

## *The Development of the Huddersfield Borough Police Force: Continuity and Change*

ON THE 6TH of November 1848 the Improvement Commissioners advertised for 'a number of persons to act as a constabulary force' within the limits of the Huddersfield Improvement Act, and the first men were sworn in in January 1849.<sup>1</sup> The creation of a 'new' police force marked an important stage in the development of policing in the town. The following years were to reveal major problems both in creating a disciplined and effective body of men and in developing a good working relationship with the town's commissioners. Nonetheless, in the last report before incorporation, Lieutenant-Colonel, John Woodford, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for the Northern District, judged the force to be 'an effective and well-selected body'.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will provide a largely statistical analysis of the development of the force that will be the backdrop to a consideration of the working lives of the men who patrolled the town and of the streets in which they operated. As in several other towns and cities, the transition from 'old' to 'new' policing was more gradual than once thought but, in adopting a recruitment policy in late 1848 that gave weight to experience, the new Improvement commissioners eased matters in the short-run while creating problems of inefficiency in the longer-term.

### *Policing Before 1848*

Police reform in Huddersfield was a gradual process spread over several decades, though accelerating in the 1840s and 1850s. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, despite rapid population growth and bitter industrial and political struggles, there were but

modest changes to the traditional institutions of law and order.<sup>3</sup> In 1812, in the wake of Luddite disturbances, the town vestry deemed it 'highly necessary' that 'a standing constable to act as a police officer' be elected. Reflecting contemporaries' beliefs regarding the cause of crime and disturbance, the constable was expected to visit on a regular basis public houses and lodging houses as well as examining hawkers, pedlars and the like for stolen goods. The post was made full-time in 1817 following 'the enormous burglaries and other depredations recently committed'.<sup>4</sup> Policing was further strengthened under the 1820 Huddersfield Improvement Act, which contained provisions for the appointment of 'such Number of able-bodied Men as they [the commissioners] shall judge proper to be employed as Watchmen and as a Patrol'.<sup>5</sup> Their wide-ranging responsibility was

to apprehend and secure in some proper Place or Places of Security ... all Malefactors, Rogues, Vagabonds, idle and disorderly Persons, Disturbers of the Public Peace, Prostitutes and all Persons who shall be found wandering or misbehaving themselves during the Hours of keeping Watch.<sup>6</sup>

The new commissioners adopted a conservative approach when considering the establishment of the night watch, taking the advice of George Whitehead, the parochial assistant constable and manorial deputy constable, before establishing a watch of ten men under the oversight of a superintendent or captain of the watch. In 1822/3 Joseph Berry, who was already manorial deputy constable and probably parochial assistant constable as well, was appointed as captain of the watch. Cooperation with existing institutions continued for over a decade but in the mid-1830s the tripartite arrangement fell apart. Berry's successor, Francis Dalton, came in for criticism, particularly from the Radicals in the township vestry. In 1834 a challenge to his salary led to his resignation, which gave rise to a number of significant changes. In November 1834 the commissioners appointed as captain of watch Abraham Milnes with explicit instructions 'not to engage in any other business.' Although charged with the responsibility of reporting and arresting thieves, Milnes' role was more supervisory, checking nightly on the watchmen, reporting neglect and misconduct, as well as ensuring that the town's gas lamps were kept clean and functioning properly. Not long after, an attempt by the town vestry to establish a day-

patrol was thwarted by the manorial Court Leet. Seizing upon the opportunity, in 1836 the commissioners appointed William Dukes as patrolman and governor of the lock-up in Bull and Mouth Street. Within months two more patrolmen were appointed, thereby unifying control of day and night policing, though this did not immediately translate into coordinated action.

