police and his time at Halifax is not specifically mentioned, possibly because it was so short and ended ignominiously.

Clarkson's book mentions his early years on the beat in London and this may have been where he started his career. Later, the 1861 census shows him as a police sergeant, boarding with other police in Thornaby-on-Tees, close to Stockton and Middlesbrough. Ten years later, the census shows him, still only thirty-three years old, as the Superintendent of Police in Whitby, where he had married a widow, who ran the local Temperance Hotel. This family background is unlikely to have done him a disservice with the Halifax Watch Committee, which was facing accusations of partiality towards the brewing interests and his comparative youth must have contrasted sharply with the sixty year old ex-superintendent, John Pearson. The Watch Committee must have felt they had a candidate who knew policing from the ground upwards.

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<sup>4</sup> J. E. Leigh, 'Early County Chief Constables in the North of England, 1880-1905', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The Open University, 2013, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Tempest Clarkson and J. Hall Richardson, *Police!* (London: Field and Tuer, 1889).

He took charge of the force on 6 August 1872, but was in a difficult position. The arguments and attempted re-instatements of Superintendent Pearson continued, including an attempt by some councillors to get him appointed as assistant superintendent to Clarkson, so that he could complete the requisite number of years to qualify for superannuation.<sup>6</sup> The matter only came to a close at the end of September, when the council finally granted Superintendent Pearson a pension on medical grounds.<sup>7</sup> The resignation and subsequent treatment of Pearson had also affected the morale of the men, many of whom no doubt felt sympathy for him.

The head of the force was now to be called 'chief constable' rather than superintendent. David Wall charts the development of the position and title of the head officer of the boroughs in his study of county and borough chief constables.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the chief officer of a borough, unlike a county chief constable, had no legal identity. The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act vested the watch committees with the power to appoint, discipline and dismiss the members of its force and the borough chief officer derived his powers from the watch committee, not in his own right as did a county chief constable.<sup>9</sup> As Wall points out, most of the early chief officers of the boroughs were initially referred to as superintending or head constables, but over the course of the nineteenth century became known as chief constables as their role and responsibilities developed. There were exceptions, where the chief officer was known as chief constable from the start, such as Leeds, where the title had been used for the constable in charge of the watch and Bradford, which after its incorporation in 1847 advertised for applicants for the post of chief constable.<sup>10</sup> Wall refers to the concern this assumption of their title caused amongst some county chief constables, who considered

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<sup>6</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 10 August 1872.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 September 1872.

<sup>8</sup> D.S. Wall, *Chief Constables*, pp.30-32.

<sup>9</sup> Municipal Corporations Act, 1835. (5 and 6 Wm 4 c76).

<sup>10</sup> Wall, *Chief Constables*, p.30. Smith, *Bradford's Police*, p.14.

their position to be socially and statutorily superior to that of their borough counterpart.<sup>11</sup> Complaints were made to the Home Secretary about the boroughs using the same title, with the claim that it caused confusion with postal deliveries, but the Home Office ruled in 1897 that both could be called chief constable.<sup>12</sup> In Halifax, the title of superintendent was more likely to cause confusion, since the WRCC had a division based in the town, headed by a superintendent. It is more likely, however, that the title was changed because the force now numbered 65 men, more than double the size it had been when Pearson had become Superintendent in 1851 and to have a chief constable rather than a superintendent would enhance civic pride and put it on a par with other local forces, such as Bradford and Leeds. It would also help to emphasize to the ratepayers that this was going to be a clean break with the previous regime, with a more professional ethos, brought in from outside by an experienced police officer. Promoting from the ranks was not, this time, an option, as this would only be seen to encourage the flaws and deficiencies that had caused concern.

The new Chief Constable lost no time in making his mark. He had a clearly defined strategy for recruiting and inspiring the men under his command and looked to improve their quality and condition. Like his predecessor, he looked for recruits among the unskilled, labouring classes, but also targeted advertisements at rural areas to attract men, no doubt hoping to attract physically fit men who could cope with the rigours of the beat. This policy is one noted by Steedman, although she points out that the recruits came from various rural employments and were not purely agricultural labourers.<sup>13</sup>

In Clarkson's first report, the force was only one constable short of its full strength, up from a deficiency of thirteen men, when he took over four months previously. He gave it as his opinion that the size of the force was ample, if well trained and fairly paid. In a clear attempt

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., *Chief Constables*, p.95.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., *Chief Constables*, p.30.

<sup>13</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp.70-2.

to reward and encourage the men to stay in the force, the Watch Committee increased the pay of all classes of constables after three years' service and again after seven years, although the basic pay of those who had less than three years' service remained the same. Those who had already been in the force the required length of time received the increase immediately. In addition, the Chief Constable introduced a merit badge for those constables promoted to merit class, presumably as a visual display of their status.<sup>14</sup> The police library was examined by a special committee with a view to extending and improving it and over the next four years, further gifts of money and 153 books for it were recorded in the Watch Committee minutes.<sup>15</sup> This was a project dear to Chief Constable Clarkson's heart. In his 1889 book, co-written with a London journalist, he set out the functions and history of the police. He illustrated his topic by drawing on over thirty years of experience as a policeman, both on the beat and as an officer. He considered a good police library to be composed of 'well-chosen and entertaining books' in order to promote the intelligence of the men and broaden their knowledge and this was no doubt the objective of the special committee.<sup>16</sup> In addition, improvements to the men's literacy were felt to be desirable and arrangements were made for lessons in writing to be given. Clarkson writes approvingly in *Police!* of constables who were glad to improve their moderate education in this way, indicating that these were the men from whom promotion to the rank of sergeant and above were drawn.<sup>17</sup> Although these improvements went through the Watch Committee, it was clear that the ideas and driving force came from Chief Constable Clarkson and that he had a clear vision of what constituted an efficient force. He was in favour of men who were raw recruits, considering that if they had 'humanity and natural kindness of disposition', then all other abilities could be supplied by the training they

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<sup>14</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 November 1872.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November 1872.

<sup>16</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, p.164.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.141.

would receive.<sup>18</sup> The Chief Constable was also in favour of supervising the conduct of the men off duty as well as on, advocating that single men should lodge together in barracks, under the care of an officer. He developed this theme in his book, giving a glowing account of barracks as enjoying ‘all the privileges of a well-regulated private home’.<sup>19</sup> Yet, as Clive Emsley points out, contemporary reports also mention this sort of accommodation as unsanitary (especially in London), noisy and prone to bouts of horseplay and bullying.<sup>20</sup> In spite of Clarkson’s recommendation, Halifax did not establish a section house. This was probably on the grounds of cost and the availability of suitable accommodation. The usual system was for unmarried men who were not local to lodge with fellow constables and at respectable lodging houses and successive censuses show that this was common in Halifax.<sup>21</sup>

Other improvements introduced under Clarkson were the purchase of an iron safe for the station, the introduction of police helmets and whistles, the photographing of prisoners and eventually, the purchase of a prison van.<sup>22</sup> Improvements were gradually being introduced in other police forces, but there was no consistency in the adoption of these measures, which were left to the discretion of individual forces. Whistles, bought for the Halifax Borough Police in March 1876, were not introduced to the Metropolitan Police until 1883, although they had helmets in the 1830s.<sup>23</sup> Urban and industrial centres were more likely than rural areas to adopt innovations in policing, but even there, forces were affected by financial

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.139.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>20</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, pp.122-3.

<sup>21</sup> TNA, RG9/3279, 1861 England Census, Pc Ingham and Pc Brooksbank lodging with Widow Shapland.

TNA, RG10/4401, 1871 England Census, Pc Binns lodging with Pc Fox and family.

TNA, RG11/4404, 1881 England Census, Pc Hartley and Pc Whittam lodging with Widow Bradshaw.

TNA, RG12/3590, 1891 England Census, Pc Pitcher lodging with Pc Ashmore and family.

<sup>22</sup> HWCN, 30 September 1872, HXM189: safe. 12 January 1874, HXM189: helmets. 8 March 1875, HXM 189: photography. 20 March 1876, HXM189: whistles. 12 June 1876, HXM189: prison van.

<sup>23</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p.124.

constraints imposed by the watch committees. Chief Constable Clarkson wanted an efficient, modern force and was fortunate to be supported by the Watch Committee. Every Government Inspection during the four years that Clarkson was in charge had glowing reports, such as the one in 1876, where the Inspector expressed pleasure at their smart, creditable and clean appearance and commented on their drill as done ‘in a steady and soldier like manner’.<sup>24</sup> At a Watch Committee inspection in March 1873, when the men paraded in new improved uniforms, that included for the first time a waterproof oil cloth cape, the Watch Committee declared that they wanted ‘a police force second to none’.<sup>25</sup>

In his book, written over a decade later, Clarkson wrote of entertainments for the borough force as ‘marks of encouragement’ that were ‘valued by the police’.<sup>26</sup> Under his leadership, these entertainments provided by the Watch Committee, became a periodic feature that seem to have been much appreciated by the men. Previous attempts had been made under Superintendent Pearson, but were not regular or recorded. Within a couple of months of Clarkson’s arrival, the whole force was taken to dinner at a local inn by the Mayor, followed by another banquet at Christmas.<sup>27</sup> The following year, the force was treated to a day out in the country with a ‘knife and fork tea’ and a cigar to take home.<sup>28</sup> The clear objective of these entertainments was to show appreciation to the men and to promote their good spirit and unanimity, creating a cohesive body that worked well together and with its officers.

Even a gathering to mark the retirement of a long-serving officer could be turned to good account. When Inspector Thompson retired in 1876, after twenty-seven years’ service, the entire force gathered in the Parade Room to witness his presentation. He was given a ‘massive solid silver tea pot, coffee pot, sugar basin and cream jug costing over £40’. The gift

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<sup>24</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 8 April 1876.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 March 1873.

<sup>26</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!* p.369.

<sup>27</sup> *Leeds Mercury* 8 October 1872 and 28 December 1872.

<sup>28</sup> *Halifax Guardian* 30 August 1873.

had been paid for by the police, the magistrates and the tradesmen of the town. His pension was £52 per annum, more than that awarded to Superintendent Pearson. The Chairman of the Watch Committee, Alderman Swale, told the assembled men that ‘this was something they had to look forward to if they continued in the service with good conduct’.<sup>29</sup> Incentives were not confined to pay and conditions, but loyal long service was rewarded at retirement with marks of appreciation such as this and, as Steedman pointed out, defined the officer’s standing and position in the local community.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout his period in office at Halifax, Chief Constable Clarkson was sympathetic to the men under his command. Having come through the ranks himself, he had an appreciation of the hardships and difficulties they faced and was keen to ensure that good, reliable men were dealt with as generously as possible, although disciplinary offences were dealt with sharply in new recruits.<sup>31</sup> This was in accord with the attitude of the Watch Committee and any reasonable request from the men was rarely refused, such as their application to be paid weekly instead of fortnightly.<sup>32</sup> There was no evidence that the men tried to take advantage of a new regime, before Clarkson established his authority. Indeed, the resignations petered out for the first four or five months, as if the men were waiting to see if a new Chief Constable would make a material difference to the conditions of their employment and may bear out councillors’ assertions that the men were not necessarily happy with Superintendent Pearson’s tenure.

Chief Constable Clarkson’s arrival coincided with the implementation of the 1872 Licensing Act, which gave the police new powers of supervision to stop drunkenness and disorder.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 8 January 1876.

<sup>30</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp.142-3.

<sup>31</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!* In his book Chief Constable Clarkson describes being on the beat in London and Teeside.

<sup>32</sup> HWCM, 12 July 1875, HXM189.

<sup>33</sup> The Licensing Act, 1872 (35 and 36 Vic c 94).

Reversing the previous order of things, a publican had to prove they did not supply liquor to a drunk. A register of convictions was established and licenses were endorsed with them. Three convictions meant the loss of the license for five years.

Exhorted by the Borough Magistrates to carry out the new law 'with all vigilance', the new Chief Constable made an immediate impact, targeting beerhouses, public houses and drunks.<sup>34</sup> The result was police cells full to overflowing at the weekends, and consequently the Borough Court being busy on Mondays. The *Halifax Guardian* commented:

This increased activity on the part of the police will surely have the effect of reducing the number of drunken people on the streets on Saturday night and Sunday.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the policemen on ordinary beats, additional officers were put on special duty at weekends 'looking after public houses'<sup>36</sup> The impact was still being felt in December that year when the *Leeds Mercury* reported that 'Christmas Day was thoroughly enjoyed, but evidently in a much more rational manner than has on many previous occasions been the case, there being an almost entire absence of drunkenness in the streets.'<sup>37</sup> This increased vigilance against drunkenness continued throughout Clarkson's tenure, but the provisions of the Licensing Act were not enforced so stringently at the Magistrates Court. On the first anniversary of the operation of the new act, Chief Constable Clarkson presented his annual report to the Licensing Committee at the Brewster Sessions.<sup>38</sup>

Although thirty-one licensees had proceedings taken against them, only six were given endorsements and the Chief Constable was keen that the magistrates should always endorse the license, as this was a more effective deterrent than merely fines. The magistrates claimed

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<sup>34</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 24 August 1872.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 September 1872.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 October 1872.

<sup>37</sup> *Leeds Mercury* 28 December 1872.

<sup>38</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 August 1873.

to have given the licensees a year to get used to the new regulations, but assured the Chief Constable that in future they intended to endorse the licenses of all offenders. However, a year later, at the following Brewster sessions, only two licences were endorsed, which may give some indication of where the magistrates sympathies lay.<sup>39</sup> By then, the Licensing Act 1874 had been amended by the new Tory government to make endorsements by the courts discretionary, rather than compulsory.

Licensees and drunks were not the only ones to draw the attention of the police. New police arrangements were intended to keep brothels in check and in November 1872, three brothel keepers were sent to prison.<sup>40</sup> The following year, three shopkeepers were prosecuted for Sunday trading, with the Chief Constable announcing his intention to prosecute all future offenders.<sup>41</sup> At the Halifax Fair, in June 1873, which was a large event with over 400 booths, the *Halifax Guardian* noted that due to the activity of the police, forty-seven offenders had been sent to prison.<sup>42</sup> Chief Constable Clarkson's regime was having a profound effect on crime in the borough and at the trial of a gang of young thieves (committed to six weeks hard labour), he was described as "terror to evil doers".<sup>43</sup> Clearly he and the force were acquiring a reputation for vigilance and effectiveness. By the time of his first report in November, the increased activity on the part of the police resulted in a decrease of serious offences, but an increase of 287 persons proceeded against summarily.<sup>44</sup> The Watch Committee were so pleased with the services of their new Chief Constable, that at the end of his first year, they

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<sup>39</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 29 August 1874.

<sup>40</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 2 November 1872 and *Leeds Mercury*, 2 November 1872.

<sup>41</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 May 1873.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 June 1873.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 July 1873.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November 1872.

recommended to the Council that his salary be increased from £300 to £350 per annum, a measure that was passed unanimously.<sup>45</sup>

## **Recruitment**

When Clarkson was appointed in August 1872, the Halifax force was suffering problems with the recruitment and retention of suitable men and was short of its full complement by thirteen men. This was a problem common to most police forces at the time, but the Watch Committee seemed not to be aware of it and had blamed Superintendent Pearson for the difficulties in keeping men. By the time the postponed government inspection took place nearly two months later, the force was short of only one man. However, recruitment continued to be an ongoing problem, despite the change at the top. During the four years of Clarkson's tenure (6 August 1872 to 10 August 1876) exactly one hundred men were taken on as supernumeraries. Of this number, twelve are never mentioned in the records again and appear never to have patrolled the beat, possibly because better paid employment became available elsewhere or because they were deemed not to be up to the job.

Over the previous twenty-five years, where origins could be identified, the bulk of the Halifax force was recruited locally, or from a wider Yorkshire area. Carolyn Steedman, in her comparison between the county forces of Buckinghamshire and Staffordshire in the mid nineteenth century, notes how the latter county had a higher percentage of native born recruits and ascribes it to Staffordshire's mix of industrial and rural economies, which could adequately supply the force's needs.<sup>46</sup> Halifax, though on an urban, rather than county scale, possessed a similar mix of industrial centre and rural hinterland. However, towards the end of the 1860s and the early years of the following decade, an increasing number of Halifax recruits were born outside Yorkshire, with a significant group from rural Lincolnshire.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 9 August 1873 and HWCMS, 6 August 1873, HXM189.

<sup>46</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.78.

It is difficult to trace the origins of many of the men who joined the Halifax force during the four years that Chief Constable Clarkson was in charge, since this period does not overlap with a census year and many stayed in the force for such a short time. Those that can be traced suggest a much more even division of origins, with a third being local men, a third coming from other parts of Yorkshire and final third from different parts of the country. This supports the evidence from the minutes that the Watch Committee was still experiencing difficulty in attracting suitable candidates for the force from the local area.

**Table 3.1**

**Recruits Place of Birth (Where Known)**

	<b>Halifax Parish</b>	<b>Yorkshire (Excluding Halifax)</b>	<b>U.K. (Excluding Yorkshire)</b>
Superintendent Pearson: 1851-1872	52	18	16
Chief Constable Clarkson: 1872-1876	10	11	9

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes and 1851-1871 Censuses.

During the period 1874 to 1876, the Watch Committee paid for adverts in *The Scotsman*, the *Dundee Advertiser*, the *Penrith Observer* and the *Northern Echo*, all seeking ‘smart, active, intelligent men’.<sup>47</sup> It was no longer sufficient just to publicise the vacancies. The advert stressed that ‘well conducted men will soon be advanced’ and listed the benefits of the job, with the wage scales, clothing, annual leave and sickness pay to show the advantages of a steady regular employment.<sup>48</sup> These adverts appear to have more effect than previously, with several Scots and men from the north of England being appointed. Although there are no records of adverts elsewhere, four former agricultural labourers from Norfolk and one from Cambridgeshire also joined the force between 1872-6. Steedman points out that the

<sup>47</sup> HWCW *The Scotsman*: 26 January 1874, *Penrith Observer*: 27 July 1874, *Northern Echo*: 14 December 1874, *Dundee Advertiser and Peoples Journal*: 15 May 1876, HXM 189.

<sup>48</sup> *Northern Echo* (Darlington), 1 December 1874.

movement of agricultural labourers to more industrialised counties, in order to get reliable better paid work, particularly during the agricultural depression of the 1870s was used by police chiefs.<sup>49</sup> This may account for recruitment adverts being targeted at impoverished rural areas such as Cumbria and Scotland, with emphasis put on the benefits such as leave, sickness and pensions, none of which would have been available to an agricultural worker. The outdoor, back breaking physical labour of agricultural work may also have made the harsh conditions of the bobby on the beat seem less daunting. Clarkson himself commented that many forces relied upon agricultural and labouring classes for recruitment and cited regular wages, extra pay for special duty, uniform and provision for old age and disability as material inducements to men to join.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, it did not necessarily follow that these men would remain.

It may also have been a deliberate policy to recruit from outside Halifax, in order to keep a distance between the police and the local population, although it is never explicitly stated. If so, it was a reversal of the original approach, which held that it was better to hire local men, who knew the area and the people. There is little evidence in Halifax that the Watch Committee recruited Irishmen to make up for the lack of suitable police. Steedman shows that in Staffordshire at least, the police force was happy to employ Irish-born recruits, although mainly from a Protestant background.<sup>51</sup> The occasional recruit in Halifax can be traced to an Irish background, but it seems likely that the Watch Committee did not view the Irish community as suitable material. Many of those arrested for drunkenness and assaults were Irish and the local papers document their antipathy to the police. For their part, the Watch Committee and the local magistrates had deplored the living conditions, behaviour and Fenian tendencies of the local (mainly Catholic) Irish community and saw them as drunken,

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<sup>49</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.78.

<sup>50</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, p.138.

<sup>51</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp. 78-9.

violent troublemakers. Even with the difficulties of recruitment, the Watch Committee was likely to view Irish candidates as adding to, rather than relieving their problems.

Under Charles Clarkson's Chief Constablenesship, 88 recruits became constables. As table 3.2 shows, out of this number 34 men lasted less than a year, either resigning or being dismissed. Another 35 men left before they completed five years' service, meaning that only 19% of the new recruits lasted more than five years. Ten of the recruits completed twenty-five years' service and drew pensions, three of them being locals, three from other areas of Yorkshire and four of them being the former agricultural labourers from Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Three of these four were continuously in the police force from joining, but William Hancock resigned after eighteen months, re-joining ten months later, presumably after trying his hand at another occupation locally. He never achieved any promotion, except to first class constable, and retired due to ill health in 1899. The 1901 census shows him still in Halifax, working as a ticket collector on the railway.

Two of the others gained promotion to sergeant, one taking only four years, whilst his colleague took over twenty to achieve the same. It is not possible to know exactly why these four moved north, presumably driven by the agricultural depression in rural areas, to find steady employment. Having gained it, Steedman notes that distance from home and the poverty there made permanent policing attractive.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

**Table 3.2****Length of Service of Halifax Police recruits, August 1872 – August 1876**

Number of new recruits appointed	100
Disappear from records	12
Less than 1 year	34
1 year but less than 2	16
2-4 years	19
Less than 5 years total	69
5-9 years	7
10-19 years	2
over 20 years	10
	88
Total	100

Source: Halifax Borough Council Watch Committee Minutes.

**Table 3.3****Reasons for Leaving the Force**

	<b>Aug-Dec 1872</b>	<b>1873</b>	<b>1874</b>	<b>1875</b>	<b>Jan – Aug 1876</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Resign</b>	3	14	5	13	9	44
<b>Resign ill-health</b>	1	3	0	2	1	7
<b>Dismissal</b>	3	5	7	5	6	26
<b>Death in service</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Pensioned</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Halifax Borough Council Watch Committee Minutes.

Resignations were the cause of the majority of the men leaving the force under Chief Constable Clarkson, (see table 3.3) with those resigning accounting for 33 per cent of the turnover.<sup>53</sup> Six men (not including Superintendent Pearson) resigned due to ill health, three of them in the first year after Charles Clarkson was appointed. All had served over twenty years in the force, with four of them becoming sergeants. William Pearson was one of the original members of the force in 1848 and had been a sergeant since 1851. He was laid up with illness

<sup>53</sup> Turnover is expressed as percentage of total force between August 1872- August 1876. ie. Fifty-four officers and men in post at Clarkson's appointment, plus one hundred recruits during this period.

in December 1872 and put on half pay for six months, to be seen by the Police surgeon at the end of that time. Given his long service and diagnosis of rheumatism, this seems a lenient measure by the Watch Committee, since he was unlikely to improve sufficiently to return to work and was in fact pensioned off at the end of the six months.<sup>54</sup> Also a founder member was John Thompson, born in Leeds, the only one of the six who was not a local. He had spent time in Australia and New Zealand, prior to returning to England and joining the Halifax force, also becoming a sergeant. All six had been career policemen and the backbone of the early force, with the four sergeants providing stability and continuity over more than twenty years. Their resignations, over the four year period of Clarkson's tenure, made it easier for the Chief Constable to stamp his own mark on the force, removing some of the oldest members who had served with Superintendent Pearson and who were most likely to be sympathetic to him and averse to change. Although all of them were in their fifties and infirm, it is possible that Clarkson's new regime, which emphasised zeal, diligence and results, hastened their decisions to leave. All were certified by the surgeon as infirm in body, with rheumatism, an occupational hazard for a policeman, cited in several cases. They could probably no longer keep up with the standards set by the much younger Chief Constable. The job was onerous, with the ever present risk of violent assault and those that did serve long enough to claim a pension could not always look forward to a lengthy retirement. Both Inspector Gaukroger and Sergeant Baldwin, members of the force since its beginning, retired within a year of each other in 1870 and 1871. Both were dead by the end of 1873, at the age of fifty-four and no doubt the physical demands of the job contributed to their deaths.

Over the four years that Chief Constable Clarkson was in charge, forty-four men resigned. Since the minutes do not record their reasons in most cases, it is only possible to speculate why they left. After the new Chief Constable was appointed in August 1872, only two men

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<sup>54</sup> HWCM, 12 May 1873, HXM189.

resigned in the latter part of that year. Possibly, given the changes, the men were waiting to see if there would be any improvements in pay, promotion or work conditions. However, by the following year, the number of men resigning had returned to the levels that the Watch Committee had come to expect over the previous decade. It was clear that Superintendent Pearson's regime had not been responsible for the high turnover and despite the reforms that the new Chief Constable had put in place, the number of resignations remained high. In fact, they compared unfavourably with the previous decade (1861-70) when the resignations totalled only fifty-two.

Many were like Emanuel Yates, an agricultural labourer from Hertfordshire, who resigned in under a year, but stayed in Halifax and became a fishmonger.<sup>55</sup> Clearly the police force was only a stop-gap employment, probably a way of moving to a more industrialised area with a greater variety of employment and as Clive Emsley points out, was a means of geographical and social mobility.<sup>56</sup> Emsley considered that to the unemployed worker, 'policing was just another job to be tried when trade was depressed' and noted that applications to the Lancashire Constabulary rose in the recession of 1847-8.<sup>57</sup> This pattern was not uncommon, with at least six men joining the force for short periods, resigning and returning when other employment did not work out. The majority left and were never heard of again. Four constables resigned to join other police forces and Inspector Lawton, who had instigated the controversy regarding Superintendent Pearson, left to become Superintendent of Detectives in the Salford Police. No comments were made in the Watch Committee minutes expressing pleasure at his promotion or satisfaction for his previous good service. Quite possibly, the Watch Committee were pleased to see him leave as the furore over Superintendent Pearson had also reflected badly on them. In the event, Superintendent

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<sup>55</sup> 1881 Census.

<sup>56</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p.203.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, *The English Police*, p.199-200.

Lawton's move to Salford ended badly, as in 1877 he was asked to either resign, or be dismissed, following an adverse government inspection which threatened the withdrawal of the Treasury Grant.<sup>58</sup> This highlighted the difficulties of senior officers, who were held to account for all problems and in the boroughs could be dismissed as easily as the men who served beneath them.

More damaging, owing to the loss of experience, was the resignation of two more men who had become sergeants under Superintendent Pearson in 1866. Sergeant Greenwood had previously been in the Liverpool police before moving to join the Halifax force. Having completed twelve years in the Halifax Police, he might have been expected to remain until pension age, but left in 1874 and became a publican. Sergeant Ambler Jagger, with fourteen years' experience also might have been expected to see his career out in the force, but in 1873 also resigned, to become an innkeeper and keeper of one of the largest common lodging houses in Halifax. The Watch Committee even granted him a gratuity of £5 in view of his efficient services over such a long period of time.<sup>59</sup> These were both long-serving officers, who might be expected to feel loyalty to their previous superintendent. Both left within eighteen months of the change of leadership, both to take up jobs as publicans, significant in view of the allegations made against the way that Pearson ran the force. It was also significant, that in addition to the four who retired through ill-health, over half the force's experienced sergeants left after Chief Constable Clarkson took over. It is impossible to know whether they simply disliked the new regime and felt their promotion prospects were diminished, or whether they were pressured into going, to clear the way for new men, who were ambitious and shared the new Chief Constable's outlook.

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<sup>58</sup> *Manchester Times*, 10 February 1877.

<sup>59</sup> HWCW, 1 September 1873, HXM 189.

## **Discipline and Rewards**

Although the head of the Halifax Borough Police had changed, the composition of the Watch Committee remained practically the same, chaired by Alderman Swale.<sup>60</sup> Between 1872 and 1876 no more than three members were replaced in any year on the committee, retaining the continuity that had been a feature under Superintendent Pearson. Although the committee had been criticised, there were no changes made there and it was clearly felt that the change at the head of the force was sufficient to rectify the problems. Whilst the Watch Committee remained the final arbiter of discipline, there was no doubt that Chief Constable Clarkson influenced their judgement through his recommendations. Between 1861-70, under Superintendent Pearson, there were twenty-six dismissals for drunkenness, mostly on the second offence. Under the four years of Chief Constable Clarkson's tenure, there were sixteen dismissals for drunkenness, ten of which were for a first offence. This could simply be a new chief officer intent on making his mark and bringing more discipline to a previously lax regime, but the new recruits bore the brunt of the new strictness. These cases were mostly involving a constable who had been in the force for less than six months and instead of the previous leniency, appears to be a determination to be rid of anyone who was likely to prove unsuitable in the long term, keeping only the best recruits. The dismissals were still subjective and certain candidates were given several chances, perhaps because they showed promise in other ways. Thus William Dyson, who joined the force in September 1873, was only dismissed in April 1874 after three instances of drunkenness, for which he was fined an escalating amount, which clearly was no deterrent.<sup>61</sup> Longer serving constables were also treated less severely, with reprimands and fines in the hope of censuring them without losing them. Thus Henry Osborne, who joined in July 1871 and enjoyed a thirty-five year career in

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<sup>60</sup> Alderman Swale was chair of the Watch Committee from 1860-7 and 1869-76.

<sup>61</sup> HWCM, 12 January, 23 March and 20 April 1874, HXM189.

the Halifax Police, rising to the rank of Inspector, had his occasional drunken interludes punished by reprimands or demotion, not dismissal. Not so fortunate was PC Cockroft, who despite charges of insubordination, absence without leave and drunkenness, was finally dismissed on the third offence.<sup>62</sup> This reluctance to get rid of a promising constable, who most of the time performed his duties well, was illustrated by the case of Enoch Wroot. A labourer from Lincolnshire, he joined the force as a supernumery in 1865, but did not stay, re-joining again in February 1873.<sup>63</sup> By December 1874, he had been promoted to a first class constable, but in March 1875 was found in a 'house of disreputable character'.<sup>64</sup> The majority of the Watch Committee wanted him dismissed, but because of his previous good conduct there was an attempt to persuade the Committee that demotion to a third class constable would be sufficient punishment.<sup>65</sup> However, the majority prevailed and Wroot was dismissed, remaining in Halifax to become a drayman.<sup>66</sup>

The overall pattern under Chief Constable Clarkson appeared to be a quick dismissal for any new recruits who broke the rules within a short time, as they were clearly not going to knuckle down to the discipline. Men who showed diligence, or had been in the force for over a year, were shown some leniency in the hope that they could be retained and their conduct improved. However, from the increased numbers of men who resigned and were dismissed during the four short years of Chief Constable Clarkson's tenure, it would appear that discipline was stricter and the demands and expectations made of the men more onerous.

On the positive side, attempts were made to encourage good men to stay. Clarkson made good use of the Merit class in an effort to reward diligent constables. The grade was introduced in April 1870, but under Superintendent Pearson, only two men were promoted to

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 9 August 1875, HXM189.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 3 February 1873, HXM189.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 14 December 1874, Hxm189, promotion to first class constable.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 8 March 1875, HXM189.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, RG11, 1881 England Census.

it. With Chief Constable Clarkson's recommendation, twelve men were promoted to Merit Class in four years. Only one man had any reason given for his promotion, that being 'for diligent attention to his duties'.<sup>67</sup> Promising recruits could progress very rapidly. Promotion through third to first class constable was automatic, with each grade taking the maximum of a year, where conduct had been good. However, those who impressed the Chief Constable and Watch Committee with their enthusiasm, vigour and diligence could be promoted to first class constable in a much shorter time. One hundred supernumeraries were appointed under Chief Constable Clarkson. Thirty six men did not stay long enough to progress from third class constable, either resigning or being dismissed. Of the remainder, 72% took less than six months to be promoted to second class constable, with 40% taking less than three months.

**Table 3.4**

**Length of Time Taken for Constables to be Promoted to First Class**

	Under 1 month	Under 2 months	Under 3 months	Under 6 months	Under 9 months	Under a year	Over a year	Total
3 <sup>rd</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	8	6	11	21	10	6	2	64
2 <sup>nd</sup> to 1 <sup>st</sup> class	1	0	3	5	19	10	7	45

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes.

The majority made it to automatic promotion within the year, only two constables taking longer to progress. The promotion to first class took a little longer, but the majority seem to have gained the next grade after seven or eight months. Out of forty-five recruits that made it to first-class constable, half took less than a year to progress from third to first and none took longer than two years. Thus, those that remained in the force could be sure of being on the top rate of pay for a constable within two years. Since further advancement was slower, the

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<sup>67</sup> HWCM, 15 September 1873, HXM189.

introduction of service pay was a clear attempt to extend the career ladder for long serving constables.

Nevertheless, several promising recruits under Chief Constable Clarkson were clearly advanced rapidly. John Powell joined the force in October 1873 and within a year had been advanced to Merit class, but this did not stop him resigning in September 1875. Francis Gough, recruited in November 1872, advanced though to Merit Class and was promoted to sergeant in little over four years. The same route in advancement to sergeant took James McKenzie and John Egan only two and a half years, whilst Joseph Binns was promoted to sergeant in less than two years. It is not clear if these men were police officers in another force prior to their recruitment at Halifax, but they were clearly earmarked for rapid advancement. Where previously, promotions had been a reward for loyalty and good conduct and went usually to the most senior constables on the force, under Chief Constable Clarkson, rather more was required. Advancement was for the energetic, tenacious men who were prepared to do more than just the basics required. Gratuities were also awarded to those men who went the extra mile. PC Robert Sinkinson was awarded £2-10s 'for diligent attention in the detection of crimes' and later that year, promoted to sergeant.<sup>68</sup> James Clark was promoted to first-class constable and awarded £3-3s when he 'distinguished himself in the apprehension of a prisoner in which case he had been attacked by the ruffians and severely wounded'.<sup>69</sup> Through these methods, Chief Constable Clarkson was stamping his authority on the Halifax force. He was responsible for recommending promotion and gratuities and these men would owe their loyalty to him first and foremost. The men he chose were eager and ambitious and were gradually replacing the men who had joined under Pearson, so that

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 21 July 1873, HXM189.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 2 September 1872, HXM189.

the force was being remodelled in his image and would deliver the type of policing that he intended.

Chief Constable Clarkson clearly valued a policeman with a dogged and determined attitude. He recounts his own experiences on the beat, one instance being where he tried to arrest a man for burglary only for the suspect to jump in the river Tees and try to swim to the other side. Clarkson dived in after him and with the help of a ferry boatman managed to secure the man and recover all the stolen property. On another occasion, he arrested a suspected burglar, who escaped by throwing him off a balcony. Clarkson, though injured, pursued him and despite another fall, overtook the man, knocked him down and secured him.<sup>70</sup> It seems likely that Clarkson expected a comparable level of enterprise and commitment from his best men and those who demonstrated a similar level of zeal could expect gratuities and rapid promotion.