It was in this context that the permissive Rural Police Act of 1839 was considered in the town. There was strong opposition, not least from the radical linen draper and one-time chief constable, William Stocks, to a proposal that was seen to threaten the autonomy of the township. Huddersfield, like many other towns both small and large, was jealous of its powers. There was no desire to relinquish them to a county police force. The town's leading political figures agreed that policing arrangements were adequate, without putting an undue burden on the ratepayer. There was some high-flown rhetoric about the beauty of the British Constitution and the principles of common law going back to Magna Carta, and beyond, but one of the most telling arguments was that the proposed rural police force would be under the 'Influence and Direction of a power over whom the Inhabitants have no influence or control'.<sup>7</sup> The other key consideration was expense: a rural police force, it was argued, would put an unfair burden on local ratepayers.<sup>8</sup>

The situation changed in the mid-1840s. In 1845, for reasons which remain unclear, the commissioners did not re-appoint two of their three patrolmen. John Danson remained, primarily responsible for the lock-up. This provided an opportunity for the town vestry to fill the gap by appointing two paid constables under the provision of the 1842 Parish Constable Act.<sup>9</sup> The Chartist Joshua Hobson had spoken out vehemently against the appointment of paid constables, denouncing them as spies, but other Radicals, notably John Leech and Lawrence Pitkethly, were key figures in persuading the vestry meeting of 13th of February 1845 to appoint two paid constables. This was an attempt by the Radicals to seize the initiative by putting forward their own nominees, William Townend and John Wood. The move was only partially successful. The magistrates refused to ratify both men and a further meeting took place to find two 'proper persons' to act as constables in place of the two men previously nominated. Wood's name was withdrawn but Townend's was put forward again, this time with that of Abraham Sedgwick. They were appointed and after 1846 worked under the purview of

a standing committee and later under the Watch Committee of the Huddersfield Improvement Commission.

Townend and Sedgwick were conscientious and active officers. They were praised by the magistrates for their 'vigilant search' following a highway robbery near Huddersfield and their prosecution of 'the notorious "Bill Weetman" whose house in Castlegate had been used for prostitution. Through their diligence 'such characters as [Weetman] will now have very little rest for the soles of the feet in Huddersfield.'<sup>10</sup> In January 1845, following the arrest of a thief in Huddersfield, the *Bradford Observer* was fully of praise, opining that police in 'the whole West Riding could not match ... the Huddersfield constables.'<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding organizational changes and some successes by the new Huddersfield constables, policing arrangements prior to 1848 had been heavily criticized, particularly in the pages of the *Leeds Mercury*. In September 1846 it highlighted 'the defective state of the Huddersfield police' which it claimed 'has long been a matter of surprise and regret to the inhabitants'.<sup>12</sup> The most sustained criticism came from certain witnesses, giving evidence to the preliminary inquiry on the Huddersfield Improvement bill. Systemic failure, the result of fragmentation and the lack of an over-arching authority was the central argument. The night watch, comprising a dozen men under a captain of watch, was appointed by the Commissioners for Lighting, Watching and Cleansing; a patrolman, largely responsible for the town prison, was also appointed by the Commissioners; additionally, two paid parochial officers, operating during the day, were appointed by the town vestry under the 1842 Parochial Constable Act; and there was an honorary Chief Constable appointed annually by the Court Leet.<sup>13</sup> There were also more specific criticisms. The inefficiency of the poorly-paid night watch, which had not been augmented since the mid-1830s, led to the employment of private watchmen; the effectiveness of the paid constables was severely constrained by 'the caprice of a Town Meeting' and the pernicious influence of beerhouse keepers in 'disorderly parts of the town'; and in the absence of 'united management', not only was there no coordination between night-watchmen and day constables, but worse there were quarrels between them.<sup>14</sup> As a consequence of these shortcomings, it was argued, the level of criminality in the town was much higher than in neighbouring Halifax or Wakefield. Twice as many people from Huddersfield appeared at the assizes in 1847 than from Halifax; a fact which, for contemporaries, could only be explained by the weak

police institutions in the former.<sup>15</sup> Conventional wisdom at the time believed that criminals migrated from well-policed areas to weakly-policed areas. In hindsight, these figures might point to the opposite conclusion, namely that the Huddersfield police were more efficient in capturing criminals than their counterparts in Halifax! However, it was the case for the prosecution that carried the day. There was much force in the arguments – notably the concern with fragmented authority – but it is important to recognize the political purpose to discredit the old order. Milnes, the captain of the night watch, was scarcely given a hearing as he tried to defend the quality of the men under his command.