During Chief Constable Clarkson's tenure, ten promotions were made to sergeant, to succeed men who had retired, resigned or been promoted. Only four of the promotees had been in the force over five years, despite there being at least ten other men who joined in the 1850s and 1860s, who were first class constables with unblemished records. Clarkson clearly wanted officers untarnished by Pearson's regime, who would owe loyalty to the new order. John Helliwell, who joined in 1860 and was promoted in 1874, was the only one who had over ten years' experience, remaining as sergeant for the next twenty years until his retirement in 1894. His appointment was the exception, with the other available posts going to younger men, who had served much less time. It is difficult to tell if they had less experience, as there is no record of their employment before joining the Halifax force and it is possible they had been police constables elsewhere. After 1874, the three promotions to sergeant were all men who had joined during Chief Constable Clarkson's period of office, with three years'

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<sup>70</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, pp.154-6.

experience, or less. Two of them had been rapidly promoted to Merit Class before becoming sergeants and both were dismissed for misconduct within a few months of Clarkson's resignation. This rapid promotion for men that joined the force under Chief Constable Clarkson suggests that he was intent on creating a body of men who were efficient, trained in his methods and loyal to him. Promotion for the longer serving men was more difficult and there is some oral evidence that this affected their morale and caused resentment. Ambitious constables, who saw newer recruits promoted ahead of them, were less likely to stay. Edward Horby had joined the force in 1867 and at the time of Clarkson's appointment was a first-class constable. He was overlooked for promotion under Clarkson and resigned in disgust in May 1876, re-joining the force after Clarkson left and was promoted to sergeant with three months, eventually retiring in 1892 after twenty-five years' service.<sup>71</sup> No doubt he was not the only long-serving officer who left to find better prospects elsewhere, with seven men, who had between 5 and 10 years' experience leaving under Clarkson, confirming Steedman's observation that slow promotion was believed to drive good men away.<sup>72</sup> The Halifax force was split under Chief Constable Clarkson between new, energetic and ambitious men and those who had joined under a more relaxed regime, who found that long, unblemished service was no longer sufficient to achieve promotion.

### **Crime and Efficiency**

There is little doubt that Chief Constable Clarkson instituted a new regime, where the men were expected to be active, alert and energetic in the detection and prosecution of crime. Clarkson himself was a proactive officer, who was as keen on the prevention of crime as on its prosecution. Directions and instructions from the Watch Committee became rarer, while Chief Constable Clarkson brought his own proposals before them for approbation. The

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<sup>71</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 22 July 1876.

<sup>72</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.107.

crackdown did not rid the town of problems, but as Storch observed, drove the perpetrators underground or at least out into the countryside.<sup>73</sup> In April 1875, he drew the Watch Committee's attention to groups of disreputable characters, who were gathering regularly just outside the Borough, and therefore outside his jurisdiction, who were then entering the town to steal and cause trouble. He was given permission to liaise with the West Riding Constabulary in order to suppress the meetings.<sup>74</sup> The lower classes, who had been able to avoid police attention by frequenting the periphery of the borough and using the boundary to dodge both the Halifax police and the West Riding County Constabulary, were targeted and squeezed between the two, leaving fewer areas for unobserved dealings.

The frequent social occasions in Halifax, such as the annual Fair, which consisted of over four hundred assorted booths, were also a magnet for troublemakers and Clarkson was proactive in anticipating and dealing with the thieves who came to the town looking for easy pickings. The *Halifax Guardian* described the measures taken for the Sunday School Jubilee Celebration in June 1876, with fifty men sent to various posts in the town to keep order, whilst plain clothes police watched the trains arriving and monitored the main roads to prevent pickpockets gaining access to the town.<sup>75</sup> The action was apparently a success, with no complaints of robberies at all.

These operations highlight a point about the nature of the crime that occurred in the 1870s. Whilst the majority of the offences were no doubt still committed by local inhabitants, it could no longer be declared that 'when anything wrong was done, they know who'd done it.'<sup>76</sup> Large gatherings such as fairs and races attracted pickpockets from a wide area and the

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<sup>73</sup> Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary', p. 292.

<sup>74</sup> HWCM, 19 April 1875, HXM189.

<sup>75</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 10 June 1876.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 May 1848.

improved transportation and the developing railway network meant that access to urban industrial areas like Halifax was not only lucrative, but much easier.

Chief Constable Clarkson was clearly aware of this and liaised with other forces to ensure that criminals did not evade them. After a robbery at a jeweller in Halifax, the two thieves from Manchester were apprehended in that city. The arrests were a joint operation by detectives from both forces, led by Chief Constable Clarkson, who clearly saw part of his role as leading from the front.<sup>77</sup> Other cases before the magistrates show that the offences being prosecuted were often committed by persons from outside the town and therefore, outsiders without obvious reason to be in Halifax were often viewed with suspicion by the police. In March 1875, the first payment for photographing prisoners appeared in the Watch Committee minutes and became a regular item.<sup>78</sup> The photos were held in books at the police station and were available for officers to examine and recognise habitual criminals, but there is no evidence to suggest that the photographs were shared with other local forces in an attempt to identify travelling criminals, although it is not unlikely. In his book, Mr Clarkson described his attempts to catch a group of forgers, who were active in Wakefield and surrounding districts, by showing photographs of the suspects to a victim in Hull for identification.<sup>79</sup>

Over the period of Clarkson's tenure, the crime figures for Halifax are not reported in either the Watch Committee or the Council minutes. The figures available are those reported in the local paper from journalists who attended the Council meetings. Even as Clarkson took over as Chief Constable the local paper was reporting a decline in serious offences, a situation that did not change over the next four years.<sup>80</sup> In 1875, the *Bradford Observer* also commented on the decrease in serious offences in Halifax, with reductions in the number of known

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<sup>77</sup> *Manchester Times*, 21 February 1874.

<sup>78</sup> HWCMM, 8 March 1875, HXM189.

<sup>79</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, pp.321-334.

<sup>80</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 November 1872.

thieves, receivers of stolen property, prostitutes and vagrants. Brothels had been reduced in number from thirteen to six, and there had been a decrease of sixty-one indictable crimes from the previous year.<sup>81</sup> These reductions were ascribed to the close supervision of known local offenders by the police and not to a general rise in law-abiding behaviour by the policed, which showed in the gradual decline of criminality during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Naturally, there were still lurid cases which commanded large articles in local and provincial papers. One such was the attempted murder of Mr Champney, director of a Halifax textile company and nephew of the owner, local M.P., Colonel Akroyd. The attacker, who shot and wounded Mr Champney, was soon identified as a local weaver with a grudge against the firm and was arrested and sent for trial.<sup>82</sup> However, events such as these were unpredictable, given that they were the culmination of a set of circumstances, and not the actions of a habitual criminal.

Although serious crime was declining during this period, there was a large increase in the number of persons arrested for drunkenness. This cannot necessarily be taken to mean that there was a rise in the number of people who drank to excess. The 1872 Licensing Act resulted in increased arrests, making drunkenness on any highway or public place an offence, but inclined no definition of 'drunk', although the new Chief Constable evidently interpreted the rules stringently.

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<sup>81</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 23 October 1875.

<sup>82</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 18 November 1872 and *Leicester Chronicle*, 23 November 1872.

**Table 3.5**

**Arrests for Drunkenness August 1872-76**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Charged</b>	<b>Convicted</b>	<b>Discharged</b>
<b>1872</b>	427	386	41
<b>1873</b>	889	870	19
<b>1874</b>	810	801	9
<b>1875</b>	805	798	7
<b>1876</b>	971	958	13

Source: Brewster Sessions as reported local newspapers.

The number of arrests and convictions more than doubled after the introduction of the Act and the number of those discharged by the magistrates halved, reflecting the determination by both the local police and the magistrates to crack down on drunkenness, although the blame was more likely to be fixed on the individual, than the beer seller or licensed victualler, who supplied the drink. The new act ensured that all pubs and beerhouses were closed by a certain time and therefore, after that time, the streets were quiet, a fact noted with satisfaction in the Chief Constable's report to the Licensing Committee.<sup>83</sup> This did not mean that the police action had eradicated after hours drinking, which proved remarkably resilient, but merely prompted drinkers to find a way round the difficulty. The Act was unpopular in the less respectable localities of the Borough, especially amongst the Irish community and Chief Constable Clarkson reported that the response of the local 'bad characters' was to club together to buy alcohol to drink in private houses, after the pubs and beerhouses had closed.<sup>84</sup> To counter this, the responsibility for the inspection of common lodging houses was withdrawn from the Sanitary Committee and transferred to the jurisdiction of the Watch Committee, who promptly appointed the Chief Constable as the Inspector.<sup>85</sup> The 1851 Common Lodging Houses Act had given the local authorities and police the right to inspect

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<sup>83</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 August 1873.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 August 1873.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 November 1873. HWC, 15 December 1873, HXM189.

such places, but it seems that prior to this, the Halifax Sanitary Committee had retained jurisdiction to themselves. This change gave the police the power to visit and enter the common lodging houses at their own discretion, since many were also beerhouses and suspected of covering up drinking out of hours.

The Chief Constable had a low opinion of common lodging houses and, in his book, described them as the home of a nomadic population of petty thieves, beggars, hawkers and characters of low repute, where a respectable man was rarely to be found.<sup>86</sup> His solution was to keep them under close supervision, both by the uniformed and detective branches of the police and becoming the Inspector of Common Lodging Houses enabled him to do just this.

The Licensing Act also allowed shopkeepers to apply for a licence to sell alcohol and initially, the Halifax Borough Magistrates refused to allow any to be granted, until it was pointed out that it was not within their power to withhold a licence, unless the applicant had been guilty of a breach of certain conditions.<sup>87</sup> The licences were grudgingly allowed, but the Chief Constable complained at successive Brewster Sessions and in his annual reports about the evil tendencies of allowing grocers to sell alcohol. He claimed that it had given rise to intemperance in women who would not have frequented a public house, but could now buy it over the counter, although he gave no evidence for this other than 'observation'.<sup>88</sup> Since there were no cases at the Magistrates Court of previously respectable women being prosecuted for drunkenness and any that over-indulged presumably did so in the privacy of their own home, no crime was being committed. Chief Constable Clarkson was attempting to get the magistrates to support and enforce his own moral code on the evils of drink, especially when aimed at respectable females. The magistrates were undoubtedly sympathetic to his views,

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<sup>86</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, pp.235-242.

<sup>87</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 August 1873.

<sup>88</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 24 October 1874.

but as the law stood, were powerless to refuse or remove a license from a well regulated grocer.

Under Superintendent Pearson, the policing had been driven by practicality, not morals, avoiding the worst reactions to the new police that Storch noted in other industrial areas. This clamp down on lodging houses, drinking, gambling and the sanctity of the Sabbath inevitably had an effect on police relations with the community. This moral imperative to reform the working class under Chief Constable Clarkson's more efficient police force certainly had the support of the middle classes, the town's elite and the magistracy. Glowing commendations were reported in the newspapers:

Under the able Superintendency of the Chief Constable, the police have become very effective, so different to what it has been in reference to other cases which the public have not forgotten.<sup>89</sup>

However, the working classes were not in favour of the more stringent imposition of the law and it gave way to a growing resentment, which came to a head shortly before Chief Constable Clarkson's resignation in 1876. The *Halifax Guardian* reported:

It..... is alleged that the hostility of a portion of the public to the police originated, or has been aggravated, by the difference of the conduct of the latter under the new regime to that observed under the late head of the police, towards the frequenters of public houses and beershops.<sup>90</sup>

Storch has written of the animosity and bitterness caused in northern industrial areas by the introduction of the new police.<sup>91</sup> Halifax escaped comparatively lightly because there was no heavy-handed imposition of moral reform in the early years, but by the last quarter of the nineteenth century the "cultural missionizing" was increasingly driven by the temperance movement and other reforming organisations, which found a like-minded supporter in the new Chief Constable. However, unlike other northern areas, the working class response was not

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 21 June 1873.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 5 August 1876.

<sup>91</sup> Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary'.

predominately violent. There had always been drunken assaults on the police since their inception in 1848. However, after the arrival of Chief Constable Clarkson some of the assaults seemed to have a more malicious, vindictive edge than the usual drunken fights. In October 1872, PC Joseph Boocock was violently assaulted and an attempt made to throw him down some steps. Only a month later he was dead, although whether his injuries contributed to his death is unclear.<sup>92</sup> The following year a man arrested for fighting was rescued by three men and a woman and the arresting officer was savagely assaulted.<sup>93</sup> Two months later, Sergeant Tempest, arriving home at 1.30am, was attacked on his doorstep and struck on the back of his head. His attacker was never identified.<sup>94</sup> Unsurprisingly, Sergeant Tempest retired two months later after twenty-three years in the force. Whilst these attacks cannot be definitively ascribed to an upsurge in animosity due to increased surveillance of and interference with the working class, the predominant response was not to resort to violent opposition.

The respectable working class who, for the first time, were feeling the increased effects of the new regime, responded by gathering together and sending petitions to the Council. When the Watch Committee recommended another pay rise for Chief Constable Clarkson and for the men in November 1874, the response showed how polarised the attitudes in the Borough were becoming.<sup>95</sup> Various ward meetings were held to oppose the increases, particularly that of the Chief Constable. The burgesses and small shopkeepers were in opposition, irritated by the enforcement of petty by-laws such as Sunday trading and goods on the pavement, but mainly because the Council, catastrophically in debt due to unwise management of its finances, had increased the rates by nearly double in just over three years.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 5 October 1872.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 May 1873.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 July 1873.

<sup>95</sup> HWCW, 30 November 1874, HXM189.

<sup>96</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 22 December 1874, 4 January 1875, 7 January 1875.

The working-class element of the town held a meeting at the Mechanics Hall and sent a memorial to the Council Meeting opposing the rise, as did North Ward, which was represented by ex-Superintendent Pearson. In contrast, a petition in favour of the increases was received from the business elite, the mill and factory owners such as the Crossleys and the Mr. Ackroyd, and stated:

We have every confidence in the Chief Constable, and contrasting the present with the past, we are highly satisfied with the efficiency of the entire force.<sup>97</sup>

The Council meeting was packed with ratepayers and despite a stormy session, the resolution was passed, and the Chief Constable's salary increased to £400 per annum and the men received increases from between 6d to 1s-6d per week, depending on class and length of service. However, this opposition was the first manifestation of the antagonism that was growing towards the Halifax Police.

### **The Growth of Opposition**

When Chief Constable resigned from the Halifax Police Force in August 1876, it was as the result of pressure from three different quarters. Despite all the commendations from the town's leading citizens, the contrast between the previous laxity and the current stringent enforcement of rules had created hostility in a portion of the public. The less reputable members of the town, especially the Irish community, had always been ill-disposed to the imposition of a new police, but the respectable members of the working class and part of the lower middle classes had been ambivalent; equally resentful and supportive, depending on whether the law was working for or against them. However, under the Chief Constable's moral campaign, the feeling arose that everything had gone too far the other way and was summed up by a sympathetic councillor,

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 7 January 1875.

...the frequency of complaints that men have been “run in” who were neither drunk nor disorderly betrays a too great readiness to make a case wherever a man would have been able quietly (if carefully), and without annoyance to anyone, to convey his burden of liquor safely home.<sup>98</sup>

The police were seen to be ambitious and the way to promotion was to prosecute as many cases as possible, regardless of the strict legality of the case. The suspicion grew in certain areas of the public that innocent people had been sent to prison and although no specific case was named, the rumours were repeated and printed in the newspapers. Those who had been released from prison were kept under such close surveillance in the belief that they would re-offend that it ‘was utterly impossible for them to adopt a life of honesty.’<sup>99</sup> The perception of the police force had become one of an arrogant, overbearing body, which thought itself above the law it was meant to uphold, although distinctions were made between the older members of the force, who had been side-lined and the young, ambitious men seen to be favoured by the Chief Constable.

Complaints were made about the secrecy of Watch Committee meetings, with drunk and incapable police merely fined, whereas a member of the public in the same condition would have been prosecuted.<sup>100</sup> In another public case, which fuelled resentment, PC Smith told a member of the public to go home and when he did not, assaulted him in front of others. Large numbers of people followed Smith through the town to the police office to complain. When he was brought before the magistrates charged with assault, the case was dismissed, as it was claimed to be ‘in an incomplete state’.<sup>101</sup> Incidents like these fed the perception that there was one rule for the police and another for the general public.

Chief Constable Clarkson was also unfortunate in having a critic with credibility in police matters, who had a personal axe to grind. The role played by ex-superintendent Pearson and

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<sup>98</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 5 August 1876.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 July 1876.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 June 1876. Allegations made to the Council meeting by Councillor Pollard.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 July 1876.

several fellow councillors in sustaining the ill-feeling towards the Chief Constable cannot be overestimated. Borough chief constables were open to attack from vindictive members of the council and Pearson used his position to undermine Clarkson. Ever since his resignation, Pearson and his small group of supporters within the council had done their best to criticise the new regime. Elected as councillor to the North Ward on the slogan 'For nearly twenty years a known public servant', he very quickly became a focal point for opposition to the Watch Committee and the new Chief Constable and enjoyed vocal support from a significant portion of the rate-paying electorate. Anyone with a complaint against the police sought him out and he would investigate by marching into the police station and demanding to see the relevant documents and books, to which he does not seem to have been denied access, perhaps because of his connections with the older members of the force. Councillor Pearson demanding answers to questions about the Watch Committee and its running of the force, became a regular occurrence in Council meetings, despite frequent refusals by the Council on the grounds it was out of order. He opposed each of the Chief Constable's increases in salary, gratuities to the men and queried the new victualing system for prisoners that was saving the Council money. The exasperated Mayor tartly informed him that they were

satisfied they had at the head of the police department a gentleman in every sense of the word, and who was determined to discharge his duty most faithfully and efficiently.<sup>102</sup>

No matter was too petty for Councillor Pearson to raise and the needling of Chief Constable Clarkson spilled over into open animosity over allegations of rudeness and the manhandling of a verger and his wife by one of the police force. Clarkson rebutted allegations of manhandling and attempted arrest on the grounds that the men were being vigilant due to church break-ins.<sup>103</sup> A visit to the police by another councillor to complain of the couples' treatment was considered by Clarkson to have been made 'in the most insolent manner

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 9 August 1873.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 5 February 1873.

possible' a comment which reveals that he clearly did not deem himself to be a servant of the Council, but head of an independent police with no case to answer.

When asked to explain himself before the Council, Chief Constable Clarkson made plain his annoyance and the *Halifax Guardian* reported,

When charges were made against him or his men, he should defend them. He should allow no member of the Corporation to tamper with his men, ... but he hoped the police business was conducted in a far superior and better way than when he came amongst them. When he came it was perfectly rotten.

He added:

If you are tired of my services, I am ready to leave you at a moment's notice.<sup>104</sup>

Not surprisingly, the chamber erupted into uproar after this speech, but no resolutions were made and the matter dropped. Clarkson's outburst made it plain that he considered himself solely in charge of the force and not subject to the Council and resented being made to account for himself and his men, particularly in front of his predecessor. Since his arrival, he had enjoyed a positive relationship with the Watch Committee. This was not uncommon, with successive chief constables in Middlesbrough allowed a significant degree of autonomy to run the force as they saw fit, with the watch committee treating them as professionals.<sup>105</sup> Clarkson had been allowed to manage the force as he chose with the minimum of interference and was unused to being treated as a servant of the council, clearly viewing himself as the expert on policing, a self-image that later led to his book, *Police*. The elite of the town ascribed all the recent improvements to Clarkson himself, not the Watch Committee, who had been happy to have it so, supporting him absolutely. He was not the 'cypher' of Steedman's description, but

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 5 February 1876.

<sup>105</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.34.

with the advent of criticism from the rate-paying working class and his opponents in the Council, it was only a matter of time before the Watch Committee withdrew its support.<sup>106</sup>

As all the matters raised at the Council Meetings were reported in the local press, Councillor Pearson's frequent grandstanding on police matters guaranteed him a wide audience and his previous experience ensured his criticisms had weight. How much of his opposition was due to resentment of the manner of his removal as Superintendent is hard to quantify, but by the time of the Chief Constable's resignation, there appeared to be mutual antipathy between the men. Chief Constable Clarkson, in his short tenure, had to endure repeated petty criticism from a small group of councillors, in contrast to the praise being heaped on him in other quarters. These trivial attacks, reported in the local press served as a counterpoint to the congratulations and as other difficulties and complaints about the force grew, fed the public perception of an arrogant, overpaid, despotic body of men. The position of chief constable was not an easy one, being open to accusations of bias, which were made worse by Clarkson's defence of his men in the face of seemingly justified criticism. David Taylor found similar complaints of bias against Superintendent Saggerson in Middlesbrough, where a member of the public, who may have had some hold over the police, was protected from a charge of assault, despite several violent incidents.<sup>107</sup> The affair undermined the integrity of the force, as did the incidents at Halifax. Unfortunately for Chief Constable Clarkson, a number of high profile, publicly reported cases against himself and his men did nothing stop the public erosion of confidence in the force.

The first such case occurred with a trial for manslaughter in August 1873, where the five defendants were acquitted. The victim had been set upon and beaten by a group of youths, but no-one actually witnessed the attack. The victim survived for a few days after the attack, but

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<sup>106</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>107</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, pp.89-92.

was unable to speak. He could, however, when asked, point to the attackers who had been taken to his bedside and by dumb show, identify them in front of Chief Constable Clarkson and Detective Inspector Birkenshaw. Despite having no evidence of identity sworn on oath, due to the victim's condition, Clarkson went ahead with a prosecution and was heavily criticised by the judge for bringing the case, since there was no proof as to who inflicted the mortal blow and the judge would not accept a second-hand account of the victim's identification.<sup>108</sup> The Watch Committee looked into the criticisms and felt that Chief Constable Clarkson had done all he could to make a valid case against the youths, but still considered it necessary for the Chief Constable to explain his actions in a letter to the local newspaper to avoid public censure.<sup>109</sup>

If this case, early on in Clarkson's tenure, called into question his abilities to make a legitimate, legal case, other later events raised doubts about his judgement of his men. The first such case occurred in December 1875 when the Chief Constable was forced to bring a case for assault against two of his own police constables. They were off duty, attending a wedding when an argument broke out with a resident in the street, whose house was being blocked by a cab, used by the wedding party. The victim, Patrick Manley claimed to have been attacked with a poker and a fire iron by John Cundell and William Ramsden, both members of the Halifax force, when he tried to move the cab. He had both wrists broken and some fingers and sustained other injuries. By the time the case went to trial, there were nine witnesses for the defence, who claimed that Manley had attacked the policemen and being disarmed, had run back into his house to get another weapon, where he had fallen and injured himself.<sup>110</sup> The jury acquitted the defendants, but damage had been done to the force's

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<sup>108</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 16 August 1873, *Bradford Observer* 17 June 1873, *Leeds Mercury* 15 August 1873.

<sup>109</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 August 1873.

<sup>110</sup> *Bradford Observer* 1 December 1875, *Halifax Guardian*, 8 January 1876.

reputation. Cundell resigned from the police, but Ramsden stayed and because he had been suspended during the case and lost wages, was awarded £5 gratuity. The opportunity to criticise the police was not ignored by Councillor Pearson and his supporters, who protested against the gratuity and claimed that despite their acquittal, the two men were ‘morally guilty’.<sup>111</sup> Both men had joined the force under Chief Constable Clarkson and been promoted to first class constables. Their arrogance in their refusal to allow the obstructing cab to be moved and the threats they made to Manley were seen as typical of the attitude of the current force to the law-abiding members of the public.

The next two cases involving the police came to the public notice almost simultaneously, only six months after the Manley case and caused huge uproar in the town. Both cases were discussed at the Town Council meeting on 8 July 1876, before a hall crowded with ratepayers and with large numbers of people outside. The *Halifax Guardian* claimed that feelings were running so high, ‘that at one time a riot seemed imminent.’

One case involved the dismissal of Detective Inspector John Birkenshaw and Sergeant William Holmes for gross breach of duty and improper conduct. The case had come to light after Holmes had admitted his conduct to another sergeant in the force, who had brought it to the attention of the Watch Committee. Two years previously, Birkenshaw and Holmes had apprehended a prisoner outside the Borough boundaries in Triangle and in the course of the journey back to Halifax, via a public house, had appropriated money from the prisoner, Thomas Hobart. The sum amounted to £8-10s which was all that remained from the proceeds of a robbery that Hobart had carried out in Lincoln. Birkenshaw gave £2 to Holmes and kept the rest for himself. Hobart made no complaint as he would have had to hand it over when

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<sup>111</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 10 June 1876.

charged anyway and Birkenshaw promised to give him some money after he was released from prison.<sup>112</sup>

Both men had been promoted under Chief Constable Clarkson and were part of the group of officers which formed 'the backbone of the service' according to the Chief Constable's philosophy.<sup>113</sup> When the dishonesty came to light, the Watch Committee immediately dismissed them and they forfeited all arrears of pay. The Town Clerk prosecuted Birkenshaw and Holmes for receiving stolen property and the hearing at the Magistrates Court was packed, with hundreds of people waiting outside. The case went to the Quarter Sessions, where both men were acquitted on the grounds that the only evidence that the money was previously stolen was the word of an accomplished scoundrel, now serving seven years penal servitude for the theft. The case and the Halifax Watch Committee were criticised for being disorganised and it appeared that any attempts to bring Halifax police officers to justice would fail due to incompetence in making a case.

The other matter before the Town Council in July 1876 was the cause of even more fury amongst the ratepayers and went to the heart of the fears and complaints against the police. PC Wadsworth and Detective Sergeant Boothman arrested a man named Henry Holland on the grounds that he was a suspicious character, loitering at Halifax railway station. They were supported by Inspector Sinkinson, who also claimed to have seen him. Holland was actually a respectable shoemaker who was waiting for a train to Leeds. He spent the weekend in the cells, was photographed and taken through the town centre, chained to a prostitute and brought before the magistrates, who instantly discharged him. A short time later, he was re-arrested, accused of stealing a suit of clothes from a blind youth at his lodgings. The police

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<sup>112</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 19 August and 25 October 1876.

<sup>113</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, p.142.

made no investigation, but locked him up, only for the youth's suit to be found and the charge of theft to be dropped.<sup>114</sup>

Both Wadsworth and Boothman were fined £3 each and reduced in rank, while £5 was awarded to Mr Holland for wrongful arrest. Councillor Pearson and his supporters wanted the men dismissed, with claims of innocent people being sent to prison 'on frivolous and paltry charges'. Pearson also took the opportunity to raise other complaints about the police and was cheered by the spectators at the end of the meeting, while the Mayor and the Chairman of the Watch Committee were booed.<sup>115</sup> Clarkson was booed again in the streets a few days later, when greeting the Duke of Connaught, who was on an official visit to the town.

Public feeling on the question of the police was such that another meeting was held at the Mechanics Hall. At least fifteen hundred people managed to cram into the hall, while another seven hundred and fifty were claimed to be outside. The meeting was predominantly working men, with none of the town's usual public speakers present. There was a call for the meeting to be held calmly so that their views would have weight and they would be listened to.

The main causes of complaint were that Boothman, Wadsworth and Sinkinson had not been dismissed for their over-zealous actions, nor had Chief Constable Clarkson resigned his position. These matters were seen to have raised questions over his fitness to be Chief Constable and the judge's strictures in the failed manslaughter case in August 1873, were mentioned. He was seen to be 'taking up people who had a glass of beer too much' and was also, 'the whole soul of the Watch Committee and ruled it as he liked,' whilst refusing to do as they directed. Civic pride was also at stake, as the force had been brought into disrepute and the cases reported in all the papers. Clarkson's salary and the pay increase to the men was also raised as many of those present were working short time, or had had to accept a reduction

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<sup>114</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 6 July 1876.

<sup>115</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 8 July 1876.

in wages, as trade was bad.<sup>116</sup> Throughout the meeting there were repeated threats of the public gaining their revenge on the Council through the ballot box.

These complaints were sent to the council from the ratepayers and had an immediate effect, as the Watch Committee decided to recommend the dismissal of Boothman and Wadsworth, despite pressure from the Chief Constable to the contrary. The threats of removal at the next election had worked and as Steedman pointed out, backing for a chief constable disappeared when the support of the ratepayers was in the balance.<sup>117</sup>

The next Town Council Meeting was also packed with ratepayers and it was decided to set up a special committee of investigation into the conduct of the police. Councillor Pearson took the opportunity to whip up public feeling further, by citing two additional cases where the police appeared to be keeping money which did not belong to them.<sup>118</sup> Within a week of that meeting, Chief Constable Clarkson sent in his resignation 'on the ground of the strong feeling manifested against him.'<sup>119</sup> He left the force very quickly and was temporarily replaced by Chief Inspector Wood as Acting Chief Constable, whilst the Watch Committee interviewed replacements. Clarkson had forgotten that, as Steedman puts it, he was not 'the final power and arbiter' but like his men beneath him, part of a chain of command which left him dependent on the Watch Committee and the Council, without whose support he could not act.<sup>120</sup> As Storch points out, the chief constable reflected the attitudes and wishes of the local elite, who lauded his efforts to enforce a moral discipline on the town and convinced the Watch Committee that they had employed the right man. Nevertheless, the change of tenure from Pearson to Clarkson was so abrupt in tone, that the extension of surveillance and interference into the lives of the respectable working class brought resistance, as Storch had

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 22 July 1876.

<sup>117</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.46.

<sup>118</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 5 August 1876.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 12 August 1876.

<sup>120</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p. 148.

found in other areas.<sup>121</sup> Some of this surfaced as violence, but the radical working class of Halifax had tasted victory in 1848 and knew the best way to resist the change was through the ballot box.

As Clarkson left Halifax under a cloud, his career was initially damaged. He accepted a post as Detective Inspector of the Leicester Borough Police in January 1877, but this demotion was short-lived and by 1881 he was Chief Constable at Wakefield.<sup>122</sup> He remained ambitious, being short-listed for the post of Chief Superintendent of the Birmingham Police, which came with a salary of £700, but was not successful.<sup>123</sup> His abrasive style split opinions in Wakefield, as they had in Halifax. He weathered an adverse government inspection in 1888, but was further criticised the following year, when he was absent for the inspector's visit, resulting in a threat of losing the grant of £1650. He was dismissed by the Watch Committee, but a meeting of between four and five thousand ratepayers protested against 'the cruel and arbitrary dismissal'. The council itself was split and 'grievously exercised' over the whole matter, but the dismissal stood.<sup>124</sup> Clarkson then collaborated on a book on the police in England, which was well received, one review calling it 'a valuable and entertaining work'.<sup>125</sup> However, he did not return to policing, possibly unable to get another post due to his age. Although it is impossible to tell if the downturn in his career affected his mental health, a few months after the publication of his book, he returned to Whitby and committed suicide at the age of fifty-five.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary', pp. 285-291.

<sup>122</sup> *Leicester Chronicle and the Leicestershire Mercury*, 13 January 1877.

<sup>123</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 January 1882.

<sup>124</sup> *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 18 April – 15 May 1889.

<sup>125</sup> *The Graphic*, 30 November 1889.

<sup>126</sup> *Northern Echo*, 9 July 1890.

## Conclusion

Clarkson's short time at Halifax was controversial and he managed to divide opinion in the police force, the town and on the council. The four years of his leadership effectively illustrated the delicate balance of power between the chief constable, the council, the Watch Committee and the ratepayers. Clarkson had been granted an unprecedented level of control over the Halifax force, which came to quickly reflect his energetic, zealous and uncompromising style. The Watch Committee accepted his assessment that he was the professional expert on policing and accepted his recommendations without question, reassured by the praise he received from the middle class and the elite. The public view was that the Watch Committee was not in charge of him in the way that it had been with Pearson and Spiers. The Watch Committee were delighted with him until it became clear that a significant portion of the public were opposed to the police force that he had created. Pressure from the voters always resulted in the Watch Committee appeasing them, as they had done over Pearson. Further pressure was applied by the Council, where Pearson and his supporters used the media to publicise the shortcomings of the force. When necessary, the voters were the final arbiter of what they would tolerate and they had the means to force the Council and the Watch Committee to comply.

Chief Constable Clarkson was angered by criticism, preferring a confrontational style to conciliation. He was unfortunate in that he inherited the animosity of Pearson's supporters and of Pearson himself, so that even from the beginning of his tenure, the force was under criticism, although at first that was mainly directed at the Watch Committee. Klein observed that borough police reflected the weaknesses and splits of local politics and this is true of the situation in Halifax, where a faction on the Council was alert to any failings by the police.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> J. Klein, *Invisible men: The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, 1900-39* (Liverpool, 2010), p.4.

Clarkson promoted proactive, preventative policing, not simply walking the beat and had well thought out strategies for tackling crime which were highly effective. He was an active officer, who liked to be personally involved and present in high profile cases, rather than delegate. His campaign against prostitutes and drunks was welcomed by those who had complained about Pearson, but was felt to be harsh by the working class. He brought a measure of professionalisation to the force and was instrumental in overhauling the training of the men, something that Pearson, comfortable in the final stages of his career, had been complacent about. In trying to foster a sense of camaraderie in the force Clarkson unfortunately encouraged a feeling of arrogance and superiority. He persuaded the Watch Committee to invest in improvements, such as whistles, a safe and a prison van. He encouraged ambitious police officers who showed tenacity and zeal and rewarded them with gratuities and promotion, but in doing so he alienated part of the force who had worked diligently, if unspectacularly. Promotion was by results and no longer a reward for long service and an unblemished record. In consequence, the force lost some long serving officers who could see no future prospects in the Halifax force.

Those favoured by Chief Constable Clarkson were rewarded with rapid promotion. The men involved in the Hobart and Holland cases had all gained advancement under Clarkson. Wadsworth was a Merit Class constable, Holmes and Boothman sergeants, Birkenshaw, a Detective Inspector and Sinkinson an Inspector. All left the force in 1876, either dismissed or resigned following demotion, leaving a large hole in the 'backbone of the service'. It is evident that part of the force considered itself an elite and behaved accordingly, which added to the resentment felt by the ordinary public.

The contrast between the lax policing style under Pearson and the zealous enforcement of all laws and by-laws under Clarkson caused friction with the working class. The respectable element for the first time found themselves vulnerable to vigorous policing and the Holland

case showed that respectability was no protection from arrest for a raft of minor offences. As Storch has pointed out, after the initial episodes of violent resistance to the imposition of a new police, other forms of anti-police outbreaks continued through the nineteenth century in reaction to police interference and police brutality.<sup>128</sup> Faced with heavy-handed police surveillance for the first time in twenty years, the overwhelming reaction of the working class in Halifax was not violence, but to make their views felt through protest meetings and threats to gain redress through the ballot box. The mass protests of ill-feeling were effective, with the Watch Committee caving in on the dismissals of Boothman and Wadsworth and the Chief Constable resigning, as his position had become untenable.

The resignation of Clarkson left the Town Council in a difficult position, with the Watch Committee still under public censure for the state of the force. Although the force was perceived as oppressive by some, Clarkson had given it direction and a strategy for dealing with and pre-empting crime. He had introduced a stricter code of discipline for the men, whilst still supporting and rewarding zeal, loyalty and initiative. He fostered a sense of pride and comradeship among the newer men, although it is debatable how far his changes were welcomed by the pre-existing force. His enforcement of moral improvements to the town through prosecution of inebriety and Sunday trading, antagonised parts of the populace and delighted others, although it is debateable how effective they were in the long term. Ultimately, the charges against some of the force and the loss of confidence in the police by a significant portion of the ratepayers left him in an untenable position, even though the press intimated that the special investigation would find that ‘the charges and rumours against the police force have been very much exaggerated.’<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Storch, ‘The Policeman as Domestic Missionary’, p.304.

<sup>129</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 7 October 1876.

The dismissal of so many officers left the force in disarray and the choice of a new Chief Constable, who could steer a course between the lax regime of former times and the more recent strict enforcement, was a priority. The Watch Committee managed to choose a man who became noted for his lenient attitude, who would take the Halifax force into calmer times and who would see it through into the next century as a professional modern force.