### *The New Borough Force: Size and Structure*

The 1848 Improvement Act marked a new era in which the town would have a unified and full-time police force, with its own superintendent constable and under the control of the Watch Committee.<sup>16</sup> This was emphasized in the rather rudimentary seven-point conditions of service approved by the Improvement Commission in December, 1848.<sup>17</sup> There would be ‘no conflicting jurisdictions, no rivalry on account of different masters, no keeping back of information for sake of pocketing perquisites’.<sup>18</sup> Rather, ‘the whole force will form but one combination ready to be brought to bear at any one point in time of emergency or danger’.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the commissioners made every effort ‘to select efficient officers and to introduce a system of strict discipline and subordination’.<sup>20</sup> Members of the force were to be aged between twenty-five and forty on recruitment and expected to live within the boundaries of the act, though dispensation not to do so could be sought from the Watch Committee. All men were expected to be available night and day, with the day constables expected to be in ‘complete uniform at all times.’ Further, all men were made aware that they could be suspended from duty or dismissed ‘for unfitness, negligence or misconduct’. This was a clear statement of intent, implicitly rejecting a flawed past and promising an improved future; but the realities of creating an efficient force proved to be considerable.

In practical terms there was less of a break with the past. Advertisements had been placed locally and in ‘several Towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire where there is a good organized Police force’ and a total of just over 200 applications were received.<sup>21</sup> The

commissioners adopted a three-point recruitment strategy. First, men not linked to previous policing in the town were appointed to the three senior posts. Of these only one was a local man. John Cheeseborough, previously the town magistrates' bailiff, was appointed superintendent constable.<sup>22</sup> The inspector of the night constables, John Thomas, came from Ripon recommended by 'the Earl of Ripon and by the mayor and several Aldermen and Town Councillors of Ripon', while the sergeant of the night constables, John Brown, an ex-army man, and a serving officer in the Manchester force was commended by Inspector Mullen of the Manchester Detective force. The major victim of the reorganization was Abraham Milnes, the captain of the old night-watch, still in post for the interim, who was interviewed in person but not appointed to the new force. The second part of the strategy was to identify men of proven ability already serving as law enforcement officers. All members of the night-watch and the two parochial officers were interviewed and six of the old night-watch were appointed as night constables, both paid parochial officers (Townend and Sedgwick) became day constables and the previous patrolman, responsible for the town gaol, John Danson, was also appointed as day constable.<sup>23</sup> The third element of the strategy was to appoint men new to the town to the remaining eight night-constable posts. This pattern of recruitment contrasted with the 'clean sweep' approach adopted in Hull and nearby Halifax but had more in common with two other nearby West Riding forces, Leeds and Sheffield, though in neither of those cities was there the same degree of concern with 'old' policing arrangements as in Huddersfield.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the continuity in personnel, the new force in Huddersfield was not significantly larger than its predecessor.<sup>25</sup> On the eve of the 1848 Improvement Act there were twelve night-watchmen and three day constables; immediately afterwards, there were fifteen night constables, including a sergeant, and overseen by an inspector, and three day constables. However, crucially there was no fragmentation of authority. From 1848 at the head of the police hierarchy stood the superintendent constable; and the town force, in turn, was responsible to the newly-appointed Watch Committee.

One of the main criticisms levelled at the old commissioners was their failure to increase the size of the night watch, notwithstanding the growth of the town. This was not the case after 1848. During the mid-1850s, with legislative change moving haltingly through

parliament, numbers were increased initially to twenty-five and later to thirty-two. This enlargement was not without its critics. At least one commissioner (Mr. J Turner) claimed that police numbers could be reduced because they were 'idle and inefficient'.<sup>26</sup> A more sustained attack was made in the early 1860s by the 'economical' faction. Turner, a long-time critic of expenditure on the police, returned to the fray in the summer of 1861, reiterating his opinion that the town 'could do with fewer police' but this time supported by the influential figure of the chair of the commissioners, William Keighley, who made clear that 'considering the population of the town and the limits of their area' police numbers were 'beyond what was needful' and that there was no case for 'keeping so large a staff in times of peace'.<sup>27</sup> Two months later Keighley returned to the subject, declaring that there was now 'an opportunity for retrenchment'.<sup>28</sup> Information relating to the size and cost of various forces in Yorkshire and Lancashire was presented to the October meeting of the commissioners. Although costs per man were not out of line with other forces, Keighley made much of the fact that Huddersfield was 'at the head of the list both as to the number of policemen and as to the area and population over which they had to exercise duties'.<sup>29</sup> Turner, unsurprisingly, argued that the force could be cut by three or four men, but not all agreed. Commissioner John Sykes received vocal support when he argued that property was better protected and crime lessened by the presence of the force as presently constituted. Natural wastage took the force down to thirty in the summer of 1862 but the following year it stood at thirty-one, at which level it remained until 1867.<sup>30</sup> On the eve of incorporation the strength of the force was back to thirty-two men.<sup>31</sup>

The favourable position of the town and its force is clear from the annual returns made by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. The area policed by the Huddersfield force was relatively small, amounting to twenty-three acres per constable from 1857 onwards, though in the early 1850s the figure was about thirty-five acres. These were the lowest figures in the West Riding and only Halifax and Wakefield had a similar ratio. The annual report for 1862, using the most recent census figures, gave a ratio of population to police in Huddersfield of 738:1, the most favourable in the West Riding.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, this represented a significant improvement on the position in the early 1850s when, with a smaller force, the ratio had been approximately 1250:1. The Huddersfield police/population

ratio was strikingly low. Generally speaking, the larger cities were more heavily policed but Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield all had ratios 20 to 30 per cent higher; while towns more comparable in size, such as Halifax, Wakefield and York had ratios 25 to 35 per cent higher. Thus, members of the Huddersfield police force enjoyed a double advantage: both the *per capita* area and population to be policed were appreciably less than in other West Riding towns and cities.

Table 2.1: Persons per constable & acres per constable: West Riding of Yorkshire, 1862

	PERSONS/CONSTABLE	ACRES/CONSTABLE
<i>Bradford</i>	892	55
<i>Doncaster</i>	1264	145
<i>Halifax</i>	1000	27
<i>Huddersfield</i>	738	23
<i>Leeds</i>	908	84
<i>Pontefract</i>	1068	372
<i>Ripon</i>	3086	723
<i>Sheffield</i>	969	120
<i>Wakefield</i>	927	25
<i>York</i>	1009	68
<i>West Riding</i>	1485	2858

Source: *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863 (20), Reports of Inspectors of Constabulary for Year Ending Sept. 1862

There were a number of distinctive features of the town police. Unlike many towns, Huddersfield had a separate day and night force until 1863 when, following a suggestion by Colonel Woodford, and encouraged by the new superintendent of police, William Hannan, the Watch Committee resolved to abolish the distinction between day and night constables. The decision met with considerable opposition from the four day constables, three of whom had seven years' service to their names and no record of misconduct. They argued that promotion to day constable 'has always been looked upon as a reward for good and meritorious conduct' and, as a consequence, 'a compulsory return is looked upon ... as in some degree a degradation, or at any rate as a punishment for improper conduct.'<sup>33</sup> The dispute reached crisis point in early June when the



four men were suspended and they then handed in their resignations. In early July a compromise was agreed. The men were reinstated and paid for the two weeks' suspension but on condition that they would accept the proposed change. At the subsequent meeting of the commissioners, Keighley talked emolliently of misunderstandings and a desire to act in the best interest of the men, while reaffirming the decision to abolish the distinction between day and night men, but the fact remained that the day constables had been forced to back down.<sup>34</sup> The Watch Committee also had a policy of approving men as supernumerary constables, from whose ranks full-time constables were recruited. Finally, the new commissioners continued a policy, dating back to the 1830s, of appointing additional night constables for the winter months, some of whom became full-time constables.