## Chapter 4

### **Stability and Professionalisation**

Only four years after the previous head of the Halifax force had been forced to resign, the Watch Committee again found itself in the position of inviting applications for the vacant post of Chief Constable. Since Charles Clarkson was released from duty immediately after tendering his resignation, the force was left leaderless, whilst still trying to deal with the continuing scandal of Holmes and Birkenshaw, who were committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions. The most challenging and immediate problem for the new Chief Constable was to establish firm control over a distrusted and demoralised force. His ability to do that and make the alterations he wanted revealed the changing balance of power with an inexperienced Watch Committee, which was unfamiliar with its duties and eager to support the new head of the force. The Chief Constable's capacity to find a middle way between satisfying the zealous reformers and conciliating the working class was a large part of his success and reflected his sympathetic and humanitarian approach. His arrival also signalled a change in the chief constable's role, which had previously included an active physical part in high profile cases. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw a shift to a more administrative, managerial role with increased delegation of operational control to deputies as part of the growing professionalisation of the police.

In the interim, whilst the Watch Committee interviewed replacements, Chief Inspector Jonathan Wood was made acting Chief Constable. Born in Bradford, he had joined the Halifax Borough Force as a constable in 1855 and worked his way up, achieving promotion under both Pearson and Clarkson. No doubt, to the beleaguered Watch Committee, he was a competent and safe deputy, a long-serving officer, respected by both the public and the men, who had no hint of wrongdoing against his name. In fact, he had supporters in the town, one

of whom wrote to the *Guardian*, suggesting that Wood be appointed as Clarkson's replacement and noting in his favour, that he was a local man.<sup>1</sup> However, Wood made it clear that he was not in the running for the post, as he was intending to resign due to ill-health. Given their previous choices, it was also unlikely that the Watch Committee would seriously consider an internal candidate. Despite the unhappy outcome of Clarkson's appointment, the committee still wanted an experienced man with a wider expertise.

Publicly, the Watch Committee was seen to have been as culpable as Clarkson for the state of the Borough Force and the *Guardian* suggested they should study the examples of the police in Leeds, Bradford and Rochdale, proffering the unsolicited advice that the Watch Committee

should be most careful to select a person fully qualified for the duties; and at the same time a gentleman of such position that he will be thoroughly independent of any party or clique. Such a gentleman should receive a good salary to commence with and not be started at a low sum, with promises of preferment, as that policy can but lead to inordinate zeal at the first and a constant canvassing of friends in favour of a speedy advance which leads to the creation of parties in the council.<sup>2</sup>

Given the vociferous antipathy to the police in the town and the continuing scandal surrounding the prosecution of Birkenshaw and Holmes, the appointment of the new Chief Constable was done quietly, with no reports in the local papers of the shortlisted applicants, nor do the Watch Committee minutes give any details except to name the successful candidate as Charles Pole and list the expenses for interviews as £10-11-6d.<sup>3</sup> Since the details of Clarkson's departure had been freely reported throughout Yorkshire, to the detriment of civic pride, there seems to have been a conscious attempt to damp down further interest in the subject and to allow the new Chief the chance to tackle the problems out of the limelight. No doubt the Watch Committee was hoping to avoid drawing further attention to itself and any additional publicity could only damage the town. The only details available

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<sup>1</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 9 September 1876.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 August 1876.

<sup>3</sup> HWCM, 18 September 1876, HXM189.

were that there had been twenty-six applicants, reduced to three and that the decision of the Council to appoint Charles Pole, previously Chief Constable at Grantham, at a salary of £250 per annum, had been unanimous.<sup>4</sup> It was likely that the applicants had included army officers, but as before the Council did not appoint one of them. It was perhaps the legacy of the original Chartist Council, many of the radicals having become Gladstonian Liberals and the council remained strongly nonconformist. Clive Emsley points out that many chief constables were ex-military, especially in the counties, often, though not always, favoured above career policemen.<sup>5</sup> David Wall's study of chief constables examines the selection processes for chief constables and notes that the larger borough and county police authorities were dominated by the local economic elite, who generally chose officers whose background reflected their own.<sup>6</sup> This meant that many of the applicants were from the gentry and the aristocracy, often seeking employment after a military career, who considered their experience in disciplining and drilling men sufficient training for the post. The justices, and later the Standing Joint Committees, were less concerned with policing experience than with appointing someone who shared their social standing and outlook and Wall's analysis suggests that a candidate's military status was not only a measure of their ability to command, but more importantly, of their social standing.<sup>7</sup>

Halifax Watch Committee proved remarkably consistent throughout the nineteenth century in preferring a Head Constable who had direct experience of policing, despite the town having a barracks. Halifax's choices support David Wall's assertion that watch committees of the medium and smaller boroughs looked for men that would carry out their directions and placed emphasis on promotion as a reward for efficient, loyal service. They preferred men

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<sup>4</sup> *The Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 9 September 1876.

<sup>5</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p.174.

<sup>6</sup> Wall, *Chief Constables*, pp. 99-128.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, *Chief Constables*, pp.272-278.

who had risen through the ranks and had a proven record, although after Superintendent Pearson, the Halifax Watch Committee always advertised the vacancy and did not promote from within its own force to the top job.<sup>8</sup> The implicit view of the Watch Committee was that ex-military men might make good policemen, but it depended more on the individual than on military training. Discipline was only part of a chief constable's remit. While the Watch Committee hired many good men who were ex-army, it was not a guarantee that the man would have the skills required for policing and applicants were considered on an individual basis. When the Commanding Officer of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Regimental District wrote to request that vacancies in the force be reserved for Time Expired soldiers who were due to return from India, Chief Constable Pole refused, replying that 'suitable applications would be considered', despite the force having six vacancies due to augmentation.<sup>9</sup> This is a different approach to the one found by Carolyn Steedman in the County forces, where discharged soldiers were welcomed as recruits, perhaps because many of the Chief Constables were ex-army themselves.<sup>10</sup> They viewed ex-soldiers as ideal for police constables, since they were disciplined and trained to follow orders without question.

Pole was born in Leicestershire, the son of a policeman in the Leicester County Constabulary. He trained as a teacher, passing his exams with distinction, but decided that an outdoor job was better for his health. This was a strange choice, since ill-health due to rheumatism, or injury through assault were occupational hazards of policing. However, given his family background, he could not have been unaware of this. In 1863, he joined the same force as his father, as a constable, but seven years later, he had risen to be Chief Clerk with the rank of Inspector, in the Leicester Borough Force and was responsible for conducting the prosecutions before the magistrates. The Clerk to the Justices in Leicester was Samuel Stone,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.128.

<sup>9</sup> HWCM, 11 July 1898, HXM194.

<sup>10</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.74.

a well-known and respected figure, author of Stone's Justices' Manual, the standard work on summary procedure, an updated version of which is still in use today. Stone appears to have seen potential in Pole, taking him under his wing, giving him advice, encouragement and improving his powers of cross examination. After three years in the Borough Force, armed with a glowing testimonial from Samuel Stone, he applied for and got, the Chief Constable's post at Grantham in 1873. When he saw the advertisement for the Halifax vacancy, he wired the Town Clerk for an application form, claiming in his resignation speech in 1903, that the reply came back 'No application form necessary in your case.' His reputation was widely known and he was appointed Chief Constable for Halifax, where he remained until his retirement in 1903.<sup>11</sup>

In October 1876, Pole was formally introduced to the Borough Magistrates, who were told that he came with 'excellent credentials', which, if implemented, would mean he had 'a pleasant time' in Halifax. In their turn, the magistrates said they would do all they could to make his situation 'comfortable', no doubt referring to the anti-police prejudice in the town.<sup>12</sup>

He inherited a sorry state of affairs; the force demoralised, distrusted and with five officers of the rank of sergeant or above, dismissed or resigned. This was nearly a third of the officers of the force.<sup>13</sup> The police were also under investigation by a special committee of enquiry set up by the Town Council to look into complaints. Chief Constable Pole claimed that when he took over in September 1876, there was 'not a particle of discipline in the whole force'.<sup>14</sup> This was despite a very favourable Inspection report in May 1876, when the Inspector

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<sup>11</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 21 February 1903.

<sup>12</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 7 October 1876.

<sup>13</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 6 May 1876. The government inspection in May 1876 put the force at 71 men: 1 Chief Constable, 1 Chief Inspector, 1 Detective Inspector, 1 Inspector, 1 Detective sergeant, 11 sergeants and 55 constables.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 June 1903.

declared himself ‘highly pleased with all he saw’.<sup>15</sup> The anti-police prejudice in the town, the resignations, dismissals and the enquiry had undermined the self-confidence of a force that for the last four years had been used to nothing but praise from the elite of the town. The arrival of a new chief constable meant that the men had to accustom themselves to a new regime, adding uncertainty to their other problems. This may have accounted for the higher levels of indiscipline found by Pole, who would also have been intent on establishing his authority. Both sides would have been unsure of where the new boundaries lay, until a few months had passed and the new regime had settled in and the men had grown accustomed to a different leadership.

The Police Enquiry Committee reported back to the Council in October 1876, having conducted its proceedings in private. It had taken evidence from anyone with a complaint, mostly cases claiming wrongful arrest, but found that most of the public complaints were exaggerated or without foundation. However, after charges of retaining money from a prosecution, Inspector Sinkinson was reduced to the rank of sergeant, ‘it having come to the knowledge of this Committee that he had taken steps to interfere with the investigation by the Police Enquiry Committee of a charge about to be made against him’.<sup>16</sup> The demotion was swiftly followed by Sinkinson’s resignation, although perhaps surprisingly, he was still given a testimonial.<sup>17</sup> The inquiry also found that money passing through police hands was dealt with in an unsatisfactory manner, with no records being kept or receipts given. Fees being paid to the police were being retained by the sergeants, who appeared to regard it as a perk of the job. This was despite orders to the contrary from the Chief Constable, following complaints in Council meetings by Councillor Pearson. One culprit was Sergeant James McKenzie, one of Clarkson’s favoured recruits, who joined the force in 1873, progressing

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 6 May 1876.

<sup>16</sup> HWCN, 3 October 1876, HXM189.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 23 October 1876, HXM189.

rapidly from third to first-class constable, then Merit class, attaining the rank of sergeant in under three years. He received monies for bail, but the sums were not accounted for. He claimed to have forgotten the Chief Constable's orders, but as the Watch Committee wanted to be seen to be re-asserting control over the men and eradicating dishonesty, he was dismissed for wilful disobedience.<sup>18</sup>

In November, two months after Charles Pole took over, a new Watch Committee was selected and the opportunity was taken to sweep away most of the long-standing, but discredited, members who had presided over the resignations of two chief officers. Alderman Swale, who for fifteen of the last sixteen years had been the chair, was no longer a member and only three of the previous committee remained to give continuity. The message to both the force and the townspeople was that there was a clean break with the old regime. The police and the Watch Committee were moulded by the expectations of the rate-paying public, but the election of a new, inexperienced Watch Committee meant that it relied more heavily on the expertise of the Chief Constable. The criticisms faced by the previous committee meant that changes were expected and Chief Constable Pole was able to implement a new regime.

At his retirement in 1903, Chief Constable Pole reflected that the early years in Halifax were so difficult, that 'he would have thrown up the sponge' were it not for the support of the new Watch Committee and especially for the help and advice of the ex-mayor, J.D. Hutchinson.<sup>19</sup> He cited the poor quality of the men and the ill-feeling towards the force as his greatest challenge. One of his first actions was to replace the officers who had been dismissed or resigned. Throughout his tenure at Halifax, Pole was an advocate of men joining the force at the bottom and rising through the ranks, gaining knowledge and experience, as he himself had

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 3 October 1876, HXM189.

<sup>19</sup> Hutchinson was a member of the council from 1863, Mayor from 1868-9 and 1871-2. He was also a J.P. and editor and part owner of the *Halifax Courier*. He was the Liberal M.P. for Halifax from 1877-82, resigning shortly before his death.

done. Despite his misgivings about the poor quality of the men at the time of his appointment, he made no attempt to recruit officers from outside, but promoted the best men available to him, deeming that the introduction of outsiders would disrupt the force further.<sup>20</sup> Carolyn Steedman found that the County Forces of Buckingham and Staffordshire appointed their officers from outside, drawing from the middle classes and excluding the working class, in a replica of the social model of the County.<sup>21</sup> The Halifax elite were mostly mill owners of humble antecedents and there appeared to have been no attempt to do other than promote the most able men available, regardless of their background.

The new Chief Constable promoted five of the remaining patrol sergeants to fill the vacancies of Inspector, Detective sergeants, Precept Server and Clerk. Four had joined under Superintendent Pearson and had between nine and twenty-one years' experience each. Only one, John Egan, had joined under Clarkson, becoming a sergeant in four years, but had previously been in the Irish Constabulary. Pole was re-establishing the old order, where ambition and ability was balanced with experience. The long serving officers would give stability to the force and indicate to men who hoped for a career, that a lengthy spell as a constable did not necessarily mean that promotion had passed them by. Underlining this point, the men promoted to replace the patrol sergeants had between nine and sixteen years' experience as constables. One was Edward Horby, who had resigned in disgust at Clarkson's approach, after seeing newer, younger men promoted ahead of him. He re-joined the police as soon as Clarkson left and was rewarded with his sergeant's stripes.<sup>22</sup> Unlike previous promotions, the Watch Committee made these subject to a three months' trial, with no pay increase considered until the end of that period, probably due to concerns about the quality of the candidates and to emphasize that advancement was dependent on satisfactory results.

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<sup>20</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>21</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.106.

<sup>22</sup> HWCMS, 13 November 1876, HXM189.

None were demoted at the end of the three months, while several of them achieved further advancement.

Pole and the new Watch Committee wasted no time in imposing their own standards of discipline. Joanne Klein noted that the character of a force was in many ways dependent on the personality of its chief constable.<sup>23</sup> Under Clarkson, the men had been encouraged to feel superior to the lower class parts of the town, an attitude that translated into arrogance in their behaviour and dealings. The change of leadership in the chief constable and a new direction from the Watch Committee took time to filter down to the actions of the men. Years later, Alderman Booth recalled being on a sub-committee to change the conditions of the force 'which was in anything but a satisfactory condition'.<sup>24</sup> No records remain of this committee, but actions taken by the Watch Committee (of which Alderman Booth was a new member) show a determination to enforce better standards. In the first year following Chief Constable Pole's appointment, six men were dismissed, four of them for drunkenness, one (Mckenzie) for disobedience to orders and one for misconduct. The last case was Sergeant Binns, a Clarkson recruit, who had nevertheless been promoted shortly after Pole's arrival. Within three months of becoming a sergeant, he was dismissed for not being on duty and falsifying his visiting book, confirming Pole's assessment of the inferior officer quality in the men under his command.<sup>25</sup> He persevered with them, the resignations and dismissals of officers meaning that between October 1876 and October 1877, eight men were promoted from constable to sergeant to replace officers who were dismissed, retired or advanced. This left the force recruiting inexperienced men to stop the gaps left by promotions, whilst being led by inexperienced officers.

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<sup>23</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.6.

<sup>24</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>25</sup> HWCW, 5 February 1877, HXM189.

Apart from dismissals, the first year was mundane with only nine reprimands being given for various disciplinary offences, mostly drunkenness. The punishments administered were still arbitrary, with fines and demotion still the favoured options, but on two occasions, some members of the Watch Committee wanted more stringent penalties imposed, but were outvoted. PC Charles Richards avoided dismissal for being drunk on his beat by one vote and was merely reprimanded, whilst an attempt to impose a fine in addition to a reprimand on PC Samuel Crossley for the same offence was also defeated.<sup>26</sup> Notably, a fine of 5s was imposed on P.C. Albert Hemingway for disobeying a general order against smoking in the Parade Room.<sup>27</sup> This was a directive from Chief Constable Pole, since he complained that

When one got to the place at nine o'clock in the morning, he could not get into the place hardly because of the smoke. The men had been smoking all day and all night. The Chief Inspector could be seen in the parade room smoking up the men's tobacco.<sup>28</sup>

He felt this had to be altered and accordingly issued an order, with subsequent fines for disobeying. The Watch Committee were very satisfied with Pole's handling of the men and to make discipline more immediate, relinquished control of minor offences to him. He was empowered to impose fines up to 2s-6d for various infringements.<sup>29</sup> This was the first time that the Watch Committee had yielded any control over discipline, however minor, to a Chief Constable and showed their confidence in Pole's abilities.

Pole was also horrified by the method of taking the prisoners to the magistrates' court and the railway station, chained together and walked through the town in public. Many prisoners found this parade past their peers an ordeal and on several occasions, Pole was so moved by

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 2 October 1876, HXM189 and 11 June 1877, HXM189.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 27 June 1877, HXM189.

<sup>28</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>29</sup> HWCM, 29 April 1878, HXM189. The offences handed over to Pole's jurisdiction were: Parading late for duty, appearing dirty on parade, gossiping whilst on duty, loitering on the beat and disobeying orders of a minor character.

their pleadings, that he paid money for the cab fare to send them privately to the station.<sup>30</sup> This practice had already been condemned by the previous Watch Committee as well as being one of the complaints levelled at the force at the public meeting in July 1876. Enquiries were made at the time into supplying a van, but on finding that the vehicle would cost £65, with an additional weekly cost of £1 for the hire of horses, the then Watch Committee resolved to continue as before.<sup>31</sup> A prison van, sufficient for twelve persons, was not supplied for the use of the police until the end of 1877, no doubt to the satisfaction of Chief Constable Pole.<sup>32</sup>

Other reviews of the way the force was organised were carried out over the next two years, sometimes at the request of the men. In February 1877, a memorial from the sergeants asked for one sergeant on each relief to be exempt from duty on Sundays, leaving only one sergeant on each relief to visit the men. This was agreed to on a trial basis for six months and appears to have been satisfactory to both sides.<sup>33</sup> Further alterations were made to reduce the hours the men worked in December 1877, when it was agreed to keep the daytime shift at nine hours, but reduce the night shift from nine to eight hours.<sup>34</sup> On the recommendation of the Chief Constable, extra duty at the increasing number of theatres and dance halls was to be performed by men on daytime shifts.<sup>35</sup> The use of men on the night shifts for this duty had led to some beats being neglected. The cover was to be in addition to normal duties and was charged to the venue at the rate of 2s-6d per man per night.<sup>36</sup>

A year earlier, many of the public complaints had been concerned with the lax, possibly corrupt attitude to monetary transactions. This was finally addressed in 1877, when on the

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<sup>30</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>31</sup> HWCM, 21 August 1876, HXM189.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 July 1877, HXM189. Tender of £164-10-0d accepted for supply of prison van. 26 November 1877, HXM190. Payment made on delivery of prison van.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 February 1877, HXM189.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 December 1877, HXM190.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 August, 1877, HXM190.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 August 1877, HXM190.

Chief Constable's instructions, receipt books were issued to the men, so that all valuables handed in to their custody could be accounted for and the donor supplied with evidence of their payment.<sup>37</sup> The money was then to be handed to the Town Clerk for safekeeping. Pole was gradually tightening the loopholes that had become evident under Clarkson's tenure.

The implementation of by-laws for nuisance continued, but with a return to earlier methods of public notices, warning of future prosecutions if ignored. Thus in June 1877, a notice was issued warning about the annoyance of making noises by the application of brakes to carts and waggons.<sup>38</sup> When complaints were received from the residents of Clarence Street about the 'serious annoyances' from children attending the local school, the matter was resolved by a visit from the Chair of the Watch Committee and the Mayor.<sup>39</sup> This signalled the abandonment of Clarkson's 'hard' policing and a return to the more cooperative method of obtaining compliance from the public. Such was the feeling against the police that strict enforcement would only inflame the situation and give rise to more complaints.

Despite the difficulties of the previous year, the visit of the Inspector of Constabulary, in 1877, resulted in a satisfactory assessment, with the government grant still being paid.<sup>40</sup> Charles Pole had only been in charge for six months, but it seems unlikely that the situation that he inherited was as disastrous as was later claimed, since under Clarkson the inspections had all been classed as 'highly satisfactory', superficially at least, with glowing reports from the Inspector. The dichotomy appears to be between the views of one portion of the public and another. Clarkson delivered the policing that the elite of the town wanted, where the laws were immutable, vigorously enforced and creative methods of catching criminals were applauded. The men that Clarkson recruited were encouraged to prosecute all transgressors

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 28 May 1877, HXM189.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 11 June 1877, HXM189.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 11 December 1876, HXM189.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 4 April 1877, HXM189.

and saw themselves as an elite, a view that fostered arrogance and a sense of entitlement. Despite their efficiency in prosecuting drunks and other offenders, this outlook probably gave rise to the actions for which several were dismissed and which made them seem unsuitable material for promotion to the new Chief Constable. The challenge Pole faced was to restore trust in the force by a return to consensual policing, reining in the more aggressive tactics of the past four years, whilst balancing that with efficiency and operational effectiveness. The Watch Committee had learned that pandering to only one section of the ratepayers was not enough, no matter how vociferous that part might be. A balance had to be found that satisfied the majority of the town that the police force was there for their benefit and protection.

### **Recruitment**

During Clarkson’s four years in charge, recruitment had continued to be a problem, with a high turnover and continued difficulties with drunkenness. In an attempt to attract suitable candidates, who might be more likely to stay and make policing a career, adverts had targeted rural areas outside Yorkshire. The son of an agricultural labourer himself, Clarkson had favoured rural recruits. The pattern of recruitment changed slightly when Chief Constable Pole took over. The Watch Committee minutes no longer record recruitment adverts in rural areas, although this does not mean that none were placed. The origins of the recruits become easier to trace as the men increasingly stayed in the force for longer periods.

**Table 4.1**

#### **Origins of recruits 1876-1903**

<b>Origins Unknown</b>	<b>Halifax Parish</b>	<b>Yorkshire (other)</b>	<b>UK (Ex Yorkshire)</b>	<b>Total</b>
50	78	49	39	216

Source: Watch Committee Minutes and Census Returns

More men were recruited from the immediate Halifax area and although not at the same levels as under Superintendent Pearson, they form a significantly larger proportion of the force than in the previous four years. This may reflect a deliberate policy on behalf of the Watch Committee, especially since Councillor Pearson was elected onto the committee in November 1877 and remained an influential member for the next fourteen years, eventually becoming Deputy Chairman. Local recruits may have been favoured again in the hope that they would be more acceptable to the alienated working class, being part of their community and not viewed as outsiders. The recruitment of local men was also influenced by the economic conditions in the town, with the late 1870s being a time of retrenchment in the textile industry and many factories reducing wages and working days. This had been one of the complaints against the increase in police wages in 1876; that trade was bad and many working men were facing pay cuts of up to ten per cent, with only three days employment a week, unlike the regular income of a police constable.<sup>41</sup> However, Halifax's increasing diversification in industry meant that more lucrative employment was still available in other fields, restricting the attractiveness of policing as a career.<sup>42</sup> The next highest number of men came from other areas of Yorkshire, some from the industrial towns, but also from the agricultural parts around York and the East Riding. Only eighteen per cent of recruits came from outside Yorkshire, mostly as before, from rural agricultural areas such as Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Westmorland. Unlike the previous decade, only one recruit was from Scotland. At the end of the nineteenth century, three recruits came from Ireland, although one resigned within a year. The other two remained to make a career in the Halifax force. This may reflect a lessening of the antipathy to the Irish, since the original immigrants over fifty years previously had given rise to a second generation, who were more integrated with the local community. The political

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<sup>41</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 22 July 1876.

<sup>42</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, pp. 146-8.

problems in Ireland do not appear to have concerned the Watch Committee as much as a reputation for hard work.

While Charles Pole was Chief Constable, two hundred and sixteen men were recruited to the Halifax force. Unlike previous years, only four men appointed as supernumeraries did not go on to patrol the beat. This may be because of better screening of potential candidates, but more likely, reflects the change in attitude to policing as a career. Men previously joined the force as a stop gap between other jobs, but the Watch Committee records from the 1880s onwards no longer show men resigning and re-joining, only to resign again, as better employment became available. Instead, the pattern shifted to show an increasing number of men joining the force and remaining in it until they drew a pension.

**Table 4.2**

**Length of Service of Recruits Between 1876 – 1903.**

<b>Length of service</b>	<b>Less than 1 year</b>	<b>1 year but less than 2</b>	<b>2 years but less than 5</b>	<b>5 – 9 years</b>	<b>10 – 19 years</b>	<b>Over 20 years</b>	<b>Join but never patrol</b>
<b>1876-85</b>	18	14	11	8	9	23	2
<b>1886-95</b>	6	7	7	5	6	33	2
<b>1896-03</b>	6	8	7	4	12	28	0

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes.

**Table 4.3**

**Reasons for Leaving the Force**

	<b>1876-1885</b>	<b>1886-1895</b>	<b>1896-1903</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Resign</b>	38	26	31	95
<b>Resign Ill-Health</b>	6	1	1	8
<b>Dismissal</b>	13	2	0	15
<b>Death in Service</b>	3	2	0	5
<b>Pensioned</b>	23	32	38	93

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes

Resignations remained the main reason for men leaving the force, accounting for over forty per cent of the turnover during Pole's tenure. This, however, dropped slightly towards the end of the century. What did change was how long a recruit was likely to remain a policeman. In the first decade after Pole took over as Chief Constable, over half the recruits left within the first five years, with the majority lasting less than two years. Between 1876-85, just over a quarter of the recruits remained for twenty-five years and received a pension. The rest served between five and nineteen years before leaving. In the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the number of men leaving in the first five years dropped to around a third, with over half the recruits who joined, spending over twenty-five years in the job and collecting a pension. This may reflect the changing attitudes of the majority to the status of the police, no longer viewed as adversaries, but a welcome defence against criminality. It also showed that recruits had more idea of what the job entailed before joining and saw it as a rewarding career, with genuine prospects of advancement. It was perfectly possible for a working-class man with ability, to advance through the ranks of a borough force to become Chief Constable. Clarkson and Pole were both examples to the men that it could be done. This was in contrast to what was happening in many of the county forces, where officers were appointed from outside.<sup>43</sup> Only a few made it through the ranks, having got their start in the borough forces.<sup>44</sup> Carolyn Steedman found that in the counties, men remained within their class, with working class men making it to the ranks above sergeant, the exception to the rule.<sup>45</sup> Under Chief Constable Pole, at least two men achieved the rank of chief constable and one became a superintendent.

A smaller number of men left the force having completed between five and twenty years. Some went to more lucrative, possibly less stressful jobs, often where their police training and

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<sup>43</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.137.

<sup>44</sup> Leigh, 'Early County Chief Constables', pp. 43-53.

<sup>45</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p106.

experience was viewed as a positive advantage. Steedman points out that local businessmen viewed ex-police, with their habits of 'regularity and punctuality' as desirable employees and a policeman could make useful contacts for future employment whilst in the course of his job.<sup>46</sup> The Halifax Poor Law Board of Guardians usually preferred to employ ex-policemen. Harry Crapper joined the force in 1892, but left after just over five years to become a Relieving Officer.<sup>47</sup> George Barnes joined the Halifax force in December 1887, becoming a first class constable with long service payments. In September 1899, after nearly twelve years on the beat, he resigned to become the manager at the local bathhouse.<sup>48</sup> It is impossible to know if he left because he had no chance of further advancement in the police, or even if he wanted it. However, it must have been worthwhile for him to relinquish his chance of a police pension. The new post was undoubtedly less dangerous and came with its own accommodation, which would have been an added attraction.

Others left after a number of years to further their police careers, having gone as far as they were able in the Halifax force. Chief Constable Pole was credited with helping many men to gain advancement, both by his help and guidance whilst they were at Halifax and by recommending them to posts in other forces.<sup>49</sup> One of his protégés was Joseph Farndale, who joined the police in 1884. He was promoted to sergeant in 1887, to Inspector five years later and Detective Inspector four months after that. He resigned in July 1893 to take up the post of Chief Constable in Margate, but by 1901 had returned to his native Yorkshire as Chief Constable for the much larger (and better paid) force in Bradford.<sup>50</sup> This movement to gain advancement was not restricted to borough forces, but was also noted by Leigh in her research

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.96.

<sup>47</sup> HWCN, 29 December 1897, HXM194. Census returns 1901 and 1911.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 4 September 1899, HXM194. Census returns 1901.

<sup>49</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 21 February 1903.

<sup>50</sup> HWCN, 22 March 1909, HXM197. Census returns 1901.

on county chief constables, most notably with John Dunne in his rise from a constable in Manchester.<sup>51</sup>

Another officer that joined in Halifax as a constable and rose through the ranks was John Harland. He was appointed in February 1876 while Clarkson was still the head of the force. He was promoted to Detective Sergeant three years later and then Inspector in 1882. In 1887, he was appointed to Pole's old job, Chief Constable of Grantham.<sup>52</sup> It is hard to believe that Pole did not still have contacts on the Council and the Watch Committee there, or that he did not use them to put in a good word on Harland's behalf. Pole was keen to encourage good men and to give them what help he could as he had previously been helped by Samuel Stone in Leicester.

Both these Halifax recruits showed that social mobility was possible through the means of the police, although the opportunities were better in borough forces, rather than the counties, where officers were more likely to be recruited rather than work their way through the ranks. Farndale's father was an innkeeper, while Harland was brought up in the Union Workhouse in Richmond.<sup>53</sup> The workhouse would have given Harland a rudimentary education and Farndale was young enough to have benefited from the 1870 Education Act. The Watch Committee in Halifax had shown itself willing to improve literacy among the men and an ambitious recruit could improve himself and rise to become a respected member of a town's elite. Pole identified suitable men for promotion and took steps to bring them on.

While more men stayed in the police, finally leaving to claim pensions after twenty-five years, the number of men being dismissed the service dropped dramatically. In the ten years following Pole's appointment, only thirteen of the new recruits were dismissed. Eight of

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<sup>51</sup> Leigh, 'Early County Chief Constables', pp. 49-50.

<sup>52</sup> HWCM, 17 June 1887, HXM191.

<sup>53</sup> Census returns, 1861, 1871.

these were for drunkenness. The next twenty years, up to the end of the nineteenth century, saw only four men dismissed. Men were keener to stay in the job and less likely to put their employment at risk by indulging in drunken behaviour. It also reflects Pole's firm grip on the discipline in the force.

Death in service and retirement through ill-health also declined towards the end of the century, possibly due to improved working conditions, compared to the early days of the force. Several of those who died were policemen who joined the fledgling force in the 1850s, such as Inspector Robert Calvert. His death from typhoid fever in 1878 was reported in the *Guardian*, which felt obliged, in light of the still recent scandals, to say that he had 'the highest character, with never a single complaint against him'.<sup>54</sup> Since he had not completed twenty-five years' service, his widow was granted a gratuity of £96. Another Inspector, Thomas Musgrave Smith died after less than six years in the police, his funeral being attended by 'Chief Constable Pole and a large portion of the force and a strong detachment from the West Riding Constabulary and the Corporation Fire Brigade. The deceased was very highly thought of and was an efficient and plucky officer'.<sup>55</sup> Clive Emsley noted the arbitrary awards of pensions prior to (and after) the 1890 Police Act, where parsimonious councils tried to avoid payment to long-serving men.<sup>56</sup> Unlike other watch committees, Halifax was usually fair when it came to paying pensions and gratuities and did not seek excuses to avoid awarding them.

Injury whilst in service was still an occupational hazard, as James Humble discovered. A Detective Sergeant, he was retired at thirty-four due to 'disease of the heart caused by injuries received while executing his duties'. His pension was to be 22s a week, for five years,

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<sup>54</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 5 October 1878.

<sup>55</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 15 March 1882.

<sup>56</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p.173.

‘should he so long live’.<sup>57</sup> He certainly survived for seven years after, since the 1891 Census showed him still in receipt of a police pension. Chief Inspector Wood, who had acted as Chief Constable in the interval between the departure of Clarkson and the arrival of Charles Pole, also retired due to ill-health after twenty-two years. He had delayed his resignation to give the force some stability, whilst Chief Constable Pole settled in, but retired six months later.<sup>58</sup> Like many of the pensioners from the police, Wood was still relatively young, in his late forties. He went on to supplement his pension by working as a school attendance officer.<sup>59</sup> Other ex-members of the force also took on other employment, such as timekeeper and rent collector, which would help top up their reduced income. John Robinson, who commenced his career with the West Riding Constabulary, joining the Halifax force in 1876, completed a total of more than twenty-seven years as a policeman, retiring in 1899 with the rank of Inspector. Still only forty-eight years old, he became an Innkeeper and went on to become the President of the Halifax Licensed Victuallers’ Association, thus keeping up the force’s traditional links with the brewing trade.<sup>60</sup> Other men, who had also clearly retained their health, stayed on for longer, before retiring. Both William Chadwick and John Holmes completed over twenty-seven and twenty-eight years respectively, but the longest serving was Henry Osborne, who had a chequered career, with various demotions for drunkenness. He served thirty-five years in the Halifax force from 1871 to 1906, finally leaving with the rank of Inspector.<sup>61</sup>

Constables in the force were still expected to give their exclusive attention to their police duties and this had always been the case until Jacob Moxon joined in 1897. The Watch

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<sup>57</sup> HWCN, 1 December 1884, HXM194.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 April 1877, HXM189.

<sup>59</sup> Census returns, 1881.

<sup>60</sup> *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 17 May 1907. Census returns 1901.

<sup>61</sup> HWCN, 10 July 1871, HXM189; 13 August 1906, HXM196.

Committee was approached in September by the Halifax Cricket and Football Club for consent for PC Moxon to become a playing member of the club, he having previously played for Huddersfield.<sup>62</sup> This was declined, but the Committee was approached again by the club just over a year later, when Chief Constable Pole found that Moxon had continued to play professional rugby football for Huddersfield, despite being told that it was not compatible with his job as a police officer.<sup>63</sup> He laid his objections before the Watch Committee, which included concerns that Moxon would receive money from the club, that his police duties were incompatible with playing away games and that injuries in the game were common, which might render PC Moxon unable to perform his duties. This was not unlikely, since Moxon was suspended for a period by the game's authorities for 'rough play'.<sup>64</sup> Not least of the objections were the accusations of 'rowdyism and betting' that were synonymous with the game, which would likely bring a constable into contact with the very people that he might have to police. The Watch Committee contacted twenty-seven other forces to ask about their practice and received a wide variety of replies about various sports which only emphasised the lack of guidance on the subject.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the Watch Committee consulted the Home Office as to whether playing professional rugby football was compatible with police duties, especially if injury resulted in a loss of pension. The reply was unequivocal: a policeman should not be allowed to play professional rugby football, it being no different from receiving money for any other occupation, which was prohibited in the Borough Police rules.<sup>66</sup> Had the game not been professional, the reply would clearly have been different. Payment, not the

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<sup>62</sup>HWCM, 6 September 1897, HXM194. Although this was called Halifax Football Club, the game was what would come to be known as rugby league and was a professional sport, with a fixed rate of pay per match.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 14 November 1898, HXM194.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 28 November 1898, HXM194.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 28 November 1898, HXM194.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 12 December 1898, HXM194. The full text of the Home Office reply is reproduced in the Watch Committee minutes. The original correspondence does not appear to have survived in the Home Office records.

risk of injury, was against the rules. Chief Constable Pole was also clearly surprised by the level of remuneration, advising the Home Office that Moxon was often paid as much for one game as he received in a week as a constable, which explains Moxon's enthusiasm to continue playing.

Amateur sports were not included in this judgement and the replies from the other police forces made it clear that many encouraged them on the grounds of fitness. Cricket teams were encouraged by most forces, with boxing, swimming and athletics also popular. Salford and Oldham even provided their men with a gymnasium at the police station in order to keep the men fit.<sup>67</sup> In the Halifax force, some of the police were members of an Athletic club, which also included boxing. There was also a cricket club which was supported by the Chief Constable and various members of the Watch Committee and Council. Matches were played against other forces' teams, often quite a distance away. In June 1894, a match took place against the Nottingham Borough Force, played at Trent Bridge, the Nottingham County Ground.<sup>68</sup> A match in 1890, between Halifax and York police forces had to be postponed because of a gas workers strike in Leeds, to which both forces had to send detachments of men.<sup>69</sup> It was finally played in July, in the presence of the Mayor of York, the Chief Constable and a sizeable number of both Watch Committees and was viewed as a good opportunity for the forces to mix and forge a sense of camaraderie, through a friendly rivalry topped off with a pleasant social event.

The Halifax Cricket Club was formed under Chief Constable Pole sometime in the 1880s, acquiring its own ground in 1889.<sup>70</sup> Its maintenance caused a stir the following year when a

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 November 1898, HXM194.

<sup>68</sup> *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 1 June 1894.

<sup>69</sup> *The Yorkshire Herald and The York Herald*, 24 July 1890.

<sup>70</sup> *The Yorkshire Herald and The York Herald*, 24 July 1890. Councillor Booth made a speech at a match between the York and Halifax police forces where he referred to the opening of the Halifax Police cricket ground the previous year.

letter to the *Halifax Guardian* complained of the use of the local water cart to keep the dust down on the pitch and worse, seven men and the Fire Engine being used to water the grounds ‘as though it had been a burning mill’.<sup>71</sup> Such care would not have been taken unless sanctioned by a higher authority in the Council, so it is clear that the civilised game of cricket was an acceptable pastime for members of the force.

### **Discipline and Rewards**

Throughout his time at Halifax, Chief Inspector Pole was known as someone who enforced strict discipline among the men, but was a good friend to those who wanted to progress. When he retired, he was considered to have left the force in a much better condition than when he arrived, with no complaints of a serious character having been made against it whilst he was in charge.

Given the difficulties the force faced when he arrived, it is unsurprising that disciplinary action was at its peak in the first ten years after he took over. Drunkenness was still a problem, with eight men dismissed, mostly as before, on the second offence. The penalties for those who were not dismissed were still subjective, with previous good conduct, or contrition reducing the punishment. A fine was the most common penalty, but a more serious or repeated offence was likely to lead to demotion, with its ongoing financial cost and the need to show improved behaviour to regain the previous rank. Those who were demoted usually took between six and twelve months to return to the grade they had lost. As the end of the nineteenth century approached the number of men who were drunk on duty declined. This

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<sup>71</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 6 July 1889.

was put down to better education and mirrored a wider drop in drunken behaviour in the town's inhabitants.<sup>72</sup>

**Table 4.4**

**Disciplinary Offences**

	<b>Punishment</b>	<b>1876-1885</b>	<b>1886-1895</b>	<b>1896-1903</b>
<b>Drunkenness</b>	Fine/Reprimand	33	11	11
	Demotion	9	12	0
	Dismissal	8	2	1
<b>Neglect of Duty</b>	Fine/Reprimand	9	7	11
	Demotion	4	1	4
	Dismissal	3	1	0
<b>Disobeying Orders</b>	Fine/Reprimand	1	0	1
	Demotion	0	0	0
	Dismissal	0	0	0
<b>Misconduct</b>	Fine/Reprimand	1	1	0
	Demotion	2	1	0
	Dismissal	3	1	0
<b>Insubordination</b>	Fine/Reprimand	2	1	0
	Demotion	2	0	0
	Dismissal	1	0	0

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes.

What did change was when the drunkenness occurred. Previously, new recruits were the main culprits, with men who had been in the force for several years, or who had been promoted, less likely to get drunk on duty. Repeat offenders were likely to be dismissed or resign after being disciplined. In the early years of Pole's tenure, this was still the pattern, but gradually, the majority of disciplinary offences occurred after a constable had attained First class grade.

<sup>72</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 21 February 1903.

The Watch Committee was noticeably more reluctant to dismiss a man who had been trained and gained experience and drunkenness was no longer confined to the lowest ranks. Inspector James Robinson was caught under the influence of liquor, whilst on duty in 1887 and fined a swingeing £5, no doubt to discourage a repetition and to show the men that the higher the rank, the higher the penalty. An Inspector was expected to lead by example.<sup>73</sup> Also fined £5 was Sergeant George Austwick, who, not having reported for duty, was found drunk at his home.<sup>74</sup> The fines imposed were high, but the Watch Committee did not want to dismiss an otherwise experienced officer for the occasional lapse.

Amongst the lower ranks, the cases of drunken behaviour tended to occur when the man had spent several years as a first class constable. This may have reflected a confidence that lapses would be viewed more leniently in an established policeman, or a disillusion with the job. Long standing constables would also be familiar with the establishments and townsfolk who would curry favour by supplying alcohol. John Marsden served twenty-five years as a constable, being caught drunk on duty three times and was demoted twice. On the third instance, the Town Clerk was instructed to write to the householder who had served the alcohol about 'the danger of treating Constables whilst on duty'.<sup>75</sup> Since the incident happened on Christmas Day, it was likely to be someone who wanted to show seasonal appreciation for the constable's services. In 1899, the Chief Constable was obliged to issue a notice to the men warning that complaints had been made about them visiting the breweries (of which Halifax had six) to obtain alcohol and threatening severe penalties to any man caught offending, either on or off duty.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> HWCM, 20 October 1887, HXM191.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 18 February 1901, HXM195.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 3 January 1893, HXM192.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 7 March 1899, HXM194.

Whilst the action taken by the Chief Constable and the new Watch Committee regarding drunkenness was not noticeably harsher than under Clarkson, more men were disciplined for a wider range of offences. Minor transgressions, which were put under the jurisdiction of Chief Constable Pole, were not mentioned in the Watch Committee minutes, so it is not possible to tell how frequent they were, or how consistently they were dealt with. More serious issues the Watch Committee reserved to its own jurisdiction and included neglect of duty, disobeying orders, insubordination and misconduct. It was in this area that the attempt to impose more stringent regulations and tighten discipline showed, particularly in the first ten years. Two men were dismissed for gross misconduct and one for insubordination. Thomas Verity was demoted to second class for ‘interfering with another Police Officer in the discharge of his duty’ and reprimands for false entries in the visiting book illustrate that problems still remained with unethical behaviour.<sup>77</sup> Other penalties were for the usual shortcomings of individuals, such as missing part of a beat or gossiping on duty. After the first ten years of Chief Constable Pole’s tenure, the number of disciplinary cases gradually declined, with neglect eventually becoming the main reason for an appearance before the Watch Committee. His report in 1886 noted that the number of offences had not only decreased, but were of a more trivial nature. The Chief Constable had established his authority, but also policing had become a career option for many working class men and a job that they wanted to keep.

The rapid advancement of chosen men that had been a hallmark of Chief Constable Clarkson’s time was ended in favour of a longer period spent in each grade. Two hundred and sixteen men were recruited under Chief Constable Pole, of which thirty-six left the force before reaching second class. The remainder took on average between nine months and a year to progress from third to second class. Only 13% took less than six months, but either

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 3 February 1879, HXM190.

showed aptitude or had previous experience of policing. Progression to first class took even longer, with a further twenty-eight men leaving before achieving it. The Watch Committee minutes often showed the promotion awarded a year after the previous one, provided conduct had been satisfactory. It still took 30% of the men over a year to achieve first class. The difference in wages was significant, with a first-class constable earning 3s more per week than third-class.

**Table 4.5**

**Length of Time Taken for Constables to be Promoted to First Class**

	<b>Under 2 Months</b>	<b>Under 3 Months</b>	<b>Under 6 Months</b>	<b>Under 9 Months</b>	<b>Under a year</b>	<b>Over a year</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class</b>	1	4	19	62	90	4	180
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> Class</b>	0	0	2	15	90	45	152

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes.

For most men, the progression from third to first class took between eighteen months and two years, but in some cases could take considerably longer. The message was that promotion was no longer so easy to achieve and had to be earned. The service pay that could increase a first class constable's wage was also only payable on the recommendation of the Chief Constable, an added incentive to good conduct.<sup>78</sup>

Promotion to Merit Class became much harder to attain. Only eight men achieved this under Chief Constable Pole, all having between four and thirteen years on the force before the promotion. Five were appointed on 21 November 1881 and a further three on 4 October 1886. The Watch Committee minutes give no details of the reason for this, so it is impossible to know if the award was for an exceptional act, or just an acknowledgement of good conduct

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 25 November 1889, HXM192.

and service. The latter seems more likely as all the men, bar two, had unblemished records. The two that had been disciplined, had no recent offences.

Promotion to Merit Class did not appear to have been awarded for exceptional acts of bravery. On 27 February 1897, PC Thompson was reported to have stopped three runaway horses and a wagonette. Mr. Hodgson, a local cab proprietor, donated £2 reward, which the Watch Committee increased to £3 for ‘meritorious act’.<sup>79</sup> Thompson was later awarded the Bronze Medal of the Grand Priory of the Order of St. John and Jerusalem and the Watch Committee allowed him £3 expenses and three days leave to go to London to be presented with the medal by the Prince of Wales.<sup>80</sup> He was not promoted to Merit Class, but perhaps the Watch Committee considered he had had sufficient reward for doing his job. The citation was for ‘great gallantry and presence of mind’ and it was reported that

Constable Thompson was dragged off his feet for some thirty or forty yards before he succeeded in stopping the runaways, averting by his heroic conduct an accident, which must have resulted in serious damage to property, and, probably, in loss of life.<sup>81</sup>

Promotion to sergeant and above was no longer to the most able man, regardless of age or experience. Advancement was given to men who had served as first class constable for a number of years and experience was valued as much as ability. The Watch Committee laid down that promotion was ‘by length of service, ability and good conduct’.<sup>82</sup> In the early years after Pole’s appointment, promotion was given to some men much earlier, to cover the many gaps in the sergeants’ ranks caused by dismissals, retirements, resignations and promotions to Inspector. Thomas Musgrave Smith joined the force in July 1876, was

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 8 March 1897, HXM193.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 12 July 1897, HXM194.

<sup>81</sup> *The Standard*, 17 July 1897.

<sup>82</sup> HWCM, 19 March 1900, HXM194.

promoted to sergeant a year later and became an Inspector in 1880.<sup>83</sup> Nothing is known of his career before joining the Halifax force, aged twenty-four, so it is not possible to tell if he had previous experience. John Egan, who joined in 1872, had previously been in the Irish Constabulary, which may have been the reason for his rapid promotion to sergeant in 1875 and to Inspector in 1877.<sup>84</sup> Chief Constable Pole noted that some were unsuitable material, but he was determined to promote from within the force. This policy was not always effective, with the candidates sometimes unable to rise to the challenge. Joseph Binns, who joined in December 1874, was promoted to sergeant two years later, only to be dismissed within three months for misconduct when he should have been on duty and for making a false entry in the visiting book.<sup>85</sup> As the stability was restored to the Halifax force, promotion took longer to achieve. It was still possible for a constable to become a sergeant within five years, if he showed promise. Joseph Farndale only took three years and three months, but it was more usual for a man to take ten or more years to achieve the next grade.<sup>86</sup> Thomas Hemingway, who was one of the few promoted to Merit Class, took eleven years from joining, while William Parkinson Bradley took over twelve years. Some took even longer. George Crossley, a wooll sorter, joined the force at the relatively late age of twenty-nine. He took just over two years to become a first class constable, with just one reprimand for neglecting to work his beat. He seems to have been dependable, if unspectacular and his long service was finally rewarded by promotion to sergeant in 1897, after nearly seventeen years on the beat.<sup>87</sup> This was followed by promotion to Inspector in 1899.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 10 July 1876, HXM189. Sergeant: 15 November 1876, HXM189. Inspector: 1 April 1880, HXM190.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 9 December 1872, HXM189. Sergeant: 12 July 1875, HXM189. Inspector: 14 May 1877, HXM189.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., joined 14 December 1874, HXM189. Sergeant: 15 November 1876, HXM189. Dismissed: 5 February 1877, HXM189.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 27 June 1887, HXM191.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 31 May 1897, HXM194.

Resentment in the town towards the police force and the parsimony of the Council meant that pay increases were rare before 1890. In 1878, the Watch Committee recommended that the Chief Constable's salary be increased from £250 to £315, to include payment for all perks and duties, such as Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, which had previously been separate. The increase was passed unanimously in

testimony of the fact that his services are efficient and are highly appreciated, and there can be no doubt that the ratepayers will also acquiesce in this slight acknowledgement of a valuable servant.<sup>89</sup>

This may have been optimistic, since Councillor Pearson, in his re-election speech, felt obliged to explain why he had voted for the increase. He had suggested that the increased salary should include all the extras, such as payment for the superintendency of the Fire Brigade, as that way the Council would recoup half of the increase from the government grant. In addition, he added that 'he was happy to say that now they had a very satisfactory state of things' and had 'got a good respectable man and well worth the increase', a comment which drew applause from the crowd.<sup>90</sup>

This did not stop him opposing a further increase to £360 in 1889, where he managed to pass an amendment that restricted the rise to £350.<sup>91</sup> It was not until 1893 that the Chief Constable's salary was again increased, to £400, by which time Councillor Pearson had left the Watch Committee.<sup>92</sup>

Pay rises were arbitrary in the fifteen years after Pole took over. Individual rises were awarded to Inspectors for duties, although again, Councillor Pearson used amendments to restrict the amounts. Thus, Detective Inspector Newburn's increase of salary to £115 was

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 9 January 1899, HXM194. See also Appendix 5.

<sup>89</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 10 August 1878.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 19 October 1878.

<sup>91</sup> HWCW, 27 February 1889, HXM192.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 30 January 1893, HXM193.

reduced to £110, after intervention by Pearson, who clearly saw his duty to be in minimizing the cost of the police force to the rates.<sup>93</sup>

The basic rate of the police constables' wage remained the same, but in August 1882, the Watch Committee rescinded service pay, which had been awarded to men who had served for five and seven years. No reason was given, but may have been to compensate the Council for the reduction granted in the men's hours.<sup>94</sup> It was not reinstated until September 1888, when constables who had served five years, 'with good conduct and efficient discharge of duty', would receive an extra 1s at the recommendation of the Chief Constable.<sup>95</sup> This was an effective way of encouraging the men to maintain standards after they had reached first class status and gave them an incentive to remain in the force, especially if they were unlikely to gain promotion to sergeant. The removal of service pay may have encouraged the men to act as firemen in the Fire Brigade, something that had previously been the case until they had been replaced by paid firefighters. In 1883, the Watch Committee decided to save money by again using the police as firemen, paying those that agreed to 'double up' an extra 1s per week, with 1-6d to the three 'most efficient'.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 1 April 1889, HXM192.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 14 August 1882, HXM190.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 17 September 1888, HXM191.

**Table 4.6**

**Pay Scales at Selected Points Under Chief Constable Pole.**

	<b>Nov 1874</b>	<b>1890</b>
<b>Sergeants on appointment</b>	30s	31s
<b>After 3 Years</b>	31s	32s
<b>After 5 Years</b>	32s	33s
<b>Constables 3<sup>rd</sup> Class</b>	23-6d	24s
<b>Constables 2<sup>nd</sup> Class</b>	24-6d	25s
<b>After 3 Years</b>	25s	-
<b>After 5 Years</b>	26s	-
<b>Constables 1<sup>st</sup> Class</b>	26-6d	26-6d
<b>After 3 Years</b>	27s	28s
<b>After 5 Years</b>	28s	29s

	<b>1897</b>	<b>1901</b>
<b>Sergeants on Appointment</b>	33s	33s
<b>After 2 Years</b>	34s	34s
<b>After 4 Years</b>	35s	35s
<b>After 6 Years</b>	36s	36s
<b>After 8 Years</b>	-	38s
<b>After 10 Years</b>	-	40s
<b>Constables 3<sup>rd</sup> Class</b>	24s	24s
<b>Constables 2<sup>nd</sup> Class</b>	25s	25s
<b>Constables 1<sup>st</sup> Class</b>	26-6d	26-6d
<b>After 5 Years</b>	28s	28s
<b>After 7 Years</b>	29s	29s
<b>After 9 Years</b>	-	30s
<b>After 11 Years</b>	30s	31s
<b>After 15 Years</b>	31s	32s

Source: Halifax Watch Committee Minutes

It was not until 1890 that sergeants' wages were increased by 1s per week and this was quickly followed by a request from the constables for a rise in pay. This was granted with 6d increase to all classes and a further 1s increase after three and five years' service.<sup>96</sup> This set

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 29 May 1890, HXM192.

the pattern for the next few years, with separate pay claims being submitted by the men, the sergeants and the Inspectors at periodic intervals. In 1892, checks with neighbouring boroughs showed that Halifax paid their sergeants the lowest amount, so the pay scales used in nearby Huddersfield were adopted, but the maximum pay was capped at 35s instead of 37s.<sup>97</sup> Service pay at 1s extra a week was also granted to the men after eleven and fifteen years' service.<sup>98</sup>

The requests for an increase were usually successful, although the rises were not always across the board, but involved tinkering with some grades and not others. However, the request for a rise by the Halifax sergeants in January 1895 was declined out of hand by the Watch Committee and no other rank was keen to put in a claim.<sup>99</sup> The combined claim of the Inspectors, Superintendent and sergeants for a rise in January 1898 resulted in some officers receiving individual increases, but no review of the salary scales.<sup>100</sup> Further increases to service pay were made in March 1900, so that a sergeant with fourteen years' service received £2 and a constable with twenty years' service, 32s.<sup>101</sup> The wage scales became increasingly complex over the last quarter of the nineteenth century, reflecting a system of checks and balances designed to retain experienced men long term, whilst minimising the cost to the ratepayers. The aim of the Watch Committee was to reward long serving men, who otherwise had no further increments to look forward to. The long-service pay and the pension were enough to attract recruits who wanted a career in the police, even though the basic pay of a beginner was not high.

When Chief Constable Pole arrived in Halifax, the Borough police force numbered 71 men, nearly three times the size it had been at its inception in 1848. Between 1876 and 1903 when

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 10 October 1892, HXM192.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 18 March 1893, HXM192.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 14 January 1895, HXM193.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 24 January 1898, HXM194.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 19 March 1900, HXM194.

Pole resigned, the strength of the force increased to 107 men. Most of this increase was as a result of the growth of the borough.<sup>102</sup> In 1889, it was redesignated as a county borough and its boundaries were extended four times between 1892 and 1902, increasing the number of ratepayers, but needing to service a larger population over a much wider geographical area. In 1891 the force stood at 83, but expanded rapidly over the next ten years to cope with the increased responsibilities. The government inspection of April 1896 highlighted the need for six more men and recommended a superintendent be appointed to assist the Chief Constable. It also suggested that the force needed six mounted constables. The Watch Committee promptly appointed Inspector Thomas Raw as Superintendent and made arrangements for the hire of horses on an ad hoc basis to form a mounted section.<sup>103</sup>

The population of the municipal borough had increased to 73,630 by 1881 and after being redesignated a county borough in 1889 rose to 89,832. It peaked at 104,936 in 1901.<sup>104</sup> The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a second phase of redevelopment in Halifax, which included the new police station, the reconstruction of the borough markets and the Commercial Street development. In addition, there was a large increase in the residential building in the town and its suburbs, particularly on the western and north-western edges, which became home to the respectable lower middle and working class, keen to distance themselves from the slums and cellar dwellings in central Halifax.<sup>105</sup> Also, public buildings, such as the infirmary, the Crossley and Porter Orphanage, theatres and numerous churches and chapels were constructed.<sup>106</sup>

Outstations were opened at the farthest edges of the borough and manned on a permanent basis, at a considerable cost to the ratepayers. Advancing technology and the need to keep in

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<sup>102</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>103</sup> HWCM, 20 May 1896 and 4 May 1896, HXM 193.

<sup>104</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, p.127.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, *Halifax*, p.149.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, *Halifax*, pp.167-175.

touch with the more distant parts of the borough led to the installation of phone lines connecting the Police Office to the outstations in 1891, with a further eight outstations connected in 1895.<sup>107</sup> The extension of the borough, the building program and the population increase must have resulted in numerous re-organisations of the beats in the town and its new suburbs, but apart from the increasing the size of the force and establishing outstations, no details survive. The expansion must have put pressure on the force, but this can only be glimpsed in the occasional complaint from town centre businesses and residents that their neighbourhood was insufficiently policed. In 1897, a letter with 134 signatories was sent to the Watch Committee demanding better police supervision of Horton Street, the main approach to the town from the station, since it was claimed to be ‘continually infested by gangs of roughs’.<sup>108</sup> The Committee referred the matter to the Chief Constable.

Government inspections continued to be satisfactory until 1894, when the Inspector, Sir Herbert Croft criticised the police station accommodation at the Town Hall. This had only been opened in 1863, but Chief Constable Pole had complained several times in the past about the poor ventilation and noxious smells in the police station, which was situated below ground in the building. Sir Herbert noted that the Parade Room and Offices were now too small for the expanded force and the sanitary arrangements were unsatisfactory, with proper ventilation impossible. His recommendation was to build new offices elsewhere above ground.<sup>109</sup> The Council, which had managed to ignore Chief Constable Pole’s complaints about the defective accommodation for over a decade, chose not to disregard the Home Secretary’s request to know how they were going to remedy the situation. The decision was taken to buy land and build a new police station. Arguments over cost and design went on for several years, with the cost for the scheme capped at £25,000. Naturally the project ran over

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<sup>107</sup> HWCM, 20 July 1891, HXM192.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 5 April 1897, HXM193.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 10 September 1894, HXM193.

budget, finally costing a total of £27,764-13-8d<sup>110</sup>. The Council wanted ‘one of the best and most modern Police Stations in the Country, fitted up with all the best known sanitary appliances’, to include new cells, a covered parade ground, a recreation room and a police court, the whole to be heated by steam and with electric lighting. Alternating semaphore signals were added to the plans to control the traffic at the crossroads by the new buildings.<sup>111</sup> The new Borough Police Station and Court buildings were finally opened in October 1900.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the force reflected the improvements being made elsewhere, while also increasing the responsibilities that came within its remit. In 1882, the Watch Committee also became responsible for the Bonding Warehouses as well as weights and measures, lodging houses, hackney cabs and the Fire Brigade. Constables were instructed on the safest way to deal with electrical wires in the event that they should fall into the street, a possibility brought about by the advent of the electric tramway service in 1898.<sup>112</sup> The Watch Committee considered creating a studio for photographing prisoners within the Town Hall, but the cost and lack of space meant that they continued with the established practice of paying a local studio to do the job.<sup>113</sup> The police department also kept up with administrative improvements, ordering a typewriter in 1898 for use in the office at a cost of £21-17s.<sup>114</sup> In 1889, the men were trained by St. John’s Ambulance Brigade in First Aid, with the Watch Committee acquiring an ambulance four years later to deal with accidents and cases of serious illness.<sup>115</sup> Chief Constable Pole reported in 1896 that 82 men had first aid certificates and that 45 of the men were doing stretcher drill and attending a course of lectures by a local

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 7 January 1901, HXM195.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 23 July 1900, HXM194.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 11 May 1903, HXM195.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 8 July 1889, HXM192.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 6 June 1898, HXM194.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 6 November 1893, HXM193.

doctor.<sup>116</sup> The members of the force were given ‘ambulance practice’ on Friday afternoons and by 1903 all the men were taking courses at various levels, with a very satisfactory pass rate.<sup>117</sup>

The opening of the new police station in October 1900 also brought the appointment of a Police Matron to superintend three working matrons, all appointed to look after the needs of the female prisoners.<sup>118</sup> The Matron was the wife of the resident gaoler, P.C. Kitchenman and had been responsible for searching the female prisoners at the old police station in the Town Hall. The appointment of a Matron had been requested in 1894 by the Halifax Women’s Liberal Association, but refused by the Watch Committee as the then gaoler’s wife, Mrs Buckley, had been performing similar duties.<sup>119</sup> The appointment in 1900 was more a formalisation of her duties, making her responsible for the supervision of the working matrons. This attention to the needs of the female prisoners gave Chief Constable Pole great satisfaction, citing it as one of the improvements in the force when he retired.<sup>120</sup>

## **Crime**

On his arrival at Halifax in 1876, Chief Constable Pole was horrified to find that large numbers of persons were arrested for drunkenness (908 in 1876), particularly over weekends, when the cells were often full to overflowing. In addition, in 1876 one hundred and eight persons were committed to the Sessions and Assizes, a figure he found ‘enormous for a town of 70,000 inhabitants’.<sup>121</sup> These figures are not necessarily a true record of the crime in the town. David Taylor points out that prosecution for drunkenness was not a good

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<sup>116</sup> *Statistical Returns. Halifax Borough Police, 1880-98*. Return for year ending 31 December 1896, p.3. Copy held in HAS library, ref (B)B:11:13. The returns for 1880-1892 run from September to September, but from 1893 run from December to December.

<sup>117</sup> HWCM, 30 March 1903, HXM195.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1901, HXM195.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 July 1894, 27 August 1894, HXM193.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1901, HXM195, *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>121</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903.

indicator of the levels of drunkenness, since the attitude of the Watch Committee and the Chief Constable could affect the figures dramatically.<sup>122</sup> Clarkson's aim was to prove to the ratepayers that his leadership was more effective than Superintendent Pearson's in cutting crime. Large numbers of arrests for drunkenness and minor by-law infringements discouraged the 'lower orders' from loitering in the streets and enforced the impression that the town was being cleaned up. Clarkson's proactive methods of policing and frequent personal involvement meant a higher number of arrests, but to the ratepayers that did not necessarily mean that the incidence of crime had increased, merely that they now had an effective chief who was dealing with it.

Under Chief Constable Pole, arrests for drunkenness gradually declined in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, partly from a more relaxed style of policing, but also due to a more general change in attitude amongst the respectable to order and decorum. In his report to the Watch Committee in 1892, Pole commented on the decrease, stating that those remaining

are almost entirely cases that have occurred among strangers and the floating population of the lower parts of the town, very few indeed having arisen amongst the bona fide working classes.<sup>123</sup>

**Table 4.7**

**Arrests For Drunkenness**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1876</b>	<b>1877</b>	<b>1878</b>	<b>1879</b>	<b>1885</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1894</b>	<b>1898</b>
<b>No. of persons charged</b>	908	636	513	484	370	282	241	267

Source: Statistical returns of the Halifax Borough Police, 1880-1898.

<sup>122</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.67.

<sup>123</sup> *Statistical returns of the Halifax Borough Police 1880-1898*. (Halifax, 1898). Year ending 29 September 1892, p.5. Halifax Antiquarian Society, (B)B:11:3

Both the summary and indictable offences declined, although the enlargement of the Borough in 1893 makes it difficult to make meaningful comparisons. Certain offences had sudden peaks or troughs, depending on changes in legislation or varying situations in the Borough. Thus in 1895 and again in 1897, a large jump in the total number of persons proceeded against was explained by the enforcement of an Order for the Muzzling of Dogs, under the Contagious Diseases Act, which in 1895 had resulted in 505 prosecutions.<sup>124</sup>

The Chief Constable complained in 1880 of a large increase in the number of beggars, many of them professional, infesting the town. He ascribed it to indiscriminate relief being handed out by the townspeople, which encouraged begging and made a plea that such funds should be channelled through properly organised societies, so that relief went only to the deserving poor.<sup>125</sup> These reflected the fears of the middle class that a portion of the poor were not strictly destitute, but moved around the country as vagrant criminals and were responsible for much of the crime, while the deserving poor did not receive the help they needed. This question of poverty and how it should be dealt with eventually resulted in the formation of the short-lived Guild of Help, which was founded in Bradford in 1904. A branch was established in Halifax in 1905, with the Chief Constable as a member. The Guild's aim was to offer a community-based answer to assisting the poor, coordinate the private and public bodies that offered assistance and exclude idlers and beggars. The Guild failed since it was unable to obtain support from across the social spectrum, remaining a middle-class initiative, which was inadequate to deal with the size of the problem it faced.<sup>126</sup>

Outsiders were increasingly attracted to the growing industrialised town, either on business or seeking work. When Chief Constable Pole made his reports in the last quarter of the century,

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., Year ending 31 December 1895, p.1.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., Year ending 29 September 1880, p.3.

<sup>126</sup> K. Laybourn, 'The Guild of Help and the changing face of Edwardian philanthropy.' *Urban History*, 20, (1993), pp. 43-5.

a large proportion of the persons arrested were strangers to Halifax, not residents. In 1881, of 1186 persons arrested, 689 were not residents of the town.<sup>127</sup> It is not possible to know from how far away these persons came. They may still have been part of the Parish of Halifax, but with easy rail travel, it seems likely that many may have come from farther afield. Ten years later, the majority of those arrested, mostly for drunken behaviour, were local, but a third were still from outside the Borough.<sup>128</sup> This increased movement of people around the country necessitated greater cooperation between the various police forces. Enquiries for other forces formed a significant part of the force's duties, with over a thousand of them being made in 1891, in addition to arresting thirteen people for crimes committed elsewhere.<sup>129</sup> The movement between forces by the men and the promotion of officers to other nearby forces meant that cooperation, rather than rivalry was implicit. Chief Constables met at the annual meetings in London and inter force sporting competitions all contributed to a combined effort to deal with crime, which was not confined to municipal boundaries. The camaraderie that was developing extended beyond individual forces, even though objectives, discipline and methodology varied between forces.

Other errands continued to be given to the police that interfered with their duties. Chief Constable Pole complained in his 1890 report that the force had been required to deliver over 2,300 circulars to the homes of members of the Council, many of whom lived at the edges of the Borough.<sup>130</sup> This had taken men away from their beats, often when they were urgently needed in the main parts of town. It is unclear whether this complaint had any effect on the method of the delivery of circulars, but Chief Constable Pole did not raise the grievance again.

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<sup>127</sup> *Statistical Returns of the Halifax Borough Police*, Year ending 29 September 1881, p.2.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, Year ending 29 September 1891, p.2.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, Year ending 29 September 1891, p.3.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, Year ending 29 September 1890, p.3.

He took the opportunity of his report in 1892 to summarise the changes that had occurred over the previous sixteen years, noting the gradual decrease in crime.<sup>131</sup> Brothels were numerous in the mid-1870s, but the heavy penalties inflicted on the keepers by the magistrates had little effect. They were finally eradicated by the police by taking additional action against those who used them, so that in 1892 there were none left in the Borough. Prostitution was still, however, a problem in the poorest parts of the town. Betting in public houses had also declined after heavy penalties had been handed down by the magistrates and most publicans kept an orderly house, with gaming no longer openly carried on. Whether the reduction in crime was as a result of the combined actions of the police and the magistrates is debatable. David Taylor argues that policing in the late nineteenth century was less successful than supposed, with crime declining due to a fundamental change in the attitudes of the public and states that ‘the apparent success of late Victorian and Edwardian policing was the product rather than the cause of a wider sense and practice of lawabidingness’.<sup>132</sup>

Chief Constable Pole was not the only person to note the drop in offences. J. T. Simpson, Mayor of Halifax in 1899, presented a breakdown of the decline of crime from 1880-99 to the Council, ascribing the drop to better education of the young. He concluded his presentation with an appeal for a reduction in the size of the force, on the grounds that the better moral state of the town meant that fewer men were required and remarked ‘this hard and fast law of the Home Office of increasing the police in the ratio to the inhabitants is an antiquated one’.<sup>133</sup>

Anything that could reduce costs was popular with ratepayers and Council members and Mayor Simpson’s analysis of crime figures was clearly made with the intention of forming a

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., Year ending 29 September 1892, pp. 3-5.

<sup>132</sup> D. Taylor, ‘Policing and the Community’, in K. Laybourn (ed.), *Social Conditions, Status and Community 1860-c.1920* (Stroud, Gloucs.,1997), pp. 106-7.

<sup>133</sup> HWCM, 2 October 1899, HXM194.

case for the reduction of police numbers. The subject was reintroduced two years later, when some members of the Watch Committee forced the establishment of a sub-committee to enquire into a reduction, but its report was not in favour of any cutbacks and without further support the measure was dropped, especially since it would be rejected by the Home Office.<sup>134</sup>

The fight against crime was not only dealt with by prosecution and harsh penalties. Chief Constable Pole was known for his concern for the unfortunates in the criminal class, with one Councillor saying that 'if he erred at all it was on the side of mercy towards the prisoner'.<sup>135</sup> His distaste for the unfeeling method of marching prisoners through the town, chained together, which still existed at the beginning of his tenure, led him to pay for cabs as alternative conveyance.<sup>136</sup> The Chief Constable was not only concerned with the crime, but also in enabling those who were caught up in it to escape into respectability. When the brothels were closed down and the keepers convicted, he ensured that many of the girls were taken away and placed in homes to prevent them being drawn back into prostitution.<sup>137</sup> The released convicts who were in the Borough under supervision were found jobs by the police, since they were normally unable to do so for themselves, without great difficulty. The Chief Constable reported in 1881 that

the Police continue to find employment for those convicts who are unable to do so of themselves immediately on their discharge from prison, and it is with feelings of pleasure I am able to report that they are all except one in employment and supposed to be doing well.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 March and 17 March 1902, HXM195.

<sup>135</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>137</sup> *Statistical Returns of the Halifax Borough Police*, Year ending 29 September 1892, p.4.

<sup>138</sup> *Statistical Returns of the Halifax Borough Police*, Year ending 29 September 1881, p.3.

He attributed the reduction in the number of serious offences to their efforts, which reduced the chances of the men and women re-offending.<sup>139</sup> This rehabilitation of offenders was not new to the Halifax force, but under Chief Constable Clarkson had become unimportant, certainly secondary to prosecutions. Chief Constable Pole seems to have combined both facets into his humane policing style, viewing certain members of those who were policed as victims of their circumstances, rather than irredeemably criminal.

In addition to drunkenness and indictable crimes, the Watch Committee continued to receive and refer complaints from ratepayers to the Chief Constable. Stone throwing, noisy children and bands (usually the Salvation Army), loitering gangs of roughs and the driving of cattle through the streets on market day all received attention from the police.<sup>140</sup> The theft of £5-18-8d from the wages tray in the police office in 1884 caused some embarrassment. The culprit was never caught and procedures were examined and refined to avoid a repetition.<sup>141</sup> The Temperance groups in the town were still active, having transferred their attention to the sale of liquor to children. When the magistrates requested information on the alleged practice of publicans supplying spirits to children under thirteen, with the enticements of sweets, the Watch Committee ignored it on the advice of the Town Clerk. He was of the opinion that the Justices had no legal right to request the information. However, a critical letter from the Wesleyan Synod and a resolution from a public meeting held in the town, regretting the Committee's stance, had the effect of reversing the previous attitude. The Chief Constable was instructed to make the necessary enquiries, although this was not confirmed by the next Council meeting.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *Statistical Returns of the Halifax Borough Police*, years ending 29 September 1882, p.3.

<sup>140</sup> HWCM, Stone throwing, 15 September 1902, HXM195. Noisy children, 5 April 1897, HXM193. Salvation Army, 7 February 1898, HXM194, 29 April 1901 and 17 March 1902, HXM195. Gangs of roughs, 5 April 1897, HXM193. Cattle, 25 November 1901, HXM195.