As the force grew in size and its duties expanded it became clear that a more sophisticated structure was needed. By the mid-1850s it was recognised that a single class for all constables was unsatisfactory and a source of grievance. As a consequence, a three-class structure evolved. In 1856 night constables were divided into two classes, with day constables a separate category.<sup>35</sup> Following the amalgamation of the day and night forces in 1865 there were three classes of constable. On appointment all constables were in the lowest class, where, to all intents and purposes, they served their apprenticeship, learning on the job. Promotion to the second class was almost automatic but further progress was not guaranteed. In contrast, the first class comprised the more able men, often in the early years of the career, but showing promise and a determination to move up the police hierarchy. The first and third classes were relatively unproblematic but the same could not be said of the second class, in which several long-serving men found themselves stranded, their careers (and their pay prospects) stagnating. It is no coincidence that a 6*d* (2½ p) per week increase for good conduct was introduced in 1861 and a merit class (effectively a reward for long service) in 1864. Finally, after a period in the mid-1850s when detective responsibilities were shared by the sergeants in the force, a detective officer was officially designated in 1858 and this area of work was expanded in subsequent years.<sup>36</sup> Thus, over the course of two decades a larger, more complex force came into being.

The minutes of the Improvement Commission carry little information on the ages, places of birth and occupations of the men recruited to the town's police force. No conduct registers have

survived (if they were ever kept) so recourse has to be made to census returns, which provide a good guide to the age structure of the force.<sup>37</sup> The average age of the men who comprised the initial force in 1849 was thirty-five. This reflected the commissioners' policy of retaining men of proven ability. The average age of such experienced men was forty years, though this figure is skewed by the surprising presence of sixty-year-old James Hirst. The 'new' men had a lower average age but the presence of two men in their forties pushed it up to thirty-two. In terms of experience, the commissioners' recruitment policy made sense but, given the physical demands of the job, there was a trade-off between experience and efficiency. By the end of the 1850s it was apparent that some of the older men were less efficient and not always fully fit for all police duties. In contrast to the initial force, the men subsequently appointed tended to be younger, with an average age of twenty-seven years. Two-thirds of recruits in the 1850s and 1860s were in their twenties and the remainder (with one exception) in their low to mid-thirties.

Evidence relating to places of birth and previous occupations is less complete. A large majority of Huddersfield police men were local men. Just over 40 per cent were born in Huddersfield or nearby townships such as Almondbury and Lockwood, and a further 35 per cent in other parts of the West Riding. Contrary to experience elsewhere, there was but one Irish-born policeman in the first generation of new policing in the town.<sup>38</sup> In terms of occupational background the striking feature of the census information is the absence of previous police experience. Predictably many were drawn from the local woollen trade, though there were also tailors, shoemakers, cordwainers and cloggers. A small percentage were general or agricultural labourers. Although recruitment reflected the wider economic structure of the region and the fluctuating fortunes of various trades, there is no evidence to suggest a meaningful link between either long-term or short-term unemployment.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, the decision to become and remain a policeman depended in no small measure on the financial rewards of the job.

### *The New Borough Force: Pay, Perquisites and Promotion*

One of the great financial advantages of police work was its regularity – there were none of the seasonal variations experienced in many trades – but this in itself was not sufficient to attract and retain capable

men. The old (pre-1848) commissioners had been criticised for the low pay of their night-watchmen but the new commissioners were also concerned to keep to a minimum the ‘burden’ on local rate payers. Police pay rates were determined by the Watch Committee. There was no automatic review process and pay increases were commonly granted in response to pressure from the force. Memorials containing the demands of men of all rank were presented to the Watch Committee on an irregular basis throughout the 1850s and 1860s. It was commonplace to seek comparison with pay rates in other forces before coming to a decision; and the continuing presence of an ‘economical’ faction among the commissioners ensured that any pay increases were subject to rigorous scrutiny. The initial wage rates agreed in December 1848 were as follows:

Table 2.2: Huddersfield borough police: rates of pay

RANK	WEEKLY PAY	OTHER BENEFITS
<i>Superintendent</i>	£1-10-0	<i>House at lock-up</i>
<i>Inspector – night</i>	£1-3-0	<i>Great coat &amp; oilskin</i>
<i>Sergeant – night</i>	£1-0-0	<i>Great coat &amp; oilskin</i>
<i>Day constable</i>	18s	<i>Uniform</i>
<i>Night constable</i>	17s	<i>Uniform</i>

Source: Huddersfield Improvement Commission Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 1 December 1848

To put these figures in perspective, in terms of wages, local operatives, according to the *Morning Chronicle*, were ‘very fairly situated’. Slubbers, carders, spinners, dyers, fullers, raisers and finishers ‘may average about 18s (90p) a week’ but the inclusion of male weavers – especially woollen handloom weavers – dragged down the average to 14s (70p) or 15s (75p).<sup>\*</sup> Furthermore, labourers working in the local construction industry earned only 14s (70p) a week and their employment was far from regular.<sup>40</sup> For these more vulnerable members of the local economy policing may well have

\* The present-day equivalent of £1 in 1850, using the retail price index, would be c.£95. However, using average earnings, £1 a week in 1850 would be equivalent to c.£700 a week in the present. For details, including a discussion of the methodological issues involved, see [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com).

been financially attractive but it is less obvious that the wages of a constable were sufficient to attract (or retain) ‘good’ men from an artisanal background. The high rate of turnover lends support to this proposition. Nevertheless, police wage rates remained largely unchanged for almost a decade. The forthcoming creation of the WRCC created a problem for the town force. In August 1856 the commissioners expressed concern that men were leaving to join the better-paid county force and in January 1857 the chief constable of the WRCC, Colonel Cobbe, wrote to the commissioners, commenting on the number of Huddersfield policemen who were applying ‘to better their condition’ in the county force.<sup>41</sup> As a consequence modest increases were approved for all ranks, except sergeant. Despite pressure from the ‘economical’ faction on the commission, further increases were approved in the early and mid-1860s, in part in response to the observation by the inspector of constabulary that low wages were making it difficult to recruit and retain good men. The position is summarised in table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Huddersfield borough police: pay increases 1856 & 1865

RANK	WEEKLY PAY: 1856	RANK	WEEKLY PAY: 1865
<i>Superintendent</i>			
<i>Inspector</i>	£1-3-0 to £1-4-0	<i>Inspector</i>	£1-8-0 to £1-10-0
<i>Sergeant</i>	£1-2-0	<i>Sergeant</i>	£1-4-0 to £1-5-0
<i>Day constable</i>	18s to £1	<i>Detective Constable</i>	£1-5-0 to £1-7-0
<i>1st Class night constable</i>	17s to 19s	<i>Merit Class</i>	£1 to £1-1-0
<i>2nd Class night constable</i>	17s to 18s	<i>1st Class constable</i>	£1 to £1-1-0
		<i>2nd Class constable</i>	19s to £1
		<i>3rd Class constable</i>	18s to 19s

Source: Watch Committee Minutes KMT 18/2/3/14/1, 28 July 1856 and KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 27 November 1865

The average weekly pay for constables in the West Riding in 1857 varied from a low of 18s (90p) to a high of £1-2-0 (£1.10) and in the late-1860s from a low of £1 to a high of £1-3-0 (£1.15). Huddersfield policemen were paid at the lower end of the range in 1857 and at the lowest level in 1865.<sup>42</sup>

Basic police pay was augmented in two ways. The first was an annual discretionary payment, agreed by the Watch Committee

from 'a general fund for meritorious conduct etc.' made up of fees, allowances, rewards and so forth. From 1850 all men received an annual payment that reflected their performance during the past year. The scheme was not without its critics. It was suspended in 1856 and, though reinstated the following year, was criticised by Superintendent Beaumont, who wanted it to be 'done away with altogether'.<sup>43</sup> The commissioners thought otherwise. As William Keighley explained 'the Commissioners did not begrudge them having [it] because they considered that their office was not in many respects an enviable one, and that they were occasionally exposed to danger and personal violence'.<sup>44</sup> Only with the belated introduction of a superannuation scheme in 1864 was the perquisite fund allocation finally abolished.