<sup>141</sup> HWCM, 20 October 1884, HXM191.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 September, 4 October, 29 December 1897 and 21 March 1898, HXM194.

The police were increasingly involved with safety issues, as theatres, halls and entertainment venues proliferated with the expansion of commercial leisure to the masses. From 1880, the Watch Committee was directing the police to examine places of entertainment to ensure that escape routes in the event of fire were in place and that appliances were available to extinguish a blaze.<sup>143</sup> Their attention then switched to urging the local mill owners to supply outside staircases at their mills to assist evacuation in case of fire.<sup>144</sup> In 1883, the safety checks were extended to all public places in the Borough, including churches, chapels and Sunday schools. The Chief Constable was responsible for the running of the Fire Brigade, although in 1884, the Watch Committee had appointed a Superintendent recommended by the London Fire Brigade and invested in a new fire engine and equipment. The brigade was still mostly manned by policemen, who were assigned to beats close to the fire station. Membership of the brigade was not compulsory and the Watch Committee minutes are full of resignations from and appointments of policemen to the Fire Brigade.<sup>145</sup>

The Halifax Force had various complaints made against it while Chief Constable Pole was at its head, although none were substantiated. A letter was sent to both Halifax newspapers in 1889 by William Fletcher, alleging brutality by the police in breaking his ribs during his arrest.<sup>146</sup> *The Halifax Guardian* published the letter, whilst the *Halifax Courier* passed its copy to the Watch Committee for investigation. This was probably because Alderman Ramsden, the chairman of the Watch Committee, was part owner of the *Courier*. The subsequent investigation revealed that Fletcher was a regular offender and had previously assaulted policemen, whilst alleging brutality. He had made no complaint whilst in the cells and a large number of witnesses testified that the force used to arrest him had not been

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 19 December 1881, HXM190.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 25 September 1882, HXM191.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 14 July 1884, HXM191.

<sup>146</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 1 June 1889.

excessive. An examination by two doctors had found no evidence of broken ribs and the Watch Committee exonerated the constable involved, whilst criticising the *Halifax Guardian* for publishing the letter without checking on Fletcher's character. The constable, who had twenty years' experience in the force, had been so distressed by the allegations and being pointed out in the town, that he had been moved at his own request to work at an outstation.<sup>147</sup>

More serious allegations were made by John Lister, a Fabian, owner of the Shibden Hall estates and a financial supporter and sometime treasurer of the Halifax Independent Labour Party. He wrote to the *Halifax Evening Courier*, to complain about brutal police behaviour that he claimed to have witnessed in Halifax. Later evidence showed that a man named McDonald had become embroiled in the arrest of someone whom he claimed to be innocent, an assertion which was subsequently proved to be correct. However, in the meantime, McDonald himself was arrested and taken to the Town Hall. John Lister witnessed the latter stages of the journey to the police station, where he saw McDonald being dragged by the legs by one constable, whilst another held his arm and kicked him 'with inhuman violence' with 'his big heavy boots'.<sup>148</sup> Lister was so disgusted that he wrote to the newspaper about what he had seen and started a slew of letters both for and against the police. Two members of the public who had witnessed events wrote to the papers, but both with different slants on what they had seen, suggesting their attitudes to the police had coloured the way they viewed events. Lister again wrote to the papers stating that McDonald's violence 'did not justify lynch law'.<sup>149</sup> The Watch Committee investigated the incident, found that the man had tried to escape and when caught, had kicked and knocked one constable over, fighting them until they had to 'use unpleasant measures'. The Committee completely exonerated the constables

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 July 1889.

<sup>148</sup> *Halifax Evening Courier*, 10 October 1889.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October 1889.

involved, suggesting that Lister owed both them and the force an apology, something he declined to give. Letters were written to the papers, some in support of John Lister, some pointing out the difficult job that the police had, with both sides holding entrenched views. Several, including Lister had unrealistic views of how the police should uphold the law and yet deal with violence in the course of their jobs, writing that whilst ‘the police ought to be protected and respected in the execution of their duty, it is to the magistrates that they should look for support and redress’.<sup>150</sup>

A letter from ‘Shackleton’ showed more awareness of the harsh reality of policing saying,

Let Mr Lister consider the police are human and have to take all sorts of insults and assaults and in many cases are assaulted in such a way that they have not the chance even to draw their truncheons or blow their whistles.<sup>151</sup>

Enough letters however were in sympathy with John Lister to give a timely reminder to the Chief Constable and the Watch Committee that, despite all the efforts of the last thirteen years, the police were not above suspicion and were not viewed by all the inhabitants of the Borough with rose-tinted spectacles. The critical letters were not from the uneducated lower part of town, but the literate members of the electorate, many of whom sympathised with Lister’s political views and were suspicious of the role played by the police in the new political reality. One letter claimed the investigation was not to find out ‘are the charges true’, but ‘how can we clear the police?’ Another harked back to the fears of a repressive, French-style, military force implicit in the resistance to the new police in 1848, referring to ‘dominant officialism’ and offering to lend Lister a hand in the ‘fight on behalf of English liberty’.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 11 October 1889.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 12 October 1889.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 20 October 1889.

The police were coming into conflict with the working class for new reasons as the growth of industrial disorders spread, supported by a small, but influential section of the middle class. The deterioration of industrial relations at the end of the nineteenth century helped found the Halifax Trades and Labour Council in 1889, a body that was mainly composed of the workers from the craft unions, particularly the expanding engineering industry.<sup>153</sup>

The Halifax force was increasingly being used to police strikes, both in the town and elsewhere, a situation that led to the men coming into conflict with the respectable working class. The 1889 Gasworks strike in Halifax went on for several weeks after the management introduced 'schemes for efficiency and economy'. Strike breaking workers were brought in and housed and fed at the gasworks and rumours spread of a plan by the strikers to blow up the premises. In addition to the Halifax force, twenty extra Bradford police were drafted in and the Watch Committee agreed to employ a further fifty men, to be paid for by the Gasworks Committee. This was seen as a gross overreaction by the strikers, who mocked the committee for believing the rumours, the implementation of which would have led to the alienation of respectable support. The police were instructed to disperse the strikers 'where two or three were assembled together'.<sup>154</sup>

During the Hull dockers' strike, the Watch Committee sent twenty men to assist the police there, along with constables from the Huddersfield, Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield and York forces. The assistance was greatly appreciated by the Hull Watch Committee, but the news brought differing responses in Halifax. The Halifax and District Trades and Labour Council wrote to condemn the Watch Committee action 'when the Peace of Hull is not proved to be jeopardised by the strike'. Conversely, the Halifax Drapers and Hosiers Association 'heartily' commended the force for sending men for 'the preservation of peace and defence of the

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<sup>153</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, p.154.

<sup>154</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 March, 30 March 1889. HWCN, 26 March 1889, HXM192.

property of that important Borough'.<sup>155</sup>The Watch Committee wisely commented on neither letter.

It is impossible to know how the policemen felt about their role in policing strikes, or where their sympathies lay. Where the industrial action was local, as with the gas stokers strike, it was entirely possible that they might know, or live near, some of the strikers. Their action in protecting the strike breakers and in dispersing groups of strikers must have reinforced the policeman's sense of living in, but not being part of the community. The growing number of industrial disputes meant that the police were being drawn into conflict with the respectable working classes, a group with whom they had maintained an uneasy relationship, dependent on the variable level of policing. Joanne Klein observed that demonstrations and riots altered police behaviour since they were not typical of their daily routine and they were under close supervision by their superiors. No matter how sympathetic they might feel to the strikers, they had to follow orders, giving them a more military presence, which fuelled resentment that remained after the strike action had ended.<sup>156</sup>

In 1903, Chief Constable Pole finally retired to the delights of Morecambe, having been persuaded four years previously to stay on. His leaving was marked by generous gifts of silverware and the thanks of the magistrates and Watch Committee. His reminiscences included the poor condition of the force on his arrival and contrasted it with the stable, efficient body that he was leaving. It was not just the men that had changed: the police station was a recently opened, purpose built building, with electric lighting and hygienic sanitary arrangements. The town itself was quieter and more law abiding, with crime lower than at any time in the preceding century and the eulogies for the retiring Chief Constable marked

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<sup>155</sup> HWCM, 24 April 1889, HXM193.

<sup>156</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.185.

the progression from an archaic watch system to a modern, efficient force.<sup>157</sup> His long period in office undoubtedly contributed to the stability of the force and his gradual improvement of the education and calibre of the men. His earlier training in teaching and later experience as Chief Clerk in Leicester gave him a good grounding in administrative matters and his period in office witnessed a shift in the role of chief constable towards organisational, rather than operational functions. His professional attitude to mentoring promising constables gave the force a reputation for producing good officers. The less intense policing, coupled with a philanthropic approach, took the sting from relations with the town, although resentments would always remain. He was credited with being responsible for the decline in crime, though this was more to do with a nationwide change, than solely the police influence, with the public readier to report crime and give evidence against offenders. Chief Constable Pole was as involved with the social and moral side of controlling the perceived criminal class as he was the punitive aspects. V. A. C. Gatrell has argued that the decrease in crime in the last quarter of the century was because criminals remained unsophisticated, with most offences a necessary way of supplementing income, as it had always been. In contrast the police and the State used new controls and methods against the poorest levels of society, who had yet to learn to defend themselves.<sup>158</sup> This was to change as the new century progressed. By re-establishing discipline, keeping all promotion internal and ensuring that long-serving men had an incentive to stay, Pole gave the force a stable basis from which to work. The abandonment of Clarkson's aggressive methods and a return to a more consensual style of policing, gradually helped restore faith in the force, at least to certain sections of the ratepayers. The changing political realities, however, had pushed the police into new areas of conflict with the public, which would prove contentious in the next century.

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<sup>157</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 13 June 1903.

<sup>158</sup> V. A. C. Gatrell, 'The Decline of Theft and Violence in Victorian and Edwardian England', in V. A. C. Gatrell, Bruce Lenman, Geoffrey Parker (ed.) *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500* (London, 1980), pp.334-7.

As Gatrell points out, even though the borough police remained under local control, the centralisation principle, driven by Home Office inspections and late nineteenth century legislation meant the loss of influence of the Watch Committees.<sup>159</sup> In common with other borough chief constables, Pole had gained a large amount of autonomy, aided by his long service and the trust that the Watch Committee placed in him. Increasingly, his administrative abilities were needed to deal with statistical returns, contact with the public and other forces and with the prosecution of cases, for which the police had become chiefly responsible.

The new Chief Constable, Alfred Richardson, looked forward to as long and as pleasant a stay as his predecessor. He had inherited a stable efficient force, but had to face new challenges in policing that came with fast moving changes towards a modern world.

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<sup>159</sup> V. A. C. Gatrell, 'Crime, Authority and the policeman-state' in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.) *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950. Social Agencies and Institutions*, (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne, 1990), pp. 260-63.

## Chapter 5

### **New Century, New Challenges, 1903-1914.**

The Watch Committee had been reluctant to let Chief Constable Pole retire. He had brought the force through a turbulent period, stabilising the turnover of men, establishing a fairer system of promotion and restoring public confidence in the police. Nevertheless, in looking for Pole's successor, the Committee advertised for a much younger man, aged between thirty and thirty-five years of age and offered a salary of £250 per annum.<sup>1</sup> This amount reflected the comparative inexperience of the candidates, compared to the outgoing incumbent, who, by 1903 was receiving a salary of £400. They received thirty-one applications, which included five army officers, three chief constables and several police inspectors. Declining to short-list any of the army officers, who were unlikely to have any direct policing experience, the Watch Committee continued with its long-held aversion to any military leadership of the force, believing that a senior officer should understand the job from the ground up. A man who had risen through the ranks had not only demonstrated ability, but would be conversant with all grades of the force and additionally would have an understanding of, and sympathy with his men. It is also possible, though never stated, that the town councillors would have been uncomfortable with an ex-military officer, since, as Steedman found, many would be younger sons of gentry or minor aristocracy, whilst the councillors were mostly manufacturers or owners of small businesses. The Chief Constable of the County Constabulary was expected to share the views and aims of the county magistrates and by extension, the attitudes of those at the Home Office. Consequently, the appointment of such

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<sup>1</sup> HWCM, 2 March 1903, HXM195.

men as chief constables increased over the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The Watch Committees of the boroughs did not necessarily share the counties' aims and the pattern of borough policing did not follow that of the counties. A man from the rural gentry, who might consider himself socially superior was unlikely to take direction from the Watch Committee and might have a different set of values from the predominantly Liberal, non-conformist councillors. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Watch Committee interviewed three inspectors (which included Joe Haigh, Inspector in Halifax) and the three chief constables.

The successful candidate, who attracted nearly unanimous support, was Alfred Herbert Richardson, then the Chief Constable of Newcastle under Lyme. If the Watch Committee were looking for a man who understood policing, they could not have chosen someone with a better pedigree. Born in a police house in Birmingham, where his father served in the City Police, he himself joined the force in October 1890. By this time, his father, Frank Richardson had been appointed Chief Constable at Hereford, where he remained until his retirement in 1920. Four of Alfred's five brothers also joined the police, with one other, Frank (junior), being appointed Chief Constable of Salisbury in 1903. Thus, from 1903 to 1920, three members of the same family held the rank of chief constable, an occurrence unlikely to be repeated.<sup>3</sup> By the start of the twentieth century, coming from a family background in policing was no longer unusual and Richardson was not the only officer with a chief constable as father to achieve the same rank. Chief Constable Parry of Cumberland and Westmorland also hailed from a policing dynasty, with a father who had been Chief Constable of Derbyshire.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the fathers' rank was not directly responsible for the achievements of the sons, it no doubt helped indirectly, with a family background in policing confirming an understanding of the role.

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<sup>2</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>4</sup> Leigh, 'Early County Chief Constables', p. 48.

Alfred Richardson rose rapidly through the ranks at Birmingham, becoming a detective inspector within ten years, described as ‘one of the smartest and most capable young officers the city has had for some time’.<sup>5</sup> He applied for posts at Radnorshire, Lincoln and Exeter, but was unsuccessful, probably owing to his youth.<sup>6</sup> He was appointed as Chief Constable of Newcastle under Lyme in 1901, where he was described as the ‘youngest Chief Constable in England’. The Newcastle under Lyme police force was small, numbering only eighteen men and the Chief Constable’s salary was only £180. The short-listed applicants were all Inspectors, perhaps reflecting the modest size of the force and the difficulty of retaining any officer of ability for any length of time. Richardson was clearly ambitious, since he was soon applying for other jobs with greater responsibilities and greater remuneration. His family pedigree and his personal qualifications, which included extensive experience in the preparation of prosecutions, especially against publicans and bookmakers, recommended him to the Halifax Watch Committee. His appointment was welcomed by the magistrates, who felt the Watch Committee had made ‘a very wise choice’ and the *Halifax Courier* called him ‘a born policeman’.<sup>7</sup> He was still only twenty-nine years old and was to remain as Chief Constable of Halifax through two World Wars, until 1943.<sup>8</sup>

### **A Fresh Approach**

At his introduction to the Borough magistrates, the new Chief Constable had said that he ‘trusted that under his command the force would not suffer in its efficiency’. His reputation during his many years at Halifax was that he was a strong disciplinarian. Unfortunately, the

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<sup>5</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 11 April 1903.

<sup>6</sup> *Gloucester Citizen*, 13 June 1900, article stated that Richardson was one of those shortlisted for the post of Chief Constable of Radnorshire.

<sup>7</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 13 June 1903, *Halifax Courier*, 11 April 1903.

<sup>8</sup> The *Halifax Guardian* in 1903 states he was born in 1872. Making him 31 at appointment. The 1901 census gives his age as twenty-seven, indicating birth in 1874. This latter date is supported by family knowledge which claims that he lied about his age when joining Birmingham City Police. Later newspaper articles of interviews also support the year of birth as 1874.

Watch Committee Minutes stopped recording disciplinary action in 1904 and the responsibility for this, possibly at Richardson's instigation, was transferred to a sub-committee, for which the records have not survived. It is thus impossible to assess if his methods had a significant impact on the men, but given Pole's reputation for strong discipline, it seems likely that the force was well ordered. Richardson's only problems would have been with the men testing the new boundaries and accustoming themselves to his particular routines.

It is difficult to establish what took place in a force when a new Chief Constable took over. Clearly, a different head of the force would have different methods. The hallmarks of Pole's time in office had been the need to re-establish discipline, instil trust and improve the quality of the recruits to the force. Training had been improved and promising candidates mentored and encouraged to climb the career ladder. Chief Constable Pole had been at Halifax for over twenty-seven years and no doubt, towards the end of that time, his methods and training would have become entrenched and as he looked towards retirement, there would be little incentive to innovate and modernise. The new Chief Constable, with the blessing of the Watch Committee, made various changes to the force as explained by the Mayor, Mr. Alderman R. D. Ward:

It was evident that on a new appointment being made, a certain amount of re-organisation and re-arrangement was necessary. This was gradually carried out by Mr. Richardson without friction, and in an able and tactful manner. His suggestions have commended themselves to the Watch Committee and have invariably been found to tend to the improvement of the force.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Letter from Mayor of Halifax to the Watch Committee of Leicester Borough Police, 19 June 1907, reproduced in T. Walker, 'Alfred Herbert Richardson, 1874-1951.' (unpublished, 2011).

Whatever the changes were (and regrettably, the Mayor did not elaborate), the new Chief Constable was clearly able to carry them out while still retaining the respect and goodwill of the men.

What is clear is that Richardson was interested in all new developments in policing and he was aware, as the new century progressed, that the police were going to face new obstacles as old certainties were challenged. Most of these difficulties arose after the First World War, but the preceding period gave the first indications of the problems to be faced in modern policing. As will be seen, Richardson was forward thinking and enthusiastic about experimenting with new ideas, often adding his own touches to improve the proposal.

Little research seems to have been done on the advances in technology and how it was incorporated into the local forces. What has been done, such as Laybourn and Taylor's work on the traffic debate and the growth of forensic techniques, is mainly concerned with the inter-war period.<sup>10</sup> Clive Emsley briefly mentions detective work and the forensic advances, emphasizing that prior to the Great War, such potential was being explored only by a few enthusiastic chief constables.<sup>11</sup> Laybourn and Taylor point out that problems were compounded by the proliferation of small forces, such as that in Newcastle under Lyme, all of which were resistant to attempts by the Home Office to standardise training, recruitment and procedure.<sup>12</sup> Such small forces did not have the resources, manpower or will to invest in detection or innovation. Alfred Richardson was one of the enthusiastic, energetic chief constables who prior to the Great War was exploring and trialling the new ideas that were being discussed at such forums as the Chief Constable Association meetings. His family background and training in a large city force, coupled with his youth and the support of an

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<sup>10</sup> K. Laybourn and D. Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918-39: The Fed, Flying Squads and Forensics* (Basingstoke and New York, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p.151.

<sup>12</sup> Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, p.7.

open-minded Watch Committee meant that he was more receptive to innovation than many other older, more dogmatic chief constables. He kept up with new developments and tried to apply them to the force and town for which he had charge.

Less than a year after his arrival in Halifax, the *Halifax Courier* reported that the old prison van, purchased under Chief Constable Pole and repaired innumerable times, was worn out and needed replacing. The new 'Black Maria', or as the *Courier* calls it 'the Regenerated Maria' was to be built to the specification of the new Chief Constable and was an early instance of his personal interest in improving equipment for the force and conditions for his men. The new van was to be light and airy, again with seating for twelve prisoners, but could also double as an ambulance, with a first aid kit beneath the driver's seat. The internal seats could be raised to accommodate stretchers, which were to serve for both accidents and for strapping drunks to whilst transporting them in from outlying areas of the district. Constables were discouraged from using the trams for transporting drunken prisoners back to the station and required to call for the police van. The constable in charge (on a special seat with a plush cushion) could communicate with the driver via a speaking tube. The outside was to resemble an ambulance, so that it was not conspicuous as a prison van and presumably render it less prone to attack.<sup>13</sup> Such doubling up of usage recommended it to the Watch Committee as an economical idea, hence its enthusiastic profiling in the local press. This was merely the first of many innovations that Richardson was to bring to the notice of the Watch Committee.

Halifax had always had a detective on the force from its inception in 1848, with the manpower gradually increasing over the latter part of the nineteenth century until in 1892 it consisted of a detective inspector and three detective constables, which by 1897 had increased to four constables.<sup>14</sup> Early in the twentieth century, two of the men were promoted

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<sup>13</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 9 April 1904.

<sup>14</sup> HWCM, 19 December 1892, HXM192, 1 DI and 3 DCs. 6 September 1897, HXM194, 4 DCs.

to detective sergeants, but it is not clear from the records whether the number of detective constables was brought back up to four, or whether the remaining two were supplemented by other constables from the force on an ad hoc basis.<sup>15</sup> Their work had gradually increased, until in 1908, Chief Constable Richardson reported that the department had dealt with 1,802 communications and served forty summonses for other forces, apart from work generated in the Borough.<sup>16</sup>

Early detective work mainly consisted of knowing an area and its inhabitants well, with payments made for information. Later, as towns swelled in size, close supervision of common lodging houses and pawnbrokers helped identify miscreants, but detection seemed mainly to rest on the qualities of the detective, 'such as dogged pertinacity in watching, thoroughness of purpose, an absence of imagination and downright sterling honesty'.<sup>17</sup> By the latter end of the nineteenth century, new methods of detection were becoming available.

Fingerprinting was one of the new techniques being used by detective departments to catch criminals, although many county and borough forces did not avail themselves of the opportunity. Advances in photography made the new records easier to store and use. A fingerprint bureau had been set up by the Metropolitan Police in 1901, by the Commissioner, Sir Edward Henry and the first conviction on the basis of such evidence was in 1902.<sup>18</sup>

It is likely that the detective department in Halifax was encouraged by Richardson to use the new techniques and he may have himself instructed the men in their use. His brother, Frank, while still a sergeant in Gloucestershire, had been involved in standardising the early use of

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<sup>15</sup> HWCM, 26 November 1900, HXM195, promotion of DC. Moss to DI. 21 November 1904, HXM195, promotion of DC. Richardson to DI.

<sup>16</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 14 March 1908.

<sup>17</sup> Clarkson and Richardson, *Police!*, p.266.

<sup>18</sup> Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, p.82.

fingerprinting.<sup>19</sup> Chief Constable Richardson understood the importance of communicating with the public and keeping them involved and interested in the progress of the force. In an early public relations exercise, which illustrated to the ratepayers the new advances being made, Chief Constable Richardson regularly gave lectures to various local clubs and bodies in Halifax on 'Fingerprints and Criminals. The New System and the Old'. In a well-received lecture, he explained the difficulties in the use of photography for identification, where habitual criminals struggled or contorted their faces whilst being photographed. Improvements in cameras had allowed more realistic pictures to be taken by stealth, but forty or fifty photos still had to be distributed to various towns to try to catch a criminal. New methods of identification included measurements of the head, hands and feet, which were believed to remain the same. Nevertheless, improvements in techniques which allowed fingerprints to be lifted from smooth surfaces meant that this was becoming the preferred method of identification. With the aid of lantern slides, Richardson explained to his audiences how prints were taken and could be kept in a central registry at Scotland Yard and how they could be used to obtain a conviction.<sup>20</sup>

The Standing Orders and Regulations of the Halifax Police, which were revised and rewritten by Chief Constable Richardson in 1906, had a section advising constables of the actions to take to preserve items with fingerprints. Paragraph 30 impressed upon the policeman that especially with robberies, where property had been broken into, there should be 'a minute search made to trace finger impressions' and went on to list various items that might be likely to have them. The item had then to be removed to the station without obliterating or smudging the impression, accurately labelled and handed over to the detective department to

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<sup>19</sup>T. Walker, 'Alfred Richardson, Chief Constable of Halifax', p.116. (2011). Unpublished manuscript held at Wakefield Archives, ref: AC5.4.1.6.AJD.

<sup>20</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 3 December 1910.

send to Scotland Yard. Non-movable items had to be preserved for inspection by the detective department.<sup>21</sup>

The Standing Orders are prototype instructions for early detective work. Since the previous Orders have not survived, it is not clear how much was revised and added by Chief Constable Richardson and how much was in existence before he took over at Halifax. However, it is clear that the ‘bobby on the beat’ was recognised as the first man on the crime scene, who could, by his initial actions, make or mar the evidence for a prosecution. The Standing Orders were printed in book form small enough for a constable to carry in his top pocket and consult for guidance. They reproduced extensive quotes from a Home Office circular to advise the best practice on arrival at a crime scene, much of which is recognisable as procedure which is still in use today. The officer was to secure the scene, exclude sightseers, identify material witnesses and stop anyone from touching or removing anything. The Investigating Officer, presumably from the detective department, was to record the scene accurately and in minute detail, with sketches and measurements in his notes. Since no-one knew what would turn out to be significant, every detail was to be recorded.<sup>22</sup> Since these steps were detailed in the force’s regulations, it can be assumed that this was the procedure that the men were expected to follow.

Another section of the regulations dealt with how to make casts of footprints. The tone of this section was less formal, with advice as to what worked best, so it is likely that this was Chief Constable Richardson’s own personal expertise that he was sharing. He advised a mix of resin and wax heated together as preferable to plaster of Paris, gave reasons for its superiority and detailed how to make the mix, how to fill the cast and how to remove it, with additional

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<sup>21</sup> Standing Orders and Regulations of the Police 1906, para.30. WYP/C113/137.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., paras. 306-310. WYP/C113/137.

instructions to cover difficult situations.<sup>23</sup> The force had been using this technique for a while, since in 1894, Detective Inspector Bradley had obtained the conviction of an arsonist by taking casts of hobnail boot prints where some hobnails were missing and matching them to the actual boots.<sup>24</sup>

All these detailed instructions show that Halifax was running an up-to-date detective department prior to the First World War, taking on board the latest Home Office advice and using the most advanced techniques on offer. The 1906 Standing Orders were regularly updated and later editions included quotes on detective procedure from a 1909 Home Office Circular.<sup>25</sup> This appears to be driven mostly by Chief Constable Richardson's enthusiasm and supports Emsley's view that there were a few who were keen to explore what science could do for the police.<sup>26</sup> Other than the advice from the Home Office, there is nothing to suggest that the Halifax force was following anything other than its own initiative. There appears to have been no formal detective training, with the instructions on taking casts advising that trial and error by the constable was the best way to gain expertise. This rudimentary detective department still placed the Halifax force to the forefront in experimentation, since even in the inter-war period, many forces were still resistant to the advantages of modern science-led detection. Laybourn and Taylor point out that it was not until the 1930s that the Home Office tried to impose some central control on training and methods.<sup>27</sup>

Chief Constable Richardson was described in the *Halifax Guardian*, on his appointment, as 'a good horseman' and he emphasized this skill in various applications and articles.<sup>28</sup> He was even known to wear riding boots and spurs to work. It is not surprising therefore that he had a

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., paras. 120-126. WYP/C113/137.

<sup>24</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 23 January 1909.

<sup>25</sup> Standing Orders and Regulations of the Police, 1912, para. 310. The Home Office circular quoted is H.O.C. 171,651/5 – 1909.

<sup>26</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p.151.

<sup>27</sup> Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, p.83.

<sup>28</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 28 March 1903.

vested interest in the mounted unit within the police force. His brother, Frank Richardson, had used mounted police for crowd control in 1906, during the King and Queen's visit via Salisbury station, to the Earl of Pembroke. This appears to be the first time horses had been used for this purpose and the Home Office ordered a report of the methods used to be sent to every force in the country.<sup>29</sup>

Halifax had created a mounted section by 1896, on the advice of the Home Office and when the new regulations were published in 1906, a section was devoted to instructions for mounted officers. It included such essential information as how to hold the reins, position in the saddle and how to mount and dismount.<sup>30</sup> This suggests that the first men to be mounted were not expert riders. At the government inspection of 1907, Superintendent Raw and seven men paraded on horseback on hired mounts.<sup>31</sup> In 1913, the Chief Constable was given responsibility for hiring the horses, as and when they were required, with the aim of improving the quality of the mounts supplied.<sup>32</sup> As with horses to pull the police van, the Watch Committee did not want to go to the expense and upkeep of buying the animals. This meant that the suitability of the mounts could not be guaranteed. The Chief Constable managed to improve the system of hiring, ensuring not only better quality, but that the same animals were always supplied.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the men were able to ride the same horses regularly. Mounted drill instruction was arranged with Sergeant-Major Hart at the local barracks, which led to the offer of 'a gratuitous loan' by the military authorities, of two horses for the sole use of the police department. The Watch Committee graciously accepted the contribution.<sup>34</sup> In 1914, the Watch Committee ordered ten pairs of new riding breeches ahead of the

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<sup>29</sup> Walker, 'Alfred Herbert Richardson', p. 120.

<sup>30</sup> Standing Orders, paras. 198-200.

<sup>31</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 16 March 1907.

<sup>32</sup> HWCM, 15 September 1913, HXM199.

<sup>33</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 9 May 1914.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 February 1914, HXM 200.

government inspection. When the Chief Constable was complimented on the mounted section of the force, he admitted that he had been trying to improve it. He told the Inspector that the mounted men were well trained horsemen and all ex-cavalrymen, which indicates a deliberate policy of recruiting ex-army men for that specific purpose.<sup>35</sup>

Mounted police were not a new idea. The Bow Street Horse Patrol, set up in 1760, existed prior to the formation of the Metropolitan Police, which also had a mounted section. However, their main purpose was to cover large areas which could not be patrolled on foot. Many of the county forces needed mounted police for the same reason. The purpose of the Halifax mounted section was very different, since most of the outlying areas of the Borough were accessible by tram by 1900 or had a resident policeman in an outstation. Chief Constable Richardson's aims were to use them as crowd control at large gatherings and demonstrations, an idea that was still in its infancy.

Horses were not the only animals that could be used to assist the police. Dogs, usually bloodhounds, had long been used to track criminals, but the Chief Constable wanted to use dogs as companions to officers on the beat. Dogs had been used in this way in Europe for a number of years.<sup>36</sup> Major Edwin Richardson, a dog breeder and trainer from Harrow-on-the-Hill in Middlesex had been supplying suitable animals to European police forces for some time and had been campaigning for British forces to use dogs in the same way, writing to *The Times* in 1910 about his attempts to get the police interested, with limited success.<sup>37</sup> Berkshire County Constabulary had purchased a dog for this purpose in 1910 and *The Times* reported that

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<sup>35</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 9 May 1914. HXCM, 20 April 1914, HXM 200.

<sup>36</sup> *The Times*, 27 December 1910.

<sup>37</sup> No known relation of Alfred Richardson. *The Times*, 19 December 1910.

it could easily overpower one or two men, and in addition to assisting a constable in case of an assault it is trained to give warning of anything unusual on the beat, and to pursue escaping criminals.<sup>38</sup>

The Chief Constable of Glasgow also supported their use, having taken one of Harrow Kennels' dogs and it had saved the life of one of his constables when they had been attacked.<sup>39</sup> After hearing a paper given by Major Richardson at the Chief Constables Association conference in 1914, explaining how certain dogs, mainly Airedales, could be used on night patrol with constables, Alfred Richardson presented a report to the Watch Committee to persuade them to consider their use in Halifax. The dogs' better hearing and smell meant that they could alert their handler to problems and find criminals that were hiding and they provided protection to the constable from attack and gave him confidence in unfrequented areas. Not least, the knowledge that there were dog patrols about, acted as a deterrent to petty, opportunistic thieves. Their use would also cut costs, especially in under-policed areas. The Watch Committee were interested, but declined to pass any resolution, deferring the matter until police dogs became more popular. Sometimes the Watch Committee did not want to be in the forefront of innovation, but preferred to sit back and see how matters developed before committing precious ratepayers' money.<sup>40</sup>

The other important development that began to take up an increasing number of police man-hours was the arrival of motorised transport. It was not destined to become a major headache until after the war, but the first signs of its future significance were apparent by the start of the second decade of the twentieth century.

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<sup>38</sup> *The Times*, 19 April 1910.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 December 1910.

<sup>40</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 20 June 1914.

The Motor Car Act of 1903 had made vehicle registration and annual driving licences mandatory and had imposed a maximum speed limit of twenty miles per hour.<sup>41</sup> The Act had introduced the offence of reckless driving and fines for speeding and driving unlicensed vehicles. The responsibility for enforcing the new laws, ensuring the safety of road users and the smooth running of traffic fell to the police as an extension of their role of regulating horse drawn vehicles. Most towns, with narrow streets and poorly planned layouts were ill-suited for the new levels of traffic. In the absence of a national policy, each town decided on its own methods of dealing with the changes, depending on the local severity of the problem. The Chief Constable and the Halifax Watch Committee were responsible for the devising of local codes of conduct for traffic and creating systems whereby all road users could safely mix on the highway.

It soon became apparent that such action would be necessary. The first local motoring offence of 'furiously driving a motor car' was recorded in the list of prosecutions in the quarter ending 30 June 1903, just as Chief Constable Richardson took over the force. The first fifteen drivers' licences (including one woman) were granted by the Watch Committee in December 1903. Twelve vehicles were registered. This was the start of a regular feature in the monthly minutes. Within a short while motor cycle licences were added to the list. In nearby Bradford, twenty-three cars and nine motor-cycles were registered in the first month.<sup>42</sup> Chief Constable Richardson's report in 1908 detailed sixteen cars and twenty motor cycles registered, with eighty-one new drivers' licences issued and ninety-six renewed.<sup>43</sup> In addition, eight motor cars had breached the 1903 Act, presumably by not having lights.

This was just the beginning of a gradually increasing workload for the Watch Committee and the police. The mix of carts, cabs, wagons, horses, pedestrians, trams and motor vehicles all

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<sup>41</sup> Motor Car Act, 1903, (3 Edw. 7 c 36).

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Bradford's Police*, p.83.

<sup>43</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 14 March 1908.

using the same roads and all moving at different speeds was a recipe for confusion and accidents in any town. Halifax was no exception. Horses, unused to the noisy newcomers, were liable to take exception and bolt. A horse and cart full of milk churns, frightened by a car in Halifax town centre, bolted, throwing the driver clear and despite several attempts to halt it, careered through the streets, scattering its load until crashing into a lamppost.<sup>44</sup> In May 1908, a pedestrian was knocked down and killed by a motor taxi cab in Broad Street. The inquest found that the cab was not speeding and could not have seen and avoided the man, returning a verdict of accidental death.<sup>45</sup> It was to take a long time before other road users could assess the speed and danger posed by motorised traffic.

In an attempt to minimise the number of accidents and improve the standard of driving, the Watch Committee issued a leaflet with all drivers' licenses, entitled 'Rules and Courtesies of the Road', which appears to assume that all that was required was the adoption of a gentlemanly code of conduct.<sup>46</sup> It does not seem to have improved the situation, so just over a year later, the Council brought in regulations and conditions to be observed by owners and drivers of cars as by-laws. Also enshrined as a by-law, was the need to show red rear lights on any vehicle.<sup>47</sup> Motoring offences such as not showing a red rear light, not illuminating the registration plate and not having a licence became a regular feature of the Chief Constables report. Further clerical work was caused by dealing with reports from other parts of the country about offences committed there, by Halifax registered motorists. Burnley magistrates wrote to the Watch Committee in 1908 to advise that a Halifax local had been prosecuted for

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<sup>44</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 16 February 1907.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 May 1908.

<sup>46</sup> HWCW, 4 May 1908, HXM 197.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 May and 16 August 1909, HXM 197.

driving without a licence.<sup>48</sup> In turn, notification had to be sent to other councils about offences committed in Halifax by non-locals.

There is no doubt that this regulation of motor vehicles brought the ordinary working-class policeman into contact with the middle classes, who locally, were the main owners and drivers of private vehicles. Although there are no reports pre-war of clashes between the two, drivers, unused to being on the wrong side of the law, were probably resentful of the perceived interference of the police in their activities. Despite the perception that policing was about crime fighting, the police had long been responsible for the regulation of the highways, keeping paths and carriageways clear of obstructions, ensuring the efficient flow of traffic and enforcing the law against 'furious driving'. The situation was not helped by a lack of national initiatives to impose a recognisable system of road use, which was not rectified until the inter war period, although the initiatives adopted were not wholly constructive. The 1930 Road Traffic Act removed the 20mph speed limit for cars (but not lorries) and introduced the Highway Code, which, like Halifax's leaflet of twenty years earlier, supported the view that a gentlemanly agreement on shared road usage was all that was required. The 1934 Road Traffic Act imposed a 30mph speed limit in built up areas, but the spread of urban growth made it difficult to decide where those areas were. The 1925 Criminal Justice Act made it an offence to drive a mechanical vehicle whilst drunk, but failed to define what 'drunk' was. These measures gave rise to more queries and confusion. Prior to the Great War, the police were obliged to respond to the problems by devising their own solutions. The proliferation of local methods and by-laws merely added to the confusion.

Congestion in the town was becoming a problem by the start of the twentieth century. In 1904, the Halifax and District Carters, Draymen and Horse-men's Association sent a deputation to the Watch Committee to complain about the traffic on North Bridge, the main

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 1 June 1908, HXM 197.

entrance to the town from Leeds and Bradford. They also complained about the prosecution of a cart driver for not keeping to the left hand side of the road, which was evidently a new initiative on the part of the police.<sup>49</sup> The keep to the left rule was not new, but dated back to early English custom. It was recommended in the General Highways Act, 1773 and became law in the Highway Act, 1835, where passing another horse or carriage had to be on the left hand side. In spite of this, enforcement had previously been lax and probably unnecessary. The prosecution was an indication of the growing pressures on the highways. The new police station, opened in 1900, had alternating semaphore signals outside to control traffic flow and the next ten years saw increasing piecemeal attempts to regulate vehicles. Cattle were still driven through the town on market days en route from the railway station, so new by-laws were brought in to restrict the streets which could be used for this purpose in 1909.<sup>50</sup>

The need to control and regulate the flow of traffic in the town meant that men had to be diverted from patrol to point duty. Although other towns considered using police pensioners, special constables or members of motoring organisations such as the AA or RAC as traffic control officers, Halifax did not, possibly considering that any such job required the powers invested in the police. This may also account for a report by the Chief Constable in 1905, recommending that the force be increased by six men, which unusually, was accepted by the Watch Committee without demur.<sup>51</sup> The Watch Committee purchased twelve pairs of overalls in 1906, followed by white gloves a few months later. These were for point duty at one of three locations in the town, which included the bottleneck at North Bridge. Point duty, which was unpopular, attracted an extra allowance of 4d a day.<sup>52</sup> The constable on duty was exposed to the elements, just as much as on the beat, but with no chance of surreptitiously seeking shelter, shade or warmth for even a few minutes. Point duty could also be as

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 29 August 1904, HXM 195.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 18 January 1909, HXM197.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 14 August 1905, HXM 196. The extra six men took the total force to 114 men.

<sup>52</sup> Standing Orders, paras. 62-3, 201.

hazardous as being on the beat. Although the standing orders were detailed in many matters, no advice was given for directing traffic, suggesting that hand signals were left to the discretion of the constable in charge, with no uniformity overall, either locally or nationally. This meant that motorists could easily misunderstand the signals they had been given, making point duty a potentially dangerous task. There seem to have been no serious consequences locally prior to the First World War, but a Halifax motorist was involved in an accident in Scarborough on Easter Saturday, 1914. He knocked down a policeman on point duty, injuring him so severely that the man was off sick for thirty-six days. He was fined £5 with costs for dangerous driving, but made it clear that he intended to appeal since the accident was caused by 'misapprehension as to the constable's intention'.<sup>53</sup>

The quality of driving was a cause of concern, but in the absence of any practical examination, which was not introduced until 1935, motorists had to rely on common sense and courtesy. The Watch Committee and the Chief Constable were particularly concerned by the competency of drivers responsible for the transportation of others, such as charabancs and taxis. These were gradually replacing the horse drawn cabs and 1910 saw the creation of two taxi cab ranks at Crossley Street and Southgate.<sup>54</sup> Laybourn and Taylor examine the debate about the 'gentleman driver', where the well-to-do middle-class motorist had a self-image of courtesy and competence. The stigmatisation of other road users, such as women, foreigners and drivers of vehicles catering for working class excursions, served to reinforce this image.<sup>55</sup> The working-class driver of a taxi cab would also have been assumed to be lacking in the gentlemanly instincts. This may have been behind the offer of the Halifax Automobile Club to supply two of their members to examine the fitness of applicants for motor hackney

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<sup>53</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 May 1914.

<sup>54</sup> HWCW, 10 October 1910, HXM198.

<sup>55</sup> Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, pp.121-3.

licenses, which the Watch Committee was happy to accept.<sup>56</sup> Motoring organisations were not naturally in accord with the police, since their members often found themselves on the opposite side of the law. Nevertheless, in the pre-war period, the Halifax Automobile Club and the Watch Committee seem to have developed some mutual cooperation. The Club seems to have gone out of its way to cultivate the Watch Committee, offering assistance in vetting drivers and at the beginning of the First World War, presenting the police with its first motorised ambulance.<sup>57</sup> Possibly this cooperation paved the way for the more lenient attitude noted by Laybourn and Taylor towards prosecutions for dangerous driving in Halifax in the inter-war period.<sup>58</sup>

These initiatives were the beginning of an attempt to deal with a rapidly changing situation, the scale of which only worsened as the century wore on. Richardson set up a police unit to deal with traffic in 1931, based on the 1930 Metropolitan Police Division for Motor Patrol, but Home Office endeavours to bring some uniformity to enforcement and to the myriad individual systems around the country took a lot longer.<sup>59</sup>

Another area in which Halifax was forging its own path was in police telephone boxes. Other forces, in London and Glasgow were also experimenting with police telephone posts in the pre-war period, but in the majority of the country, a constable on the beat who needed to contact his superiors in an emergency had to make use of a private householder's telephone.

Halifax had long been making use of the new telephonic technology. The new police station, opened in 1900, was equipped with a telephone. An extra line was added in 1910 as 'a relief for the existing phone' demonstrating how methods of communication were beginning to change within the space of a decade. Gradually, each of the outstations was connected by

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<sup>56</sup> HWCM, 22 January 1912, HXM 199.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 18 January 1915, HXM 200.

<sup>58</sup> Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, p.175.

<sup>59</sup> WYP/HA/13/2. History of the Police, Public Relations Dept of the West Yorkshire Constabulary. Purchase of motor cycles and sidecars for first traffic patrol, 3 August 1931,

telephone to the main station and when change of tenancies meant that outstations changed premises, the telephone was moved too. By 1911, the Chief Constable's house in Balmoral Place and the residences of the senior officers of the force were all connected to the police station by telephone.

More importantly, a series of street telephones was established by 1906 which gave the constable on the beat contact with not only the main police station, but the fire brigade, the police outstations and the electricity and tramways corporations, all of whom had access to the boxes in the event of an emergency.<sup>60</sup> This effectively linked all the outlying urban areas, so that assistance could be summoned without delay. These were not the large police boxes which were to become common in later decades, nor were they available for use by the general public. They appear to have been just big enough to house the phone and were attached to street poles, mostly those belonging to the tramways department. The Standing Orders showed a network of forty-eight street alarms on eight circuits, which were increased in June 1906 and April 1912 to take it to a total of fifty-two. The cost and maintenance of these additional telephones was split four ways, between the police, the fire brigade, the tramway and electricity corporations 'the same as the existing street telephones'.<sup>61</sup> The Standing Orders gave directions to the constable on how to use the boxes to contact the relevant authority. Each constable was issued with a key to the boxes, which was stamped with his collar number and had to be produced at each parade, along with his handcuffs and staff. Each box had to be tested after midnight as the constable passed it on his beat, with any out of order boxes reported to his superior officer as soon as possible. Lifting the receiver in the box connected the police to the electricity department, who then put the call through to the required person. This was a boon for the bobby on the beat, who could use the boxes to

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<sup>60</sup> Standing Orders, para. 234.

<sup>61</sup> HWCM, 15 April 1912, HXM 199.

call for back up. In 1908, PC Squire Jennings did exactly that on discovering a break-in at a town centre jeweller, so that in a short time the premises were surrounded by a cordon of police and the thieves captured.<sup>62</sup> It also meant that men on the more distant beats were less isolated and could summon the police van to come and transport offenders back to the cells.

Unlike the later police boxes, this system was nearer to the police pillar system, which many forces did not introduce in some form until the 1930s. It gave no shelter, but did give the constable access to assistance. Unlike the cases documented by Joanne Klein in the inter-war period, there was no requirement to use the technology to ‘check in’ at regular intervals, the patrol sergeant still being responsible for ensuring that the men were walking the beat.<sup>63</sup> Nor was the system used as an argument to reduce the number of men on the force or to lengthen the beats, which would have led to increased isolation for the constable. This was something the men complained of in the Manchester force, where the introduction of the pillar system was used to cover manpower shortages and the watch committee used them as an excuse to request a reduction in the force’s manpower.<sup>64</sup> The intent in Halifax appears solely to use the technology to improve communication. Nevertheless, the requirement to check the boxes on first passing after midnight was irritating, since the operator at the electricity department had to deal with a high volume of calls at that time and several attempts to get through often had to be made.<sup>65</sup> This had the men complaining that it made it harder to walk the beat and fit in all the checks of premises required, but generally, the system made life easier for the police, especially those who patrolled the outer perimeters of the borough.

Signal lights to attract the attention of constables on the beat and get them to contact the station, were introduced by Chief Constable Richardson in 1925, although it is not clear if

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<sup>62</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 3 October 1908.

<sup>63</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.67.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>65</sup> *Standing Orders*, para. 160.

they were separate from the street phones or if they were attached to them.<sup>66</sup> Systems like this were introduced in many forces over the next decade, especially after the introduction of Gilbert Trench's standardised design for the police signal box in 1929, putting Halifax to the forefront in trying out new technology prior to the Second World War.<sup>67</sup>

The expansion of the borough up to 1900 and the continued growth of the urban residential building meant that by the beginning of 1910, the Halifax force had twenty-seven manned outstations spread around the outlying areas. The system had been the most economical way of policing the outskirts, but in the twentieth century, the Watch Committee Minutes frequently showed changes of leases, as rents rose and they tried to find cheaper alternatives. The cost of renting these properties amounted to over £311 per year, with every extra man posted to the outlying areas necessitating the rental of yet another house.<sup>68</sup> The frequent changes of address due to cost, or change of personnel also necessitated payments for the removal of household furniture, further adding to the expense. At the end of 1909, Chief Constable Richardson presented a report to the committee with an alternative suggestion, designed to cost about the same initially, but with an eventual financial gain. He proposed the building of a district police station, with an estimated cost of £2,045, on a suitable site available at King Cross, a populous residential area, just over a mile from the main police station. This would contain quarters for a resident officer and his wife, a charge office, parade room, three cells and a section house for six unmarried men. This would enable the closure of seven outstations, with the savings on rental being more than the annual amount needed to

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<sup>66</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 June 1951.

<sup>67</sup> Glasgow led the way, experimenting with signal lights and boxes in the 1890s. [WWW.britishtelephones.com/police/boxes](http://WWW.britishtelephones.com/police/boxes).

Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp.68-9. Liverpool introduced signal boxes in 1930 and Manchester by 1929. Birmingham had established a police pillar system by 1933.

The Metropolitan Police experimented with police boxes in Richmond and Wood Green in 1929, before extending the system throughout London.

<sup>68</sup> HWCM, 20 December 1909, HXM198.

defray the cost of the new building, which in due course would belong to the council, unlike the outstations. Richardson supported his proposal by explaining that the Huddersfield Police Force, similar in size and area to Halifax, had abolished their outstations and replaced them with three district stations.<sup>69</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Watch Committee was enthusiastic about an idea that would be a saving to the ratepayers in the long run and would result in more efficient policing. The Council also agreed, the approved site was purchased and tenders invited. The Watch Committee was delighted to get a tender for £1,850, less than the Chief Constable's estimate and even happier with the final cost of £1,819-2-5d.<sup>70</sup> The new district office was equipped with a telephone and the men's quarters were supplied with beds, mattresses, bed linen, chairs and a table. Since the Halifax force had never had single men's quarters before, preferring to lodge unmarried men at approved boarding houses, the Chief Constable drew up a list of regulations for the constables who would be resident. The new district office finally opened in May 1911, with the rather ominous motto *Ignorantia legis excusat nominem* (Ignorance of the law excuses no-one) over the door.

All these changes indicate that at the start of the twentieth century, courtesy of an energetic young chief constable, Halifax was embracing many of the latest innovations in policing. Chief Constable Richardson was instrumental in training the men in the new methods and streamlining the force to obtain the maximum benefit financially, especially in view of the expanding size of the borough. He was conscious that the police needed to develop and assimilate the latest skills, which would be essential to deal with the fresh challenges of the new century.

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<sup>69</sup> HWCM, 20 December 1909, HXM 198.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 August 1911, HXM 198.

## Recruitment

The pattern of recruitment in the pre-war period is difficult to assess as the Watch Committee Minutes were less informative than previously. Details of dismissals and disciplinary action were transferred to a sub-committee for which the records have not survived. The Watch Committee Minutes still recorded the appointment of constables, but a cursory check of the 1911 census showed far more men listed as Halifax police than were shown in the minutes.<sup>71</sup> Previously, men had been appointed as supernumeraries and had been assigned to a beat to cover for absences or when a permanent vacancy became available. It is not clear exactly when this changed to a probationary system, which as Joanne Klein found, was common in other forces.<sup>72</sup> The records suggest that it was about the turn of the century and was probably introduced under Chief Constable Pole. Later it was placed on a more rigorous formal footing by Chief Constable Richardson.

The Halifax Register of Police, which previously corroborated information in the Watch Committee Minutes, showed the date of a man joining the force, but from 1901, included an extra column for the date of the constables' formal appointment to the force.<sup>73</sup> The probationary period seems to have been flexible, with the length of time between the dates of joining, to the appointment to the force by the Watch Committee, anything from a couple of months to a year. By 1906, the Standing Orders were clear that a policeman had to serve a

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<sup>71</sup>TNA, RG14, 1911 England Census.

Ancestry.com offers the facility to search the 1911 census by profession and print a list of all men in Halifax whose occupations are given as policeman. This provides a useful checklist, but is not infallible, since it includes police pensioners, WRCC police who lived in the town and even the police matrons! By comparing the list of men for 1911 against the Watch Committee minutes of appointments, it became clear that there were men listed as Halifax Borough police on the census, who were not formally appointed by Watch Committee minutes until much later. This was corroborated by the Halifax Register of Police, which showed a date of joining and a year later, a date of appointment which matched with the Watch Committee minutes. Those who never made it past the probationary year do not appear in the minutes.

<sup>72</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 25.

<sup>73</sup> Register of Police Force 1853-1967, WYP/HA/2/1/1.

probationary period of twelve months, show good conduct, smartness, intelligence and attend various instruction classes.<sup>74</sup> Under Chief Constable Richardson, the requirements for a probationary constable had become more rigorous and reflected the increased expectations the public had of the police and their professional abilities. The application form for candidates for the force was updated and the successful probationary constable was expected to attend instruction classes, presumably on how to perform his duty and then take an exam to obtain a certificate of proficiency.<sup>75</sup> On Tuesdays and Fridays, for his first four weeks, he was also to attend the Petty Sessions (in plain clothes) to learn court procedure.<sup>76</sup> He was obliged to attend the Technical School to pass his St John's Ambulance exams (first to third class) and in 1905 it was made a condition of the appointment of a new constables that he must achieve this within three years of joining else he could not achieve first class rank and pay.<sup>77</sup> In 1910, the Watch Committee also made it a condition of the probationary period that all the men had to pass the exam for the Royal Lifesaving Diploma.<sup>78</sup> Along with the rest of the force, the probationer had regular physical training with Professor Drayton, who was employed by the Watch Committee to keep the men fit for a fee of thirteen guineas a year.<sup>79</sup> The Watch Committee accounts were full of payments to various lecturers for education and instruction classes, so it is clear that the training of the men was being professionalised, with teaching being led by experts in each particular field. In addition to learning all that he needed to know, the probationer was assessed and reported on by his Patrol Inspector every three months to ensure that he was progressing satisfactorily.<sup>80</sup> Joanne Klein records the

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<sup>74</sup> Standing Orders, para.3.

<sup>75</sup> Standing Orders, para. 311. HWCM, 4 December 1905, HXM196, new application forms adopted.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., para. 277.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., para. 27. HWCM, 13 March 1905, HXM196, Must obtain 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> class to qualify for first class rank and pay.

<sup>78</sup> HWCM, 21 March 1910, HXM 198.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 26 March 1906, HXM196.

<sup>80</sup> Standing Orders, para. 276.

complaints of policemen in Manchester, that training was often sparse and deficient, especially in the face of all they were required to know, before being turned out onto the beat in a very short time, so plainly standards of tuition varied widely between forces.<sup>81</sup> The probationary period was the time for the constable to prove he could master a range of skills and assimilate the necessary information needed to perform his job. Unlike the police of the previous century, height, build and the ability to read and write were no longer sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the job. Alderman Leonard Calvert, Chair of the Watch Committee acknowledged as much in a speech to the Town Council in 1909;

A policeman's lot might seem easy, but it was a monotonous round day by day. Many qualifications were expected. At one time it was thought that big burly fellows were required. Today they wanted good intelligent smart men.<sup>82</sup>

These remarks by the Chair of the Halifax Watch Committee indicate that they seem to have had some awareness that the job was becoming more onerous and needed more than just unskilled labour. The instruction offered by the Halifax force seems to have been better than most, with some structure to the training and monitoring of the results. The Halifax Watch Committee was not reluctant to pay for the necessary training, as some were and supported the Chief Constable's efforts to improve the quality of the recruits. As Joanne Klein points out, many Watch Committees, viewing policing as unskilled labour, 'put economy before efficiency and recruits found their training to be deficient and brief.'<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, many of the probationers would have felt unprepared when turned out onto the beat. Some may still have expected to be paid for walking around doing very little. If so, they were very soon disabused of the notion. The training could not prepare them for how to balance the regulations with the realities of policing the streets, although the guidance was more defined

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<sup>81</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.24.

<sup>82</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 4 September 1909.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, *Invisible Men*, pp.24-26.

than had been the case in the nineteenth century. On his retirement in 1910, Superintendent Raw reflected on the improvements since he had joined up in 1876, commenting that

The chances of the young men in the force today were much better than they were when he joined. It was very dangerous then to ask an officer any question relating to duty.

They were told

You are a policeman now you are in uniform and you must use your own discretion.<sup>84</sup>

Discretion had been a watchword of policing from the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829. Steedman defines it as the ‘institutional virtue of being able to make intelligent decisions on the spot’.<sup>85</sup> This in practice meant that respectable citizens were to be left alone and on the beat, judgement had to be employed when to take action and when to leave well alone. Raw clearly had managed to balance his duties as perceived by his superiors, while retaining the cooperation of members of the public. Indeed, he was praised for his ‘sound common sense and acumen’ and ‘erred on the side of leniency’ in prosecutions.<sup>86</sup> Nonetheless, discretion still played a significant role in a man’s success, whether as a constable in Halifax or a much larger force. Joanne Klein found that whatever the force, probationers were on their own on the beat for much of the time and had to learn where to be flexible and when to follow the rules exactly, a skill that often required on the spot judgements.<sup>87</sup>

The high number of men who failed to be appointed indicated the difficulties of finding suitable men, but the Chief Constable was not prepared to lower his standards. Instead, the

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<sup>84</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 31 December 1910.

<sup>85</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.6.

<sup>86</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 31 December 1910.

<sup>87</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp.28-9.

Watch Committee was prepared to unofficially lower the age limit for probationary constables to nineteen, although none were allowed to be appointed as regular policemen until they reached twenty-one. Nineteen year old John Bargh joined on 1 June 1912, but was not appointed until August 1914. He served in the army during the war, re-joining the force in 1919 and continuing as a policeman until his retirement in 1937.<sup>88</sup>

This probationary period served as an opportunity both for the novice to decide if policing was a career for him and for the Chief Constable to weed out unsuitable recruits. One hundred and fifty-four men joined the Halifax force between June 1903 and December 1914.<sup>89</sup> Only eighty-one were appointed to the force after completing a satisfactory probationary period. The rest resigned, but whether this was the choice of the probationers, unimpressed with the demands of the job and the level of pay or whether they were deemed unsuitable by the Chief Constable is difficult to determine. The Register of Police usually records the date of resignation with the words 'not appointed' next to many names, which suggests these men had not reached the required standard.<sup>90</sup> However, occasional insights are allowed. Joe Booker, who joined in January 1906, was told to resign by the Chief Constable in December the same year.<sup>91</sup> Herbert Smith was also ordered to resign within four months of joining.<sup>92</sup> Men who were deemed unsuitable were encouraged, or occasionally, ordered to resign, rather than be dismissed, presumably in order not to blot their employment record. Only two of the recruits, Harry Greenwood and Ernest Sykes, were dismissed, although no indication was given of their offences.<sup>93</sup> Drunkenness and neglect of duty, which had been

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<sup>88</sup> Register of Police Force, 1853-1967. p.15. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.14. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p.105. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., Greenwood, p.39. Sykes, p.105. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

the main reasons for disciplinary action in the past century, no doubt played their part in the constant turnover, but without the records, it is impossible to be certain.

The probationary period was meant to last twelve months, but this was flexible. Many resigned within the year, but some left after a much longer period, never having been appointed by the Watch Committee. Alfred Smith joined in June 1912, resigning in October 1913 after sixteen months.<sup>94</sup> Edwin Wynn joined July 1908 and resigned after fifteen months.<sup>95</sup> This suggests that there were no disciplinary problems, but that they were being given time to come up to scratch, or possibly obtain the necessary qualifications. Their resignations meant that they either failed to achieve this or gave up the attempt.

Those that were appointed to the force, having completed their probationary period, took from as little as one month to two years to achieve it. The majority, sixty-two percent, were appointed between twelve and fourteen months after joining. Adverse reports or disciplinary action could prolong the probationary period beyond the twelve months. Only two men were given speedy promotion into the force. Frederick Staite joined on 6 January 1914 and was immediately promoted to a third class constable on 19 January.<sup>96</sup> The normal grade for a new constable at the time was sixth class. There seems little reason for this, but the 1911 census showed him to be in the Coldstream Guards and this may account for his rapid promotion.<sup>97</sup> He may also have had previous police experience between 1911 and 1914. Whatever the reason, he was not in the force for long, re-joining the army in August 1914 and resigning from the police at the end of the war.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.105. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.128. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.105. WYP/HA/2/1/1. HWCM, 19 January 1914, HXM200.

<sup>97</sup> TNA, RG14, 3270, 1911, England Census.

<sup>98</sup> Register of Police Force, p.105. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

The other recruit, John Drake, who joined the force in 1903 and was formally appointed by the Watch Committee within three months, had a more illustrious career, which indicated that Chief Constable Richardson saw useful qualities in him.<sup>99</sup> Drake passed through the ranks to become a first-class constable in 1912, being promoted to sergeant in 1919 and then inspector, eighteen months later, remaining in the Halifax force for his whole career until retirement in 1928.<sup>100</sup> He kept a scrapbook of his work and family which sheds some light on his life.<sup>101</sup> His family background, with its parallels to that of Chief Constable Richardson, no doubt helped in his initial appointment. Like his Chief Constable, he was born in a police station and brought up with a background in policing. His father was an inspector in the West Riding Constabulary, as was his younger brother. Amongst his papers, Drake kept a list of the equipment issued to him by the Halifax force. Items such as his whistle, his stave, his handcuffs and his warrant card are to be expected. The twelve booklets and copies of various Acts of legislation issued to him, that he was required to know and enforce, illustrated how much more complex a policeman's job had become in the sixty years since Halifax had established its own police force and how far it had come from its original crime prevention role.<sup>102</sup> Drake obviously felt the same, as amongst his papers he kept a copy of a Christmas card, showing a policeman doing half a dozen jobs at once, looking after lost children and animals, administering first aid, catching criminals and directing traffic. This cartoon depiction of the conflicting demands of the job evidently struck a chord with Drake and led him to keep it.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.24. WYP/HA/2/1/1. HWCN, 15 February 1904, HXM195.

<sup>100</sup> HWCN, First class, 16 December 1912, HXM199. Sergeant, 17 February 1919, Inspector, 15 November 1920. Register of Police Force, p. 24. WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>101</sup> Inspector John Drake, Notes and Career, 1903+. Misc 1026/1

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., the full list of items is as follows: 1 whistle and chain, 1 staff, 1 pair snaps, 1 warrant card, Ambulance Book, 1 Ambulance bandage, Constable's Pocket Guide, Advertising Vehicles paper, General Order Book, Licensing Act Book, Constable's Duty and How to do it, Book of Bye-laws, Electricity Instruction Paper, Pistol Act Paper, Motor Car Act, Dog Act, Children Trading Act.

He also kept a record of his days off sick from work, a total of forty-eight days in his whole career.<sup>103</sup> He only took time off work sick for significant illnesses, usually seven days or more, with influenza and bronchitis recurring problems, the latter a common hazard for police. The Halifax force kept men on full pay where the illness or injury was work-related, but deducted 1s per day in all other cases, a significant amount to lose for a man supporting a wife and children. The illness also had to be certificated by the police surgeon and men were not encouraged to malingering.

Before marriage, Drake had spent his holidays at seaside resorts, such Blackpool, but later annual leave was spent at Morton, in Lincolnshire, where his wife's family lived.<sup>104</sup> In 1914, all leave was cancelled because of the Great War. Amongst his papers he also kept various newspaper cuttings, including a review of a book, written by Chief Constable Richardson after the war, on 'The Evolution of the Modern Force'.<sup>105</sup> Another cutting gave advice on how to address letters to superior officers, especially where the officer also held military or naval rank, common during the Great War.<sup>106</sup> Clearly, Drake was keen to keep in with his Chief Constable and show he was aware of social niceties. His career was successful enough for him to be able to buy his rented house for £275 on his retirement in 1929.<sup>107</sup>

**Table 5.1**

**Length of service of recruits between 1903-14**

<b>Length of service</b>	<b>Less than 1 year</b>	<b>1 year but less than 2</b>	<b>2 years but less than 5</b>	<b>5 – 9 years</b>	<b>10 – 15 years</b>	<b>15 – 20 years</b>	<b>25 years and over</b>
<b>1903-14</b>	59	18	25	11	3	4	34

Source: Halifax Register of Police.

<sup>103</sup> Inspector John Drake, Notes and Career, 1903+. Misc 1026/1.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. Misc 1026/1.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., Misc 1026/1.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., Misc 1026/1.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., Misc 1026/1.

The new century did not bring a reduction in the high turnover of men. A large proportion (thirty-eight percent) of the new recruits, as in previous times, did not last beyond the first year. Some left because the Chief Constable did not consider that they had the potential to become efficient policemen, some because they did not like the job itself with the demands and constraints that came with it. The majority left as 'not appointed' suggesting they failed to reach the required standard, rather than that they chose to leave. Another large group (twelve percent) left in less than two years, though most of these seem to have either had an extended probationary period or left shortly after being appointed. Most of the unsatisfactory recruits were weeded out in the first year.

Those that lasted less than five years did so for a variety of reasons. Seven men transferred to other forces, possibly to be nearer family or to obtain better pay and conditions. The Great War affected recruitment and distorted the picture. Six men who had joined the force just prior to the war, enlisted and were killed in action or died of their wounds afterwards. Several others enlisted, but soon resigned after re-joining the police in 1919. The longer a man stayed in the force, the more likely he was to remain and claim a pension. Thus, those men who had been in the police for over ten years were unlikely to leave unless they died in service or were able to gain promotion to another force. The incremental pay scale was structured so as to reward the men who stayed and the longer they stayed, the less likely it was that they would be able to transfer to other employment that paid as well. The lure of a pension after twenty-five years' service was considerable. In the pre-war period, under Chief Constable Richardson, eighty-one men were appointed as regular constables, having passed their probation. Despite serving in the army in the war, thirty-four of these remained in the Halifax Police for the duration of their working lives and claimed their pension.

Many of the men that joined the force were there so briefly that it is not possible to ascertain their origins. Those that passed their probationary period and became regular police are easier to trace, mostly through the 1911 census.

**Table 5.2**

**Origins of Recruits Appointed 1903-14.**

<b>Origins Unknown</b>	<b>Halifax Parish</b>	<b>Yorkshire (other)</b>	<b>UK (Ex Yorks)</b>	<b>Total</b>
27	10	13	31	81

Source: Watch Committee Minutes and Census Returns.

The records that are available showed that Halifax was still taking a large proportion of recruits from rural areas, particularly central England, with Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire being favoured. Two recruits came from Ireland, but there were none from Scotland and only two from counties more northerly than Yorkshire. Clearly, Halifax was still attractive in pay and employment terms to men from agricultural areas, where the wages were still low, but also where job opportunities were still declining due to increased mechanisation.<sup>108</sup> Joanne Klein observed that men from agricultural areas who would normally have considered policing could often find better paid options in the pre-war period, or chose to emigrate, but Halifax still continued to attract recruits from these counties.<sup>109</sup> They may still have been attractive as employees for the reasons that Carolyn Steedman had found in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Their dislocation from rural living meant a heavier reliance on the camaraderie of the force and their schooling in belonging to a hierarchy in which deference and obedience were essential may still have been seen as

<sup>108</sup> Although mechanisation began in the nineteenth century, the spread of machinery continued into the twentieth, with oil engines gradually taking over from steam. Advances in machinery in the early twentieth century included steam ploughing, milking machines and equipment to harvest corn. See P.W. Blandford, *Old Farm Tools and Machinery*, (Trowbridge and Esher, 1976). Also the Museum of Rural Life, University of Reading, <<http://www.reading.ac.uk/institits/im/interface/advanced>>.

<sup>109</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp.17-18.

admiral traits for a policeman, even though, as Alderman Calvert pointed out, intelligence was now seen as important as size and fitness.<sup>110</sup> This was a considerable change from the 1860s and 1870s when Steedman found that the police authorities prized brawn and obedience above intelligence in recruits. A policeman did not need to think since he was a servant and there to follow the instructions of his superiors.<sup>111</sup>

The recruitment of suitable men was still problematic. In the pre-war period, the Halifax population began a gradual decline from its 1901 peak of 104,936, to 101,594 in 1911, a trend that continued after the war. The textile industry, Halifax's largest employer had begun to decline and the town's competitors locally (Wakefield, Leeds and Bradford) had achieved city status by the end of the nineteenth century. These cities had more opportunities than Halifax and may have attracted young men who saw a better future elsewhere.

The 1911 census gives a snapshot of the composition of the Halifax force. It shows that despite the twentieth century decline in local recruits, thirty-six percent of the existing force still originated from the parish. Thirty-five percent came from counties other than Yorkshire, mostly rural counties in central England. There were also five men in the force who had been born in Ireland. The result was a balanced mix of local and provincial men. The growing emphasis on education and intelligence, rather than height and build meant that Halifax had to spread the recruitment net wider to find suitable men.

### **Promotion, Pay and Incentives**

Although the size of the Halifax force had grown to a complement of one hundred and twenty-six men by 1911, the opportunities for promotion had declined. More men were remaining in the police until they retired and claimed a pension, especially if they had gained

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<sup>110</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 4 September 1909.

<sup>111</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p.147.

promotion to sergeant or above. The Watch Committees in the nineteenth century had faced the problem of retaining men who had little incentive to stay once they reached the top of their pay grade and had, like many other forces, brought in a graded system of third to first class constable, later adding long service pay for those who had served for up to fifteen years.<sup>112</sup> The scheme had at first only applied to constables and sergeants, but by 1903 had been extended to include officers up to the level of inspector.<sup>113</sup>

If the Chief Constable was aware of the need to attract a better calibre of recruit to the force, he was also aware that retaining suitable men who had been trained was essential. Training was expensive and the loss of such men costly in terms of time and money. Each force still had its own individual pay and conditions and would welcome a fully-trained man from elsewhere, who might be attracted by better pay and prospects. Since men were often drafted to serve temporarily in other areas covering large events such as royal visits or strikes, awareness of varying employment conditions in other forces would be widespread. Even if such subjects were not discussed in police magazines, such as the *Police Review and Parade Gossip*, it is hard to believe that men meeting colleagues from other forces did not compare notes. However, pay was not the only condition which could help encourage a man to stay in Halifax.

Chief Constable Richardson still awarded Merit Class, with its premium of 1s extra per week, but it was used sparingly, only being given to three men from 1903 to 1914. The scale of good conduct stripes was updated in 1907, so that men with an unblemished record displayed visual evidence of their status. One stripe was awarded for each seven year period of good conduct, up to twenty-one years (three stripes). Any instances of insubordination or

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<sup>112</sup> HWCM, 24 July 1865, HXM185. Grades 1-3 introduced. 19 November 1875, HXM189. Long service pay introduced.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 January 1897, HXM193.

drunkenness led to the loss of the stripes.<sup>114</sup> It was a cheap and convenient way of distinguishing the men and discouraging indiscipline.