The criteria for allocation are not set out in the Watch Committee minutes. Initially decisions appear to have been based partly on length of service and partly on the disciplinary performance of the individual. By the late-1850s and early-1860s the number of cases brought before the town's magistrates were considered. There was a clear hierarchical dimension to the awards. In every year for which detailed records survive, the superintendent of police received the largest sum of money, followed by other senior officers. In 1850 the newly-promoted Superintendent Thomas received £2-10-0 (£2.50), substantially more than the £1-10-0 (£1.50) awarded to seven other men.<sup>45</sup> In 1857 Superintendent Beaumont was awarded a gentlemanly four guineas (£4-4-0 or £4.20), five long-serving inspectors and sergeants received £3 while the remaining men were awarded sums varying from 5s (25p) to £1-17-6 (£1.87½). Newly-appointed men received least, a reflection of the fact that they had brought few, if any, cases before the town's magistrates. Although the Watch Committee did not record the reasons for its decisions, it is clear that effectiveness (measured by the number of cases brought) was usually a key consideration. In 1857, for example, Jonathan Sheffield, despite being in the force for just over a year, had brought fifty cases (the third highest total) and was rewarded with a payment of £1-17-6 (£1.85½). Benjamin Marsden, a longer-serving man with a similar record of cases received the same sum, despite having been reported for assaulting drill-sergeant Mellor during the past year. In contrast other long-serving men, but with significantly fewer cases to their names, received only £1-12-6 (£1.62½) while two others with a single disciplinary report against their names received £1-10-0 (£1.50). Recently appointed men were not

totally ignored and even one supernumerary constable received 5s (25p). Only one man received nothing. John Field had been in the force for only six months and had no cases to his name. However, the fact that he was reportedly intending 'to leave immediately on receiving his expected perquisite' scuppered his chances! A similar pattern emerges from the most detailed information which relates to the 1862 distribution. The superintendent (Priday) was awarded three guineas (£3-3-0 or £3-15), the two inspectors (Townend and White) and the detective constable (Partridge) two guineas (£2-2-0 or £2.10) and the three sergeants £2 each. In terms of effectiveness detective Partridge clearly (and unexpectedly) led the field with ninety-one cases but the other men combined their responsibilities as senior officers with an above average number of arrests.<sup>46</sup> Among the ordinary constables, hierarchy continued to play an important role. First-class constables Hutchinson and Irving were deemed worthy of a payment of £1-5-0 (£1.25) whereas second-class constables Eli Nutton and Hugh Moore only of £1-2-6 (£1.10½). Indeed, Moore might well have felt badly treated as his tally of forty cases was exceeded only by that of the force's detective. The most common payment was of £1, which was paid to men with fewer cases to their name, irrespective of length of service. There were some variations. Constables Lee and Sykes had a solid record in terms of cases but appear to have been penalized for having received money from the sick fund during the past year. More baffling is the case of first-class constable William Redfearn who, despite five-and-a-half years in the force and over thirty cases in the previous year, was awarded the same sum as James Gledhill, an original member of the force with only eight cases to his name that year. A small number of men received a mere 10s (50p). Two were supernumerary constables but three ordinary constables were penalized for their disciplinary record – two had been found drunk on duty and the third in the harness room when he should have been working his beat.

The allocation of the perquisite fund has been considered in detail for two reasons.<sup>47</sup> First, it was a supplement to the regular income of the police. For most men in the early 1860s their award was roughly equivalent to a week's wages, though somewhat more in the case of senior men. Put another way, for constables with a good disciplinary record, it was worth approximately an additional 6d (2½p) per week. However, it was a discretionary award, which leads to the second point. The annual allocation was another opportunity for successive

Watch Committees to exercise their control over the town's police force, rewarding the worthy but not those who had transgressed.<sup>48</sup> This in turn reflects upon the management approach of the Watch Committee and the Improvement Commissioners more generally. They saw it as their responsibility to be involved in a hands-on manner in the running of the police. Such micro-management, which contrasts for example with the approach adopted in Leeds and particularly Hull – though not dissimilar to Halifax – was to have significant repercussions regarding working relationships, not least with senior officers of the force.