Meritorious conduct by individuals was still recognised by the award of a gratuity, with thirty-three such payments, totalling £22-4-6d, being made at Chief Constable Richardson's recommendation before 1915.<sup>115</sup> The amounts varied between five shillings and three guineas, depending on the act. Five shillings was the usual amount for 'vigilance' usually connected with break-ins, while ten shillings was awarded for stopping runaway horses.<sup>116</sup> More serious events, such as dealing with fires, tramway accidents and arresting shop breakers attracted a higher reward, usually a guinea or more.<sup>117</sup> In July 1906, the brakes on a tram failed and it ran out of control downhill, ending up on its side on North Bridge and causing the death of two passengers. PC James Dixon, who was on duty on the bridge, warned the public of the approaching tram and organised medical assistance for the injured, for which he was awarded a guinea gratuity.<sup>118</sup> In 1910, the Watch Committee reconsidered the whole question of rewards for meritorious conduct, but came to the conclusion that the current system should be retained.<sup>119</sup> Special duties were also rewarded, particularly during strikes. The railway strike in 1911 and the carter's strike in 1913 both required the men to work extra hours. The Watch Committee supplied refreshments for the men while on duty and the extra hours were paid at double rate, no doubt partially reconciling the men to the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 22 April 1907, HXM 196.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., various payments between 8 June 1903- 31 December 1914 recorded in minute books HXM195-200.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 3 June 1907, HXM196. PC Mullen awarded 5s 'for vigilance.' 19 December 1910, HXM198. PC Lister awarded 10s-6d for 'courage in stopping a runaway horse'.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 19 November 1906, HXM196. Sgt. Gledhill awarded a guinea for averting serious fire damage at a premises in Northgate.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 16 July 1906, HXM196.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 19 December 1910, HXM 198.

unpleasant task.<sup>120</sup> This also ensured that the extra duty was fairly recompensed. Not all Watch Committees were so reasonable. Joanne Klein illustrated her point about the reluctance of Watch Committees to pay fair wages, by citing the Birmingham force, where one days' pay was considered reasonable recompense for extra strike duty. It took no account of how many hours each man had worked, or even if they had done extra work at all.<sup>121</sup>

At the beginning of Chief Constable Richardson's tenure in 1903, the paid annual leave in Halifax for a constable was seven days, with two days per month allowed off duty.<sup>122</sup> This compared favourably with the position in the Middlesbrough force, whose men at this time were only allowed one day off every four weeks and only during the winter months.<sup>123</sup> Most forces had no guarantee of any time off and even in 1900, one free day a month was the most common allowance, since men had to be hired to cover the beats. This had become a focus for resentment and in 1906 the *Police Review and Parade Gossip*, a paper aimed at the rank and file policeman, began a campaign for the police to be granted a weekly rest day.<sup>124</sup>

Aware of the national debate and sympathetic to the men, Richardson lobbied the Watch Committee, who decided to allow the men one days leave in seven, to take effect from October 1910.<sup>125</sup> This pre-empted the Police (Weekly Rest Day) Act and was a generous allowance, and remained so even when the legislation permitted one days leave in seven to police constables. It is possible that the Watch Committee was aware that legislation would force their hand, but despite the Act, many other police authorities were slow to implement the change or found excuses not to do so at all. Their reluctance to accord the men their due

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 18 September 1911, HXM198. Double pay for those on duty during Railway strike. 21 July 1913, HXM199. Refreshments cost 5s-4d. Double pay authorised for men involved on duty during carters' strike.

<sup>121</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.140.

<sup>122</sup> HWCM, 11 January 1897, HXM193. This was set during Chief Constable Pole's tenure.

<sup>123</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.132.

<sup>124</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.143.

<sup>125</sup> HWCM, 16 August 1909, HXM197.

merely added fuel to the campaign for a police union, which came to the fore in the aftermath of the Great War. The reasonable attitude to pay requests and allowances (compared to other forces) of the Halifax Watch Committee probably blunted the resentment of the men and ensured that the town never faced a police strike.<sup>126</sup>

The change in leave allowance was not without cost, as twelve additional men were required to cover the increased absences, taking the force up to its pre-war total of one hundred and twenty-six men.<sup>127</sup> The force was already working at the minimum required by the Home Office and could not be stretched any further. The Council would have to find an extra £900 per year to cover the cost of the extra days leave. Alderman Calvert explained the Watch Committee's reasons for the action to the Council, pointing out that the Halifax force was the third cheapest to run in the West Riding and that the pay, conditions of labour, leave and pensions put it in the forefront of most occupations. The extra breaks were intended to keep the men more fit. He stated that:

They wanted, if possible, to raise the status of the force, to lift and improve the force, to attract a good class of men. . . . they hoped by this concession to attract a better class.<sup>128</sup>

The wish to attract and retain a better calibre of men is the clear intention of the change to rest days, even at the additional cost to the ratepayers. The Council did not oppose the concession, accepting the job was becoming more complex and skilled than previously, requiring better conditions to tempt men with the necessary abilities. The men themselves were appreciative of the concession, knowing that few other forces had such generous rest day allowances. Only the Metropolitan and City of London Police forces had been granted a weekly rest day in 1909. They subscribed to a plaque 'as a permanent record of their deep gratitude' to the Town Council. The plaque records that

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<sup>126</sup>Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.144.

<sup>127</sup>HWCM, 16 August 1909, HXM 197.

<sup>128</sup>*Halifax Guardian*, 4 September 1909.

Especially do the subscribers feel indebted to the Members of the Watch Committee and the Chief Constable who initiated the proposal and upon whose recommendation it was accepted by the Council unanimously, the Halifax Police Force being the third in the United Kingdom to whom such a highly appreciated concession was accorded.<sup>129</sup>

Despite the improved leave allowance, the men felt their wages were not keeping pace with those in other forces locally and in 1911 applied to the Watch Committee for a pay increase.<sup>130</sup> Unfortunately, their request was made at the same time as the Chief Constable and the Watch Committee chairman were to attend a conference in Sheffield, ‘to consider and report on the advisability of adopting uniform pay scales and conditions for the Forces of the Cities and Boroughs of the North of England and the Midlands’, so the matter was deferred.<sup>131</sup> Despite their generosity over the leave and the indications that more was needed to attract a better class of men, the Watch Committee continued to pay unskilled wages, as did other police forces, regardless of the fact that low wages dissuaded suitable applicants. Up until 1911, Halifax paid a constable on appointment 25s, rising to 32s after fifteen years, whilst Middlesbrough paid 27s on appointment and 38-6d on third service pay.<sup>132</sup> The starting pay for constables in Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester in 1911 was higher than Halifax.<sup>133</sup>

Discussions at the Chief Constables conference reached no agreement and it was not until 1919 that the government appointed a committee under Lord Desborough to look into the recruitment, conditions of service and rates of pay, allowances and pensions of the police.<sup>134</sup> The Desborough Committee’s report rejected comparisons of police pay with that of unskilled labourers and recommended that the pay and conditions of service of all police

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<sup>129</sup> The plaque is currently displayed in the Halifax Police Station (Divisional HQ) in Richmond Close, Halifax, HX1 5TW.

<sup>130</sup> HWCM, 18 December 1911, HXM199.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1911, HXM199.

<sup>132</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.126.

<sup>133</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.137.

<sup>134</sup> Report of the Committee on the Police Service of England, Wales, and Scotland.

forces be standardised and improved and be under the control of the Home Secretary.<sup>135</sup> The resulting pay increases of almost 100 per cent for the lower ranks resulted in a threefold increase in financial costs to the Exchequer. The police were no longer cheap, generating a debate on their efficiency and fundamental role. Howard Taylor argued that with police numbers frozen, the police authorities used traffic control and its regulation as a solution to shore up falling crime statistics, increasing their prosecutions in this area to justify their role, which in turn justified their need to retain manpower.<sup>136</sup> Laybourn and D. Taylor, however, dispute that this was the case, maintaining the situation was more complex than Howard Taylor allowed, since police opinion on the subject was divided at the time, with many senior officers in favour of traffic control being delegated to another body.<sup>137</sup>

Prior to the Great War, the lack of agreement nationally meant that pay was still decided on a local level by the Watch Committee, who, in Halifax, increased wages for the first time in nine years from April 1912, accepting that in that time pay had fallen behind that in other forces.<sup>138</sup> The classes of constables were overhauled so that a probationary constable joined as sixth class and after reaching first class in nine years' time, there were two long service grades at eleven and fifteen years, so that longevity continued to be rewarded. Progression through the classes was on a fixed timescale, unless there were disciplinary issues and constables had to apply in writing, for permission to move to the next pay grade. The starting pay was increased to 27s, with a top rate of 34s. Two years later in 1914, the pay scales were revised again, with three extra pay levels included for constables, so that the starting pay (ninth class) was 28s and the top pay was 38s.<sup>139</sup> This put starting pay on a par with

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<sup>135</sup> Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, pp.190-194.

<sup>136</sup> H. Taylor, 'Forging the Job. A Crisis of 'Modernisation' or Redundancy for the Police in England and Wales, 1900-39', *British Journal of Criminology*, 39, (1999), pp.113-135.

<sup>137</sup> Laybourn and Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales*, p. 112.

<sup>138</sup> HWCM, 19 February 1912, HXM 199.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 February 1914, HXM 200.

Manchester and higher than Liverpool and Middlesbrough. The Watch Committee was beginning to accept that wages increases were necessary to attract and retain good men, especially when faced by the enthusiasm to enlist. Some were lost to military service, others to industries rejuvenated by the war.<sup>140</sup> The textile industry in Halifax underwent a brief revival due to the demand for military uniforms.<sup>141</sup> The new pay scales, though still set at unskilled workers' levels, had regular increases for the first five years to induce men to stay, then were designed to reward those men who had no prospect of promotion beyond constable and felt their careers had stagnated. Increases continued up to the twentieth year of service, after which it could be expected that a man was looking forward to his pension and would be extremely unlikely to do anything to lose it.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., HXM200, App. 2. List of Constables still in the Police Force desirous of enlisting in HM Forces. (no date.) There are forty names on the list and the name of the unit the officer wished to join.

<sup>141</sup> Hargreaves, *Halifax*, pp.182-84.

**Table 5.3****Pay Scales 1903-14**

<b>Constable</b>	<b>1903</b>	<b>1912</b>	<b>1914</b>
Probationer on appointment	25s	27s (6 <sup>th</sup> class)	28s
After 1 year	26s (3 <sup>rd</sup> class)	28s (5 <sup>th</sup> class)	29s (8 <sup>th</sup> class)
After 2 years	27s (2 <sup>nd</sup> class)	29s (4 <sup>th</sup> class)	30s (7 <sup>th</sup> class)
After 3 years	-	-	31s (6 <sup>th</sup> class)
After 4 years	28s (1 <sup>st</sup> class)	30s (3 <sup>rd</sup> class)	-
After 5 years	-	-	32s (5 <sup>th</sup> class)
After 7 years	29s	31s (2 <sup>nd</sup> class)	33s (4 <sup>th</sup> class)
After 9 years	30s	32s (1 <sup>st</sup> class)	34s (3 <sup>rd</sup> class)
After 11 years	31s	33s	35s (2 <sup>nd</sup> class)
After 13 years	-	-	36s (1 <sup>st</sup> class)
Long service after 15 years	32s	34s	37s
Long service after 21 years	-	-	38s

Source: Watch Committee Minutes

The higher ranks were also given a pay rise in 1912, with sergeants receiving 2s increase per week and the grades above £10 per year.<sup>142</sup> New ranks appeared in the pay scales for the first time, although individuals had been promoted to them for some time. Harry Broadbent was made Acting Sergeant in 1908, which attracted a supplement of 1s per week on top of whichever grade of constable's pay the man was on.<sup>143</sup> The new rank was to act as cover for absences of the sergeants and was an opportunity for the Chief Constable to assess the man's potential to become a sergeant. Promotion to the next grade usually followed, but normally took a minimum of two years to achieve.

The rank of Chief Inspector had been awarded to two officers in 1910 on the retirement of Superintendent Raw.<sup>144</sup> No one was appointed as superintendent and the rank was discontinued, since it had only been instituted to assist Chief Constable Pole in the latter

<sup>142</sup>HWCM, 19 February 1912, HXM199.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 9 March 1908, HXM197.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 19 December 1910, HXM198. Inspectors James Hardy and James Gledhill promoted to Chief Inspector.

years of his tenure. It was felt that relacing the superintendent with two chief inspectors, who could provide cover for each other, was more effective. Their basic rate was amended in April 1913, when an extra scale was added for service over two years.<sup>145</sup>

Chief Constable Richardson's pay was naturally not included in these revised scales, but his salary was periodically reviewed by the Watch Committee and the Council. He had been appointed in 1903 at a salary of £250 with £50 allowance for sundry items.<sup>146</sup> This was to be increased annually by £25 up to a limit of £350, which was reached in 1907.<sup>147</sup> The following year the Watch Committee proposed an increase of £100, with a further £50 a year later, but discontinued the separate allowance.<sup>148</sup> This was the first time that an unsolicited increase had been offered to the Chief Constable, but the Watch Committee was fully aware that Richardson had been applying for other posts and had been short-listed twice, once for the Chief Constablenesship of Leicester and once for the West Riding County Constabulary. Both were larger forces than Halifax and would pay a higher salary, a fact of which the Watch Committee was well aware. This was only way for a Chief Constable to advance, by applying to a larger force, especially while he was still young, as most forces stipulated an upper age limit for applications between thirty-five and forty. The Chair of the Watch Committee, Alderman Calvert commented that 'like a wise man with a family to bring up, he looked after himself'. The Labour members of the Council, whilst having nothing but praise for Richardson, had pledged to oppose any pay rise on salaries above £300 and tried to block the increase, claiming that the Chief Constable's job was routine and 'humdrum', with a staff of subordinates to do the work. Alderman Calvert made it clear that he had recently been approached by

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 21 April 1913, HXM 199.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 2 March 1903, HXM195.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 8 April 1903, HXM195.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 20 March 1908, HXM 197.

some gentlemen in London, asking him pointed questions about the Chief Constable and speaking very highly of him in regard to a position in a smaller town than Halifax.

He added

The Council would not be doing the best in their own interest if they parted with a man of his capabilities who managed his work with so little friction and who got good work from the men without bullying them.<sup>149</sup>

Alderman Brearley pointed out that towns such as Walsall, Cambridge, Stockport and Blackpool all had smaller populations than Halifax, but were paying their Chief Constables £500 per annum. Reading, which had a population of 64,000, was paying their chief constable a salary of £600. The Watch Committee hoped to offer the advance and retain Richardson's services for a few years longer. The threat of losing a man of Richardson's calibre worked and the rise was agreed.

The thorny question of Chief Constable Richardson's pay did not go away. The 1908 Finance Act devolved powers and duties previously dealt with by the Inland Revenue to local councils, who in Halifax's case immediately passed them to the members of the detective staff under the Chief Constable, despite an appeal by the Watch Committee for it to be given to some other department.<sup>150</sup> These Local Taxation Licenses involved the issue and collection of revenue for such items as licences for dogs, guns and the dealing in game. It proved time consuming and unpopular and to compensate for the extra work involved, the Watch Committee increased the Chief Constable's salary by £50.<sup>151</sup> The resulting acrimonious debates at the Council meeting quickly led to the withdrawal of the increase as councillors questioned who was actually doing the work. Despite the parsimonious attitude of some

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<sup>149</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 4 April 1908.

<sup>150</sup> HWCM, 17 May 1909, HXM197. Finance Act, 1908. (8 Edw.7 c 16).

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 July – 18 September 1911, HXM 198.

councillors, Chief Constable Richardson remained at Halifax, although he continued to apply for other posts. The Great War no doubt interrupted his promotion prospects and when it was over, he was in his early forties and it was no longer so easy to find an alternative post when Watch Committees were looking for younger men who could be paid less.

The 1890 Police Act had guaranteed a pension to every police officer after twenty-five years' service. Halifax Watch Committee, with the exception of Superintendent Pearson, had always been fair, but not generous, about the payment of pensions to long serving men, although the allocation could at times be arbitrary. Along with many other forces, Halifax became concerned about the amount of money being paid out in pensions and took action to reduce the bill where possible. In 1899, they introduced an age minimum of fifty-two years for new recruits, which delayed the payment of pensions as much as six or seven years past the twenty-five years set out in the 1890 Act.<sup>152</sup> This still compared favourably with some forces which set the age minimum as high as fifty-five.<sup>153</sup> By the start of the Great War, the Watch Committee was operating three different pension schemes, depending on when a man had joined. Those joining before 1899 were on the most favourable terms, with a maximum pension of two thirds the final salary after twenty-five years approved service. Thus a first-class constable, retiring on the eve of the Great War would be entitled to a pension of 25s-4d per week and a first-class sergeant 30s. Those who joined after 1899 had to serve twenty-five years, but had to be a minimum of fifty-two years of age before claiming. New regulations were adopted on 1 April 1912, which allowed a minimum pension to be claimed after fifteen years, with a sliding scale of pension for each year served after that. On this scale it took thirty years before qualifying for a two thirds pension.<sup>154</sup> In addition, the Watch Committee agreed that half of any future sick leave would be deducted from the reckoning for time

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 20 March 1899, HXM194.

<sup>153</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.140.

<sup>154</sup> HWCM, Appendix 1, HXM 200,

served, as was any time suspended from duty due to misconduct, further prolonging the time needed to qualify for pension. Though these stipulations meant that men joining the force in the early part of the twentieth century had to work longer for their pensions, Halifax was still more generous than some watch committees. Liverpool had increased its service minimum for full pension to thirty years in 1903, only allowing half pensions after twenty-six years, instead of the fifteen years at Halifax. Manchester stipulated thirty years' service for any pension.<sup>155</sup>

The increasing number of men who had stayed to make a career in the force under Chief Constable Pole meant that the period from 1903-14 saw a surge of men completing twenty-five years' service under the pre 1891 rules and applying for their pensions. In all, thirty men retired and claimed a pension during this period. This loss of experienced men put pressure on the force and on the superannuation fund. The resignations of four constables for this reason in April 1904, led to a resolution by the Watch Committee to insist on four months advance notice by men wishing to retire after twenty-five years, so that replacements could be trained up in time.<sup>156</sup>

Chief Constable Richardson's annual report in 1908 stated that there were forty-two men on the pension list and for the first time, the superannuation fund was no longer self-supporting, having had to be assisted by the rates to the tune of £215-11s. The cost of pension payments in 1895 had been £923-19-9d, but just over a decade later had almost tripled to £2,565-4-4d, with at least eighteen more men due to reach twenty-five years' service in the next six years.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.140.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 May 1904, HXM 195.

<sup>157</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 14 March 1908.

This increase in the cost to the ratepayers, with the future prospect of it only becoming more expensive, influenced the Watch Committee's response to requests by officers to stay in the force beyond their twenty-five years. These were mostly made by senior officers, as the constables invariably retired as soon as they were able, no doubt glad to be able to leave the physical demands of the job behind. The Watch Committee also preferred a younger, physically fitter man who was at the bottom of the pay scale and on the less generous pension provisions. The Police (Superannuation) Act 1906 had made it possible for a man to safeguard his pension after twenty-five years if he wanted to continue working, provided he passed a medical examination to declare him fit to serve. Several senior officers were reluctant to leave, or were already working past their retirement date. Superintendent Raw, who had joined the force in 1876, became eligible for his pension in 1902, but agreed at the Watch Committee's request to continue at a reduced salary (£30 less per year than previously) and the understanding that he could make no claim for an increased pension. He was however paid both his pension and his salary from 1902.<sup>158</sup> He finally retired in 1910 after nearly thirty-five years and serving under three chief constables. He was described as 'the Father of the Force' by Chief Constable Richardson and was the recipient of several handsome presents on his retirement to his new home in Blackpool.<sup>159</sup>

Detective Inspector Bradley also continued past his retirement date, at a reduced salary, eventually retiring in 1908 after twenty-eight years.<sup>160</sup> It was unclear whether he was drawing a pension as well, but it seems unlikely, given that despite his agreed entitlement to two thirds of his 1905 annual pay, some members of the Watch Committee in 1908 attempted to vote him the new pension rate of thirty-one fiftieths of his annual pay, which would have been a

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 31 December 1910.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 31 December 1910.

<sup>160</sup> HWCM, 8 May 1905, HXM196. Agreement to remain on in force. 21 December 1908, HXM197. Notice of intended retirement.

reduction of over two shillings a week. Fortunately for Bradley, the motion was defeated, but it was an indication of the council's concern over the escalating pension's bill.<sup>161</sup>

The arguments for and against allowing senior officers to stay on past their retirement date came to a head at a Council meeting in October 1908, when the subject of Inspector Butterworth's retirement was discussed. He had attained twenty-five years' service, but wished to continue in the force and had passed the medical for fitness. Several of the councillors were of the opinion that allowing senior officers to stay on was detrimental to the force, since it blocked the promotion prospects of eligible men. The result was a loss of efficiency as men had no incentive to do their best. Good quality men would look to other forces for promotion, or leave the police altogether. Councillor Broadley held the view that

If they allowed positions to be monopolised by men whose time had expired the keenness would leave the force and he knew that a spirit of unrest was rampant throughout the police force through such arrangements.<sup>162</sup>

The majority of the Council thought that in keeping Butterworth on, the Watch Committee had 'done a very good stroke of business'. Not only were they delaying paying out the pension, but were retaining an experienced man at a reduced salary, half of which was refundable by the Home Office. This viewpoint, with the emphasis on financial savings, found favour with most of the councillors and Butterworth's services were retained for another eighteen months.

Nevertheless, the point about blocking the promotion of younger, ambitious men was well made. Whether Councillor Broadley was right and the men were unhappy with the extended employment of pension age men is not documented elsewhere, but it seems very likely. After the turn of the twentieth century, the time between appointment and first promotion to

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<sup>161</sup> HWCM, 21 December 1908, HXM 197.

<sup>162</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 10 October 1908.

sergeant had lengthened, even for talented men.<sup>163</sup> The introduction of the intermediary stage of Acting Sergeant had helped, but after 1910, it was still common for it to take from ten to fifteen years to get to sergeant, whereas at the turn of the century it had taken between seven and twelve years.<sup>164</sup> The narrowing of promotion prospects further up the ladder had also led to long-service payments being implemented for all grades up to inspector to prevent stagnation.<sup>165</sup> Whether it was deliberate policy on the behalf of the Chief Constable and the Watch Committee is not clear, but after 1908, no more officers stayed on after qualifying for pension. The resolution by the Watch Committee in 1909 to implement the provision of the Police (Superannuation) Act 1906, that no man could apply to stay on after qualifying for pension unless he had twenty-six years' service probably blocked several applications.<sup>166</sup> Possibly none were interested in continuing, but it may be that the Watch Committee had realised that short-term gains were better ignored in the light of the longer-term prospects of the men. This situation was inevitably changed by the advent of the Great War, since the shortage of men meant that those who wished to extend their service were welcomed.

While most men who made a career in the police force managed to complete twenty-five years, a handful did not, possibly with their health broken by the physical demands of the job. Two men died in service during this period and their families were awarded gratuities. PC Francis Hunter died in 1905 after five years' service, leaving a widow and child, who were

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<sup>163</sup> Between 1900-09, the average length of time between appointment and promotion to sergeant was 10 years 7 months. Between 1910-1915, the average was 12 years 9 months. Source: HWCM.

<sup>164</sup> Rank of Acting Sergeant was first introduced in 1894, but did not become commonly used until after 1910: HWCM, 23 April 1894, HXM193.

Promotion :J.W. Gledhill, joined 5.9.1892, sgt., 9.1.1899 (6 years 8 months): Joseph Brier, joined 9.5.1888, sgt, 26.11.1900. (12 years 6 months): S.H. Hopps, joined 27.5.1902, sgt., 19.2.1912 (9 years 9 months): G. Lee, joined 12.1.1898, sgt., 16.12.1912 (14 years 11 months). Halifax Register of Police Force, WYP/HA/2/1/1.

<sup>165</sup> HWCM, 19 March 1900, HXM194.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 15 February 1909, HXM 197.

given a gratuity of £28, the equivalent of twenty weeks' pay.<sup>167</sup> The other was Sergeant William Lumb, who had served twenty-two years in total, four in the Leeds force and eighteen in Halifax. He had been an active member of all the force's social clubs, helping to arrange the charity police concerts and a member of his local church. He had been secretary of the Recreation and Athletic Club and had organised cricket, hockey and tennis matches for the police. He was sent to the Police Convalescent Home at Harrogate, with wasting of the nerves. His treatment was paid for by the Halifax Police Sick Club, one of many charitable organisations around the country, set up to aid policemen in the event of serious illness. Halifax had a favourable record with sickness, having set up a club in the early years of the new police and maintained it throughout the nineteenth century. Sergeant Lumb died in 1909, but since he had not completed twenty-five years' service, his widow was not entitled to a pension, but was awarded a gratuity of £190-13-4d. However, the Watch Committee still felt a responsibility towards his widow and did its best to assist her, investing £150 for three years to increase the capital and improve her income.<sup>168</sup>

Illness was not always purely physical. Help was also offered to the wife of Henry Holland, a constable who had retired in 1902. By 1912, he had been committed to the Storthes Hall Asylum in Huddersfield, so that he could receive psychiatric treatment. Since he was no longer capable of managing his own affairs, the Watch Committee arranged for his pension to be transferred to his wife.<sup>169</sup>

Three others, all sergeants, retired early through infirmity, though all had served over twenty-three years. This suggests that they were trying to struggle through to their pensions, but were finally defeated by illness. All three were awarded reduced pensions, but the Watch Committee put a further stipulation on Sergeant Simms, insisting that he be re-examined

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 13 February 1905, HXM 196.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 17 May 1909, HXM 197.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 17 June 1912, HXM 199.

yearly to confirm his continuing ill health, suggesting that they had doubts about the existence or severity of his illness. This proved to be unnecessary, as he died three months after retiring. His widow was awarded a gratuity of £97-12-11d, presumably what was left of her husband's pension funds. This compared unfavourably with the amount granted to the widow of Sergeant Lumb, who had served a similar length of time, but died in service.<sup>170</sup> This double standard in pension payments to widows whose husband died in service and those whose husbands had retired on medical grounds was also noted by Klein. The discrepancy in payment often led to a widow having to find other employment such as cleaning or taking in lodgers to make ends meet.<sup>171</sup>

The Watch Committee wanted to keep the men in good shape and apart from the weekly fitness classes, encouraged them to participate in the sports provided by the Recreation and Athletic Club. The sports included cricket, hockey, billiards, tennis and swimming, all of which had regular tournaments or matches against other forces and other company teams.<sup>172</sup>

They fostered camaraderie amongst the men, invoked a friendly rivalry between forces and brought the police into contact with the public in a way that presented a positive image. Klein found the same encouraging attitude towards sports from the senior officers in Liverpool and Birmingham, although in Manchester, the support the men received seems to have been dependent on results.<sup>173</sup> The recreation side was responsible for the annual Police Charity Concert, which had begun in the nineteenth century and was going from strength to strength, regularly raising over £200.<sup>174</sup> It was a much anticipated event in the town's social calendar,

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 December 1912, 17 March 1913, HXM 199.

<sup>171</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 307.

<sup>172</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 15 February 1908, 1 May 1909.

<sup>173</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 213.

<sup>174</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 3 April 1909. Concert raised £201-1-3d.

with guest appearances from police bands from Leeds and Bradford.<sup>175</sup> Halifax did not have a band, but did have a noted Glee Club.<sup>176</sup> Charities were seen as a popular and worthwhile cause and Watch Committees encouraged the men to get involved. The Chief Constable led by example, chairing the meetings of the Police Recreation and Concert Fund, with an Inspector as Treasurer and a sergeant as Secretary.<sup>177</sup> The proceeds went to various police and community projects and were invariably given good positive publicity in the local papers as in the *Guardian* headline 'Police Generosity' in 1908.<sup>178</sup> A regular recipient of Halifax's charity funds was the Northern Police Orphanage and Convalescent Home in Harrogate, which was one of Chief Constable Richardson's favoured projects, since he was on the General and Finance Committee that ran it.<sup>179</sup> This catered for police forces in Northern England and assisted policemen suffering from long term ill-health or terminal conditions, such as PC Lumb. It also took in and raised police orphans, assuring the local constable that should he be taken ill or his children left fatherless, there was a safety net to take care of him and his family. Charities that benefited children were amongst the most popular with police forces.<sup>180</sup>

The newly required qualifications for lifesaving and first aid were also an opportunity for the police to show their abilities and attend social events with colleagues and the public. The Halifax force was renowned for its first aid teams which regularly competed across West Yorkshire. In 1908, the Halifax 'B' team won trophies at the Dewsbury Infirmary Carnival in the Ambulance Competition, being especially commended for their bandaging and

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 February 1908. Concert, which featured the Halifax Glee Party, Bradford City Police Military Band was described as a 'huge success' and raised £195-7-9d.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 December 1908. Inspector Bradley described as a founder member of the Glee Party.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 February 1908.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 February 1908.

<sup>179</sup> HWCM, 3 December 1906, HXM 196.

<sup>180</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp. 218-19

smartness.<sup>181</sup> Later in the same year the *Guardian* printed a photograph of the successful Halifax teams and the numerous trophies they had won that season.<sup>182</sup> The Watch Committee also paid for an official police team to compete in various swimming galas and tournaments, where further trophies were won, although they were not as successful as the ambulance teams.<sup>183</sup> Apart from keeping the police skills in first aid and lifesaving well-honed, the competitions promoted knowledge of the town's force through the newspapers and made the public aware of the many duties that fell within a police constables remit. The Watch Committee wanted to encourage the men's pride in their abilities and to that end, from 1909, the certificates and medals earned after studying in various classes were formally presented by the Mayor in an annual ceremony at the Town Hall, emphasising that acquiring such skills was an important part of the job.<sup>184</sup>

Such ceremonies as these had replaced the annual dinners given by the Mayor, which given the size of the force, had become an expensive gesture. The presentation ceremonies brought the men together and the various social events for sports and charities served the same cohesive purpose as the dinners. Instead, the Mayor gave each of the men a small gift, usually a joint of meat that could be enjoyed by the policeman's family as well. In 1906, this took the shape of a brace of pheasant and in 1908, a leg of mutton.<sup>185</sup> This was probably appreciated as much as the dinners and would have helped the household budget, which owing to inflation in the pre-war period was becoming increasingly stretched on a policeman's wages.

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<sup>181</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 18 July 1908.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 November 1908.

<sup>183</sup> HWCM., 20 March 1911, HXM198.

<sup>184</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 22 May 1909.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 December 1906 and 17 October 1908.

## Crime

The period up to the Great War saw the numbers of prosecutions in Halifax remain relatively stable, with a slight peak in the middle years of the first decade and tailing off towards 1914.<sup>186</sup> The increase towards the middle of the decade is most probably explained by a crackdown to enforce some of the by-laws, rather than an upsurge in serious crime. Thus in the second quarter of 1904, thirty-three people, probably shopkeepers, were prosecuted for obstructing the footpath, but the subsequent quarter resulted in only eight prosecutions for the same offence.<sup>187</sup> The earlier crackdown had had the desired effect and for a period the footpaths remained clear, until it was considered that police attention had moved on to something else.

A third of all prosecutions were still drink related, with drunkenness, disorderly conduct and action against infringements by licensed premises being the most common. The number of arrests for drunkenness had barely altered since the end of the nineteenth century, with 231 in 1906 and 255 in 1907. This was in marked contrast with the 1870s when the cells were filled to overflowing at the weekends. Chief Constable Richardson compared Halifax favourably to the situation in other West Yorkshire towns, where the number of drunks per head of population was much higher.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> HWCM, Chief Constable's quarterly report on prosecutions, recorded in the Watch Committee minutes in January/ April/ July/ October.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 July 1904, HXM195. 21 November 1904, HXM196.

<sup>188</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 8 February 1908. Report of the Brewster Sessions.

**Table 5.4****Drunkenness in the West Riding per head of Population 1907**

<b>Licensing District</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Persons prosecuted per 1000 of population</b>
<b>Halifax</b>	167	88	255	104,936	2.43
<b>Huddersfield</b>	177	57	234	95,047	2.46
<b>Dewsbury</b>	96	17	113	28,060	4.02
<b>Bradford</b>	859	294	1,153	279,767	4.12
<b>Leeds</b>	1,624	649	2,273	428,965	5.29
<b>Sheffield</b>	1,712	461	2,176	409,020	5.32
<b>Doncaster</b>	168	20	188	28,932	6.45
<b>Barnsley</b>	218	70	288	41,086	7.00
<b>Wakefield</b>	226	78	299	41,413	7.24

Source: Brewster Sessions.

The higher percentage of drunks in the industrial cities of Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford was hardly surprising, but the higher numbers in the coal mining towns may have reflected a hard drinking culture or a local crackdown by the municipal authorities. Halifax's position in the table was a matter of self-congratulation for the Watch Committee, but the magistrates wanted a breakdown of the times of arrests, so that the premises that the drunks were leaving could be identified and controlled.<sup>189</sup> Nonetheless, the Watch Committee noted disapprovingly that nearly half the men arrested were from the labouring classes, amongst the poorest of the town.<sup>190</sup> The number of women arrested for drunkenness caused concern, particularly the 'considerable increase' on the previous years' figure.<sup>191</sup> The Bench deplored the fact that thirty-four of them were married women, whose behaviour would affect their husbands and children adversely and resolved to oppose any facilities which enabled women to obtain drink. Despite the obvious improvements in drunkenness from the middle of the

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 8 February 1908.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 8 February 1908.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 8 February 1908.

nineteenth century and the town's comparatively good statistics for the West Riding, sobriety, or the lack of it, remained top of the police force's focus on social delinquency.

Apart from the new laws for traffic control, the usual enforcement of the by-laws still formed the bulk of the offences in the town. The Watch Committee still received complaints about the same nuisances, such as the crying of newspapers, Sunday trading, rowdyism and street traders, mostly still from the middle classes.<sup>192</sup> Periodically, the force had a crackdown on nuisances that were considered to be morally pervasive or on the increase. Thus, in 1905, there was a purge of street betting, begging and the introduction of a new by-law on indecent language.<sup>193</sup> Several of the Watch Committee had strong links with the Methodist Chapels who were no doubt instrumental in pursuing action against betting.<sup>194</sup> Street gambling was endemic to Halifax borough throughout the nineteenth century and had frequently been targeted by the Watch Committee without any noticeable long-term effect. As has been noted in earlier chapters, the only result of a clamp down was to drive the practice underground. David Taylor points out that gambling was often targeted via local acts, as was the case in Halifax, with a clause in the 1905 Corporation Act which allowed them to do just that.<sup>195</sup> In 1906 the Street Betting Act, designed to restrict working-class gambling, made betting on the streets and in public places illegal. It was not popular with police authorities, since the middle class could still 'have a flutter' through off course credit gambling and by targeting the

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<sup>192</sup> HWCM, Crying of newspapers, 21 September 1908, HXM197, 18 April 1910, HXM198. Sunday trading, 8 October 1906, HXM196, 18 November 1912, HXM199. Rowdyism, 31 August 1903, HXM195. Street traders, 11 March 1907, HXM196.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 August and 9 October 1905, HXM 196.

<sup>194</sup> Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion. <http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com>, 27 March 2015. Alfred Seed, watch committee member, 1905-15. William H. Greenwood, watch committee, 1903-07. Both members of New Connexion chapels. Joe Brearley, watch committee, 1899-1913, member of Primitive Methodist chapel. J.H. Waddington, watch committee, 1903-06, Methodist lay preacher. Enoch Robinson, watch committee, 1911-14, member of Mount Zion Methodist chapel.

<sup>195</sup> Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.160. Halifax Corporation Act, 1905, Section VI, para. 48. (5 Edw. 7 c. ccv).

working class, the new Act was seen as an impediment to good relations with them. Many policemen did not see betting as a vice, although it was illegal and turned a blind eye where possible. Many probably enjoyed having a bet themselves. Joanne Klein's examination of the large city forces of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham found that street betting was not only widespread, but provided an ongoing temptation to constables for corruption, by taking bribes to warn bookmakers of raids.<sup>196</sup> There is no evidence of this in Halifax, but since the disciplinary records have not survived, it is impossible to be sure. It was still possible that policemen were paid off for protection and warning, but were never caught. The Halifax force seems to have ignored street gambling unless instructed to suppress it, as in 1905. Even then, since the Act was newly introduced, the Watch Committee insisted that warnings of intended action be publicised in the newspapers and handbills be distributed, no doubt giving those involved time to make alternative arrangements, which seemed somewhat counter-productive.<sup>197</sup>

The Halifax non-conformist chapels continued to be active at the beginning of the twentieth century, pressurising the Watch Committee, not just over street betting, but also Sunday trading. In 1906, a deputation from the committee of the Halifax Evangelical Free Church Council met with the Watch Committee to complain about its increase.<sup>198</sup> The Watch Committee, evidently having been petitioned on this subject before, declined to act, claiming they were still of the opinion that the existing law was unsatisfactory (probably this refers to the 1781 Sunday Observance Act) and that they would not consider the matter again until Parliament had passed further legislation. The subject of shops and entertainment venues opening on Sundays was contentious, with pressure being brought both for and against its enforcement. Whilst the religious societies were in favour of shops being closed, in Leeds,

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<sup>196</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 102.

<sup>197</sup> HWCM, 28 August 1905, HXM 196.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1906, HXM 196

the National Federation of Sunday Societies was founded in 1894 with the intention of campaigning for the removal of restrictions.<sup>199</sup> The previous Halifax Watch Committees had instructed the police to enforce the closure of shops, but in the period before the Great War seem to have been more cautious, possibly after adverse criticism following a prosecution, or simply because they recognised it as a controversial subject, which might cause problems with the working class, who were most in favour of reform.

Assaults on police were still a hazard for the constable on the beat, usually in conjunction with drunken behaviour. However, the force regarded them as one of the risks of the job, with the Standing Orders telling constables not to bring a charge of assault against prisoners unless they could show clear physical evidence of such an attack.<sup>200</sup> Small injuries from shoves and kicks were seen as part and parcel of police work and only major injuries likely to affect a constable's ability to patrol his beat were likely to be pursued in the courts. This decline in hostility from the public was not just felt in Halifax. Both Klein and Taylor note that resistance to the police was part of a downward trend in the incidences of violence.<sup>201</sup> Major injuries sustained in the line of duty were becoming increasingly rare. The public, becoming less tolerant of law breaking, occasionally showed their sympathy for the constable in difficulties, and were more likely to assist the police with arrests. Klein felt this was partly due to increased working class support since the middle and upper classes had been targeted over traffic offences, but in Halifax such assistance was not unknown.<sup>202</sup> The Watch Committee knew this was dangerous for the members of the public, but encouraged such public-spiritedness with small gratuities. James McManus went to the aid of PC James Fox,

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<sup>199</sup> C. Lane, 'On the Victorian Afterlife of the 1781 Sunday Observance Act', *Branch Collective*,

<[http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps\\_articles=christopher-lane-on-the-victorian-afterlife](http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=christopher-lane-on-the-victorian-afterlife),>

24 October 2014.

<sup>200</sup> Standing Orders, para.186.

<sup>201</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 168. Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.172.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169.

when the latter had difficulty apprehending a violent prisoner in Smithy Street, an area with numerous common lodging houses. The Watch Committee awarded him a gratuity of 10s for his assistance.<sup>203</sup>

Constables who patrolled a particular area, especially the outstations, for a long time became friendly with many of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. When the constable was moved on to patrol another area, it became normal practice for the locals to show their appreciation of his past services with gifts and a get together before he left. These gifts could be remarkably generous. Inspector Bradley reminisced at his retirement about his time at the outstation in Boothtown and how on leaving, he was presented with a marble clock and his wife with a gold watch.<sup>204</sup> This practice had become prevalent across the country and was seen as a perk of the job. However, the Home Office felt that this was open to abuse, both by the donors and the recipient, especially if the constable was remaining in the force. The Watch Committee received a letter from the Home Office, suggesting that a regulation restricting such testimonials be adopted and in 1903, the Watch Committee duly prohibited such testimonials, except in special cases.<sup>205</sup> A year later, the unfortunate PC Bates, also stationed at Boothtown, was informed he could not accept a similar testimonial from the local residents.<sup>206</sup> In addition to the new regulation, the Watch Committee also kept a record of any cases which were granted exemption and a testimonial allowed, along with the individual circumstances of the case. This record was to be open for scrutiny by HMIC.<sup>207</sup>

Indictable offences remained low, averaging 250 a year.<sup>208</sup> These were mostly larcenies and shop break-ins, the latter being notoriously hard to solve which was why the Chief Constable

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<sup>203</sup> HWCM, 18 September 1911, HXM 198.

<sup>204</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 19 December 1908.

<sup>205</sup> HWCM, 22 June 1903, HXM195. Letter from HO and adoption of prohibitive regulation.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 July 1904, HXM 195.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 June 1903, HXM195.

<sup>208</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 14 March 1908.

insisted on the beat constable checking for unsecured doors and windows and staying alert for anything unusual. Men who detected a shop break-in, especially if it led to an arrest, were always rewarded with a gratuity.

Alongside the usual run of petty offences, the police were increasingly required to oversee large public gatherings. These could be anything from striking municipal workers, as with the Halifax tram strike in 1906, to ILP or suffragette meetings. These caused difficulty for the police since they frequently ended up trying to separate two opposing factions. The suffragette support for the tram strike and the Hebden Bridge weavers' strike led to several visits to Halifax by leaders of the WSPU.<sup>209</sup> Adela Pankhurst came to address a meeting in Commercial Street, which was so packed that she had difficulty getting in and out. Three constables on duty and twice the number in plain clothes 'took the little lady in hand' and got her out to the station in safety.<sup>210</sup> The visit had attracted gangs of lads, who were opposed to the suffrage movement and the police had several encounters with them, but managed to keep the trouble to a minimum. The Halifax force appears to have been on good terms with the suffragettes, with one of the local members, Lavena Saltonstall, visiting the station to meet the Chief Constable.<sup>211</sup> During her imprisonment for attempting to enter the Houses of Parliament, she wrote that the 'Halifax police compared favourably with the London police' and that 'the London police are not half so smart as the Halifax police'.<sup>212</sup> Chief Constable Richardson was 'genial' with 'an obliging army of inspectors and sergeants and constables'.

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<sup>209</sup> Halifax Tram Strike, August - September 1906. Hebden Bridge Fustian weavers Strike, July 1906 – December 1908. Visits to Halifax and Hebden Bridge by Annie Kenny, Adela and Emmeline Pankhurst during 1906-07 detailed in J. Liddington's *Rebel Girls: Their fight for the vote*, (London,2006), pp.90-102.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid., 20 June 1908.

<sup>211</sup> Walker, T. 'Alfred Richardson, Chief Constable of Halifax', Unpublished manuscript,(2011), p.5.

<sup>212</sup> *Halifax Courier*, 23 March 1907.

The men appear to have treated the suffragettes with respect, albeit tinged with condescension.

The Halifax force under Chief Constable Richardson became a more organised, smarter body of men. The government inspections continued to be 'highly satisfactory' and according to the *Guardian*, the Halifax police gained a reputation as one of the smartest forces in the country, although the official reports of the inspections merely recorded that the force was 'efficiently maintained'.<sup>213</sup> Never having skimmed on uniforms in the past, the Watch Committee continued to ensure that they were of the best quality, made up in London from Halifax cloth.<sup>214</sup> Not only were they good quality, but they were well made up with a good fit for each man. Superintendent Raw remembered when they had to make them fit themselves.<sup>215</sup> Not all Watch Committees were prepared to spend money on good quality uniforms. Those who were reluctant to listen to petitions for increased wages were also the ones who economised on other items. Manchester was notorious for the poor quality of their uniforms and it was hard for men to have pride in themselves and their force, when economies such as these undermined them.<sup>216</sup> The Halifax police in the early twentieth century gave every evidence of having pride in their force. Their smart uniform and their successes in first aid and swimming competitions gave them a sense of self-esteem that helped mould them into a cohesive body. Whilst not the highest paid force, the Watch Committee was at least prepared to listen to their concerns about pay and conditions. Gestures such as the one days' leave in seven were greatly appreciated and helped the men to feel that they were valued. The increasing numbers of men who were prepared to spend their working lives in the Halifax police gave it a stability that other forces lacked and if the pay

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 16 March 1907 and 9 May 1914. Reports of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the Year ending 29<sup>th</sup> September 1914, xxxii.187, pp.55-6.

<sup>214</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 9 May 1914.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 31 December 1910.

<sup>216</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p.23.

was still at the level for unskilled men, the pensions, leave, sick pay and medical care provided some compensation.

Chief Constable Richardson's approach to policing had many parallels with that of Robert Peacock, Chief Constable of Manchester.<sup>217</sup> Both had started on the beat and understood the difficulties of the job and were sympathetic to the men under their command. Like Peacock, Richardson was keen to foster more sociable interaction between the police and the public. He encouraged the many sporting, social and charitable events that brought the public into contact with the police in a positive way. He participated by giving lectures to outside bodies about police advances, such as fingerprinting, recognising that this sort of interaction gained credibility and support for the force. This contact made the force more approachable and bypassed the Watch Committee, which for so long had been the intermediary between the police and the middle classes. The end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth saw a gradual shift in the authority of the Chief Constable, with the Watch Committee being progressively undermined, not just locally, but also by national initiatives. The Chief Constable was not only responsible for the operational aspects of the police, but also for interceding with the committee about pay, leave, discipline, manpower and promotion. Increasingly, his recommendations were accepted unchallenged, partly because the Watch Committee trusted him, but also because they recognised that in policing matters, with his access to the expertise of his peers he was more qualified than they were. The professionalisation of the force left the Committee localised and side-lined. Legislation such as the Police Act 1890 and the Police Forces (Weekly Rest Day) Act 1910 undermined the Watch Committee's erstwhile right to determine the force's pay and conditions. A chief constable was becoming the acknowledged specialist in police matters and the role of the Watch Committee was being devalued, a trend that continued through the twentieth century.

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

## Conclusion

In many forces, the dawn of the twentieth century was little different to the end of the nineteenth. In most of them, the same attitudes and conditions continued up to the start of the Great War. Owing to the retirement of Chief Constable Pole, Halifax was fortunate to find itself with a young, energetic and forward looking Chief Constable, who was aware of the changing world and that the police were going to have to adapt and change with it. During his long service, almost up to the end of the Second World War, he saw the growth of motor traffic from negligible proportions to problem creating volume. He recognised that the police were going to be the authority which would have to deal with the new problems of traffic control and even before the Great War had begun to devise strategies to deal with them. He kept pace with new developments and was at the forefront of new ideas and technological advances, which would help keep the police abreast of changes. He realised that the police could no longer work in isolation, but needed expert opinions from other fields to professionalise their work. The only aspect of pioneering police work which he did not endorse was the employment of women police constables, considering there was no work suitable for them.<sup>218</sup> Halifax police force had no women officers until after his resignation in 1943.

Under his tenure, the lives of the individual policemen were improved. The conditions at Halifax compare favourably with those described by Klein in the larger forces. Although the pay was not always as high as that elsewhere, the Watch Committee was approachable and reasonable about requests for improvements and used small concessions to make their police force attractive to better quality recruits. Chief Constable Richardson over-hauled the organisation of the police and its deployment and upgraded its equipment. He professionalised the training, bringing in experts in their fields to give tuition and instituted a

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<sup>218</sup> *Halifax Guardian*, 30 June 1951.

system of instruction and monitoring which helped to weed out unsuitable candidates and develop the abilities of those who stayed.

While he was at Halifax, the role of Chief Constable became more important, as the influence of the Watch Committee was gradually undermined by that of the Home Office. Richardson's comparative youth meant that Halifax was quick to adapt and change to the challenges of the new century, unlike some other forces which were led by more conservative, hidebound chiefs.

He was held in high esteem by his peers, being president of the Chief Constables Association in 1918 and in 1935 was awarded the Kings Silver Jubilee Medal. His leadership ensured that the Halifax police entered the twentieth century looking forward to new developments and advances and not clinging to the past.

## Conclusion

This thesis has considered the conditions that gave rise to and shaped the police force in Halifax and looked at how Halifax's experience compared with other small industrial towns in the nineteenth century. The establishment and growth of the Halifax force has been viewed through the context of the tenures of the five chief constables who ran the force from its inception until the start of the Great War. Their influence was essential to the structure and direction of the local police and along with the Watch Committee gave the force its own identity.

The findings in Halifax support Joanne Klein's view that the head of the force went a long way towards determining the type of policing that Halifax was to have, how effective it was and the reaction that it received from various sections of the community.<sup>1</sup> This was the case even in the early years when the Superintendent was under the close supervision and control of the Watch Committee, although the influence of the Chief Constable changed according to local conditions, personality and how long he had been in charge. A borough chief constable did not enjoy the statutory powers of a county chief constable, which gave the latter a degree of independence and meant they could rarely be dismissed. Although a chief constable had often risen from the working class and thus achieved a measure of status in the town, the job was by no means easy or secure. Further promotion was by moving to a larger town, where the post attracted a higher salary, but the stresses that came with the job were too much for some. The chief constable was sometimes applauded, but equally could be the scapegoat when problems arose, especially if there was a threat to the annual government grant. Watch Committees rarely accepted responsibility for their errors of judgement and the blame was usually placed on the chief constable. His job was precarious and he could be dismissed as

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<sup>1</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp.4-7.

easily as the men beneath him, although usually he was permitted or encouraged to resign. The Halifax head constable was as vulnerable to these pressures as any other. Superintendent Pearson resigned after twenty-four years, ostensibly on medical grounds, which enabled the Watch Committee to fob him off with a greatly reduced pension. Inspector Lawton, who became Superintendent at Salford, was forced to resign after that town's grant was threatened with removal by the government inspectors and left policing completely. Chief Constable Clarkson, publicly forced to resign from two separate forces, took his own life, an action which must in part be attributable to the collapse of his career. The loss of such a position, usually accompanied by press coverage, was not only humiliating, but meant the loss of pension and future job opportunities, often when the man was approaching middle age. Superintendent Pearson was fortunate and respected sufficiently by certain sections of the community to be elected a councillor, from which position he was able to torment both his successor and the Watch Committee.

The findings of this thesis also supports Roger Swift's conclusion that police reform cannot be taken out of context.<sup>2</sup> It was local government and local concerns that had most effect on the structure of the force and the unprecedented outcome of Halifax's council elections changed the nature of the policing that the town was to have. Halifax's early police reorganisation was piecemeal, with no appetite for a wholesale sweeping reform of the existing structure of watchmen and parish constables. The Act of Incorporation, obtained owing to civic pride and the wish to retain local control over affairs, made a new police inevitable. Had the structure of the new council reflected the *status quo* before incorporation, with the elite of the town, many who had been Trustees, in the majority, it is doubtful whether changes would have been made to the rank and file of the watch. The Trustees had always defended individuals and were aware of the charge on the rates of unemployed men.

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<sup>2</sup> Swift, 'Urban Policing in Early Victorian England', pp.236-7.

Since there were few complaints about the watch immediately prior to incorporation, it is entirely possible that the old watch would have been re-employed as the new police and changes would have been purely cosmetic, as Jenifer Hart found in her study of borough police.<sup>3</sup> Instead, a newly enfranchised electorate ensured a council composed of lower middle-class radicals, with no obligation to past employees and no wish to spy on working-class politics, but with a desire for effective policing for their own businesses, paid for by the rates. This contrasts with Oldham, where despite strong political radicalism, the Whigs and Tories dominated the town's government and Chartists were more likely to be on the receiving end of police action, than determining its type and direction.<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding the small size of the force, the chief officers deployed the men to protect strike-breakers, arrest those suspected of leading strikes and even raided a trade union meeting, but stopped short of dealing with riots or large incidents of disorder, the authorities preferring to call in military assistance.<sup>5</sup> Storch has written of the bitterness and suspicion felt by the working class, but with such a council, they could not suppose in Halifax that the new police had been placed among them to carry on political surveillance or oppression, thus removing one of the causes of popular antipathy.<sup>6</sup> The hierarchy that had been established during improvements to the watch was retained, whilst the change to borough status provided an excuse to remove the remnants of the old system and establish a younger, fitter body of men. The radical nature of the first council, with its instinctive suspicion of a militaristic police, curbed any desire for a large, over-zealous force and made sure that it was under the close control of the Watch Committee, which in turn was responsible to the council. The council's need for economy battled with civic pride, but the new police force was part of the public face of the new borough and appearance triumphed over parsimony. This was not the case in all boroughs,

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<sup>3</sup> Hart, 'The Reform of the Borough Police', p.420.

<sup>4</sup> Winstanley, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham', pp.26-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>6</sup> Storch, 'The Plague of the Blue Locusts', pp.66-7.

where more often penny-pinching overcame all other considerations. In Oldham, the police force was deliberately kept small due to pressure from the ratepayers, who on occasion refused to pay the rates when the force was considered too costly. This reluctance to fund an effective police continued after incorporation, resisting pressure from the Home Office to expand numbers and only increased manpower to the prescribed levels after 1874, when the newly improved Treasury grant made capitulation economically expedient.<sup>7</sup> Halifax's more balanced approach exemplified the twin virtues of Victorian municipal government; economy and the need for local control of their own affairs.

The Watch Committee exerted most control in the decades after the establishment of the new police, whilst the force was still headed by a superintendent, rather than a chief constable. The Superintendents were treated as trustworthy servants and were subject to close oversight by the Watch Committee. They both had previous police experience in large metropolitan forces and advised the Watch Committee with regard to the organisation and operation of the force. Nonetheless, in the early years the Watch Committee controlled the important aspects of the force, such as recruitment, discipline, pay and promotion. The superintendent reported to the Watch Committee, was directed what aspects of the job he was to concentrate on and 'be most unreserved and confidential in his communication with the chairman'. His opinion was sought on operational matters, but the Watch Committee was not obliged take heed.

Although the Watch Committee dictated the direction of the force, at least in the early years, it was the Superintendent and later the Chief Constable who directed the *modus operandi*. Unlike the county constabularies, which almost always appointed gentry born, ex-army officers to senior positions, Halifax never chose anything other than a career policeman as the head of its force. This fits with Clive Emsley's assertion that the smaller boroughs usually appointed a man that had risen through the ranks, something the bobby on the beat was

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<sup>7</sup> Winstanley, 'Preventive Policing in Oldham', p. 22.

strongly in favour of, since it gave the chief constable unparalleled experience of the job and its frustrations.<sup>8</sup> They understood the operational difficulties and privations of the men and frequently liaised with the Watch Committee on their behalf, furthering improvements as Richardson did over the extra day's leave. It was they who, along with the men, had to find a way to turn the instructions of the Watch Committee into a pragmatic and effective way of policing. This parallels Klein's findings in Manchester, where the chief constables who started in the ranks were more sympathetic to the constables, whilst ex-army officers were preoccupied with discipline and details and averse to reforms requested by the men.<sup>9</sup> It was not until the 1919 Police Act that the recommendation was made that only men with police experience should normally be selected as chief constable, although even then it does not seem to have been immediately observed.

The Chief Constable's attitude set the tone for the force and the way the men interacted with different sections of the community. Both Spiers and Pearson favoured a form of consensual policing where the public, especially the middle class, were educated about the new by-laws with leaflets and then visited to encourage them to comply. Prosecution was a last resort after numerous warnings had failed and even in the late 1860s, crackdowns on cab drivers, shopkeepers and licensees were usually preceded by warnings. Less warning was given to the working class for their infractions, but the emphasis, where possible, was still on defusing problems, particularly when drink was involved. This approach undoubtedly made a constable's job less confrontational and contributed to the wider acceptance of the force. Until 1856 and the establishment of the WRCC, anyone wishing to avoid the attention of the police could leave the Borough for a less policed area. The establishment of the WRCC, which had a division stationed in Halifax, closed this avenue. Storch's examples of antipathy

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<sup>8</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp.6-7.

to the police in the Halifax area arose after the WRCC began a crackdown on pubs and beerhouses and it may be that the working class found themselves squeezed between the two forces, with nowhere left unsupervised.<sup>10</sup> This happened to a greater degree under Clarkson, where joint action was taken against those troublemakers using the borough boundary to evade detection and arrest.

It was undoubtedly Pearson's 'softly-softly' approach which blunted a large part of the rancour that the working class felt towards the police in the early years. Their response was frequently mixed, sometimes hostile, sometimes making use of the police. Storch's social control model has some relevance in Halifax, as it does in other northern industrial towns, although the reaction to the introduction of the new police was not as violent as in Wolverhampton, where the police patrolled carrying cutlasses. Situations were often more complex than Storch recognised, with reactions to the police varying according to circumstance. Some inhabitants, especially in the middle classes, wanted to see the new by-laws strictly enforced, but as Storch observed, the regulations impinged on the freedom of the lower classes to drink, gamble and even gather on the streets. There was undeniably resentment of the new police, especially in the slum areas of the town and amongst certain communities, particularly the Irish. Nevertheless, this dislike co-existed with an appreciation of their value and the working class were happy to call on their services when the need arose. There were attacks on the police, but these died down after the first few years, leaving most assaults as the product of unpremeditated, drunken aggression. This pragmatic approach, possibly as a practical consequence of the experience of policing, minimised the aggression between the police and the working-class, although it could never eradicate it.

The appointment of Chief Constable Clarkson, with a mandate to appease middle-class pressure on the Watch Committee, particularly with regard to drink, brought about a very

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<sup>10</sup> Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary', pp.283-84.

different situation. His approach exemplified Storch's interpretation of a middle-class elite attempting to influence popular culture and his zealous commitment to enforcing the town's by-laws, abandoning tolerance and pursuing a results-driven policy, comparable, led to four years of growing discontent amongst the lower middle class and the working class in the town.<sup>11</sup> Clarkson's personality and style of leadership were fundamental to his widespread influence over an increasingly supine Watch Committee, which allowed him to restructure recruitment and promotion within the force. The resultant loss of experience and the preferment of arrogant, ambitious men led to a force that was overbearing and corrupt, fuelling the antagonism of the working class. Whilst those policed by county forces had no means of influencing the authorities, except by expressing hostility through direct action, inhabitants of the boroughs were not so restricted. The Halifax working class could and did use their collective ability to threaten the Watch Committee at the ballot box. The Committee, although in effective control of the police and its chief constable, was itself vulnerable to intimidation by the borough electorate, who made a direct correlation between the payment of rates and their right to influence how the money was spent.

The tenure of Chief Constable Pole was notable for a return to a more consensual method of policing, necessary because of the need to heal the divisions in the force and the town. The damage done by Clarkson to the reputation of the police, to its relations with the local community and to the internal discipline took years to repair, effectively illustrating Klein's view that the chief constable's role was integral to the character of the individual force.

Whilst there has been extensive research made into the establishment of police forces, relatively little has been done on the second and third generations of policing, as forces consolidated their origins. This study of Halifax illustrates the development of the personnel in the force through training, the establishment of a career path for ambitious constables and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 282-87.

social activities to promote the camaraderie of the men as part of the late nineteenth century move towards professionalisation. The Watch Committee developed a close relationship with Chief Constable Pole and allowed him a considerable degree of autonomy to direct the force as he chose. He improved conditions for the men, established training routines, nurtured and developed talented protégés. In common with many other late nineteenth century forces, recruits were less inclined to treat policing as a temporary stopgap and more likely to view it as a lasting career, with the result being a more disciplined, stable and experienced force. Despite efforts to the contrary, resentment of the police remained, with a public discussion of police brutality in the local paper. New areas of conflict opened with the policing of strikes and later, the arrival of motor vehicles. The mythical ‘golden age’ of policing never seemed to arrive.

Halifax was fortunate in having three chief constables who between them achieved nearly sixty years in office. This continuity was unusual in borough forces and this study illustrates how it laid the groundwork for increased professionalisation. It also encouraged men to stay in the force and make it a career. A long-standing leader meant the men could more accurately assess their promotion chances by studying normal custom, knowing the criteria were unlikely to change much. New recruits learned more from veteran officers than from training, so a long-standing chief constable had a widening effect on the whole force.

While the Watch Committee scrutinised the work of a new chief constable, this supervision inevitably relaxed as time went on and a competent head of the force was given much more scope to manage the police as he saw fit. This meant that the officers and men almost certainly adjusted their working practices to suit the requirements of chief constables over an extended period of time. Not only the chief constable, but also the men would settle into a work routine which, whilst it was ordered, also remained unchallenged, since men joined the force at the lowest rank and were trained up in the habitual practices. Whilst it gave stability,

this could become a self-perpetuating situation where weaknesses were never identified. This situation allowed Superintendent Pearson to introduce practices which protected certain sections of the community and allowed him to control the reports and prosecutions. The appointment of Detective Inspector Lawton, from another force and used to more rigorous procedures, meant that Pearson's methods were challenged for the first time and resulted in his resignation.

The study of successive chief constables allows comparisons to be made between the men and their methods. A change of chief constable led to a tightening up on rules and behaviour by the new head, desirous of instilling his own methods and discipline. It meant that the men had to get used to new methods and new routines, which was inevitably stressful, especially if a lengthy portion of a man's working life had been served with one chief. The changeover to Clarkson dismayed many of the constables, several of whom had been in the force since its inception, since it soon became clear the criteria for promotion had altered. Men who had expected to be in line for advancement found their careers were frozen, whilst newcomers moved rapidly up the career ladder because they adapted to and adopted the new working practices more quickly.

When Chief Constable Pole took over he complained of the lack of discipline in the force, as did Richardson in 1903. A new Chief Constable faced men who were out to test unfamiliar boundaries and see if they could get away with more under a different regime. The men found that things that were tolerated under one chief were unacceptable to his successor.

The stability in the force in the late nineteenth century was due to the long-serving Chief Constables and the increasing professionalisation of the service. The role of Chief Constable was gradually changing from that of being in active operational control to that of administrator and organiser, liaising with the Home Office and other institutional bodies. Pay,

leave and pensions had all improved, as did the training, making policing an attractive alternative for a working-class man. Men could change forces with comparative ease, without losing their pensions. The pattern of recruitment had changed over the century, from the first, parochial force, with its emphasis on local men drawn from the textile industry and other semi-skilled work. This continued until the late 1860s, when improved trade in Halifax meant that police pay compared unfavourably with local wages. This was the beginning of attempts to create a pay structure, divided into classes, where long service was rewarded, an action which was widespread and continued to be refined until the start of the Great War. It was also at this point that the Watch Committee advertised farther afield, aiming to recruit from areas characterised by rural poverty, a trend documented by Carolyn Steedman. Chief Constable Clarkson was pleased to employ men from agricultural backgrounds, similar to his own and a third of the men recruited during his period in office were from outside Yorkshire. This trend continued after Clarkson left, dictated, as Steedman pointed out, by the rural recruits' acceptance of low wages, their physical fitness due to outdoor work, their habitual habits of deference to authority and the Watch Committee's difficulty in finding suitable local recruits. Chief Constables Pole and Richardson both continued to accept recruits from rural areas and they formed a significant part of the force. Knowledge of the local area was no longer seen as essential, since this could be acquired after joining and segregation from the local community was considered a positive factor since it meant that the recruit was more dependent on the camaraderie of the force. More important was the ability to take on board a growing range of skills and deal with a diverse range of duties, only one part of which was the prevention of crime. By the start of the twentieth century, Dogberry had turned into a dogsbody, as further tasks, such as traffic control were added to the responsibilities of the police.

What did change over the nineteenth and early twentieth century, both in Halifax and police forces across the country, was the perception of the job. It was not originally defined as a

career and there are numerous examples in Halifax and elsewhere of the job being used as stopgap employment. However, what perhaps was unusual in Halifax, were the few men who joined at the beginning of the force and stayed to claim a pension. Nine men who joined the force by 1850 remained in long enough to be awarded a pension, either through superannuation or medical grounds. All had done over twenty years' service and only two remained as constables. Whilst Halifax suffered the same high turnover as other forces, their presence underpinned the foundations with experience for the first twenty-five years. Even during Chief Constable Clarkson's tenure, men joined the force who would remain long enough to gain a pension. By the start of the twentieth century, though turnover among probationers was still high, a life in policing had become an attractive enough option for a working man to stay.

This study shows that as the nineteenth century progressed, the influence of the Watch Committee declined. Spiers and Pearson, the first two superintendents, had been closely supervised and directed by the Watch Committee and the focus of policing had reflected the councillors' moral values and concerns. This did not stop Superintendent Pearson from favouring certain elements in the licensing trade, or from manipulating official procedure to ensure the written records presented an advantageous picture. Until the arrival of Inspector Lawton, the rest of the force followed the guidelines that Pearson laid down for everyday policing.

Chief Constable Clarkson, through his zeal and strength of character had more influence over both the Watch Committee and the force. Since his objectives were in line with those of the Watch Committee, they willingly relinquished a large measure of the direction to him, for the first time tacitly accepting that the Chief Constable was the expert on policing. Nonetheless, Councillor Pearson was able, along with others, to act as a check on Clarkson's authority and in addition to a significant section of the ratepayers, make the Chief Constable's position

untenable. The control of the police continued to be a precarious and changing balance between the authority of the Chief Constable, the Watch Committee and the influence of the ratepayers and the Council.

After a new Watch Committee initially took firm control after the departure of Clarkson, it gradually relaxed to relinquish more powers to Chief Constables Pole and Richardson, including discipline, recruitment and promotion. Increasingly, the Watch Committee took the advice of the Chief Constable and rubber-stamped his recommendations, relying on him to keep them up-to-date with the latest innovations, particularly at the start of the twentieth century. Emsley refers to the ‘creeping centralisation’ as government legislation such as the 1890 Police Act gradually imposed pay and pension conditions on the service which undermined the Watch Committee’s independence.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst Chief Constable Pole had led the way towards professionalisation, the arrival of Chief Constable Richardson, young, enthusiastic and full of fresh ideas was what the Halifax force needed to face the challenges of the next half century, when new methods and technologies began to change the way the police worked. His openness to the opportunities meant that Halifax was not stagnant, but ready to try out new ideas, which kept the town to the forefront of national change. The Watch Committee, a reflection of local ratepaying politics and sidelined by growing centralisation, was less dominant than it had been for the last sixty years. The inclusion of the police in the social fabric of the town, via sporting events, competitions, musical concerts and the Chief Constable’s lectures drew them into close contact with the public, by-passed the Watch Committee and boosted the standing of the force and its chief officer. The role of chief constable was changing, no longer ‘only a cypher’, as Steedman categorised him.<sup>13</sup> He was no longer so closely identified with the Watch Committee, but

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<sup>12</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, pp.92-3.

<sup>13</sup> Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, p. 46.

emerging as increasingly independent, partly due to statutory changes which assigned more tasks to the police from central government. His specialised knowledge, his association with his peers and access to technological advances enhanced his standing. By the start of the twentieth century the role of Chief Constable had achieved a measure of autonomy and the occupant of that position was regarded as one of the growing number of acknowledged experts who was an authority on professional policing.

## APPENDIX 1

Election Results, 20 May 1848. I have also noted those subsequently appointed to the Watch Committee.

St. John's Ward: Elected:-

William Thompson, gentleman.	Radical.	
John Holt, corn dealer.	Whig.	Watch Committee.
Joseph Wilson, plumber.	Radical.	
Squire Balme, gentleman.	Chartist.	
Joseph Hanson, innkeeper.	Chartist.	Watch Committee.
Robert Bottomley, corn dealer.	Chartist.	

Trinity Ward : Elected:-

Joseph Thorp, woolstapler.	Whig.	
Robert Brook, woollen draper.	Radical.	Watch Committee.
John Ackroyd, wine merchant.	Radical.	
George Gaukroger, card maker.	Whig.	
Joshua Appleyard, manufacturer.	Whig.	Watch Committee
Thomas Nicholl, woolstapler.	Radical.	

St. Jame's Ward : Elected:-

Samuel Batty, confectioner.	Radical.	Watch Committee
John Ramsden, corn dealer.	Radical.	
William Booth, merchant.	Radical.	Watch Committee.
John Ingham, dyer.	Radical.	Watch Committee.
William Rawnsley, gentleman.	Radical.	Watch Committee.
Samuel Blagborough, linen draper.	Radical.	

Market Ward : Elected:-

John Craven, gentleman.	Whig.	
James W. Gregory, grocer.	Whig.	Watch Committee.
David Binns, linen draper.	Chartist.	
Francis Roper, ironmonger.	Tory.	
Leonard Duncan, woollen draper.	Tory.	Watch Committee.
Isaac Swaine, agent.	Tory.	

North West Ward : Elected:-

Robert Eastburn, stover.	Radical.	Watch Committee.
Daniel Ramsden, farmer.	Radical.	
Ely Bates, merchant.	Radical.	

North Ward : Elected:-

John Crossley, carpet manufacturer.	Radical.	Watch Committee.
Thomas Barraclough, carpet manufacturer.	Radical.	
Samuel Dennis, gentleman.	Radical.	

APPENDIX 2



The growth of the borough of Halifax, 1848-1902.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Size and Growth of the Halifax Police Force, 1848-1914.**

**November 1848.**

1 Superintendent, 1 Inspector, 1 Detective Police Constable, 4 sergeants, 18 constables.  
Total 25.

**September 1849.**

Increase of 4 constables. Total 29.

**September 1852.**

Additional day constable. Total 30.

**March 1857.**

Increase of 6 constables. Total 36.

**August 1862.**

Increase of 1 constable. Total 37.

**August 1865.**

Increase of 15 constables. Total 52.

**June 1866.**

Increase of 2 constables. Total 54.

**December 1870.**

Detective Inspector and Detective Sergeant appointed. Total 56.

**June 1871.**

Force increased to 65 men.

**September 1872.**

1 Chief Constable, 3 Inspectors, 9 sergeants, 54 constables. Total 67.

**May 1876.**

1 Chief Constable, 1 Detective Inspector, 1 Chief Inspector, 1 Inspector, 1 Detective sergeant, 11 sergeants, 55 constables. Total 71.

**November 1876.**

Force increased to 74 men.

**July 1884.**

Additional Inspector appointed. Total 75.

**October 1884.**

Increase of 2 constables. Total 77.

**June 1885.**

1 additional constable. Total 78.

**June 1891.**

Increase of 5 constables. Total 83.

Increase of 4 constables and 1 sergeant. Total 88.

**April 1896.**

Increase of 6 constables and 1 Superintendent. Total 95.

**July 1898.**

Increase of 6 constables. Total 101.

**October 1900.**

Increase of 6 constables. Total 107.

**August 1905.**

Increase of 7 constables. Total 114.

**October 1910.**

Increase of 12 constables. Total 126.

## APPENDIX 4

### Chairman of the Watch Committee, 1848-1914.

November 1848- April 1851.	Alderman Joshua Appleyard.
April 1851- November 1857.	Councillor T. S. Walsh.
November 1857- November 1858.	Councillor Hutchinson.
November 1858- November 1860.	Councillor Brook.
November 1860- November 1868.	Alderman Swale.
November 1868- November 1869.	Councillor Parker.
November 1869- November 1876.	Alderman Swale.
November 1876- November 1877.	Alderman Farrer.
November 1877- November 1881.	Alderman Ramsden.
November 1881- November 1882.	Councillor Kerr.
November 1882- November 1883.	Alderman Ramsden.
November 1883- November 1884.	Alderman Whitley.
November 1884- November 1888.	Alderman Ramsden.
November 1888- November 1889.	Alderman Booth.
November 1889- November 1892.	Alderman Ramsden.
November 1892- November 1895.	Alderman Booth.
November 1895- November 1901.	Alderman Hodgson.
November 1901- November 1911.	Alderman Calvert.
November 1911- post 1914.	Alderman Seed.

Councillor John Pearson: Watch Committee member 1877-1891.

Vice-chairman : 1882-1888 and 1889-1891.

**APPENDIX 5**



Inspector George Crossley

## APPENDIX 6

### The Richardson family



Standing: Major, James (in uniform) Ralph, Harry  
Seated: Frank (Junior) Frank (Father) Alfred

**APPENDIX 7**

3



Alfred Herbert Richardson circa 1910

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