The second way of augmenting income was via promotion from within the ranks. Until 1863 the most common career progression was from supernumerary constable to night constable and then to day constable. A much smaller number of men were more successful, progressing from day constable to night sergeant to day sergeants and maybe to inspector or superintendent.<sup>49</sup> Overall, meaningful progression through the ranks was restricted to a small minority. Prior to the amalgamation of the day and night force, thirty-three men (including one man re-appointed) were appointed as night constables and served for at least five years.<sup>50</sup> Sixteen (c.50 per cent) made the transition from night to day constable and would have seen their weekly wage increased by 1s (5p). Of these men eight (50 per cent) went on to become sergeants with a further 2s (10p) per week pay increase but only one gained further promotion under the Improvement Commission. In contrast, all three men who were appointed as day constables in 1848/9 became inspectors. While it would be wrong to dismiss the importance of a pay increase of 1s (5p) or 2s (10p) per week, it remains the case that Huddersfield policemen were relatively poorly paid in comparison with fellow officers in Yorkshire, and internal promotion prospects, except for the first generation of men appointed in 1848/9, were limited. A discretionary perquisite scheme that offered the equivalent of just over a week's wages, or 6d (2½p) increase per week), made some difference but was offset by the fact that there was no guaranteed superannuation scheme until 1864.

### *Recruitment, Retention and Discipline*

Despite the modest growth in wages and limited promotion opportunities, the town force grew in size and complexity, stabilizing

around a total of thirty-one men in the 1860s. Closer examination, however, reveals a more diverse and problematic picture. Beneath the headline figure of the overall police establishment there was considerable movement in and out of the town force. In the twenty-year history of policing under the 1848 Improvement Commission almost 200 men were recruited. There was a cluster of problems (experienced in most towns and cities) relating to recruitment and retention and the creation of an efficient body of men.<sup>51</sup> However, as will be discussed in chapter three, the situation was further complicated by the high turnover of senior officers and ongoing tensions between police superintendents and successive watch committees. In this respect Huddersfield was highly unusual.

Recruitment, in quantitative terms, was not as great a problem in Huddersfield as in, for example, Middlesbrough where, in times of economic boom, high-paid local industries reduced the flow of recruits and even attracted men away from the force.<sup>52</sup> A steady number of men presented themselves to the Watch Committee whenever advertisements were placed.<sup>53</sup> In total some 184 men were appointed between late-1848 and late-1868, though actual recruitment levels fluctuated from year to year: eighteen in 1849, fourteen in 1854 and thirteen in 1865.<sup>54</sup> In qualitative terms, matters were less positive. Retention of newly appointed recruits was a problem in all new police forces. In Huddersfield, taking the period as a whole, 56 per cent of recruits left within their first year and a further 28 per cent served between one and four years. Only 15 per cent served for more than five years. Unusually, the percentage of recruits serving less than one year was noticeably higher in the second half of the period (that is after the passing of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act) than the first.<sup>55</sup> Even allowing for the distorting effect of a higher number of incomplete careers among the second cohort, the fact remains: only a small minority of men made a career of policing, even though their impact was out of proportion to their number. Inexperience and limited experience were striking features of the first generation of 'new police' in the town.

In comparison with other towns, Huddersfield's retention record was poor. The contrast with Halifax is striking. Of its original force, only 20 per cent left within the first year while 40 per cent served for five years or more and 25 per cent for over twenty years. However, looking more generally at the period 1851-72, 43 per cent of Halifax policemen served less than one year and only 17 per



cent serving more than five years. These figures are not significantly different from those for the atypical town of Middlesbrough, where the percentage of recruits leaving within their first year dropped from 50 per cent to just over 40 per cent from the mid-1850s to the late-1860s while approximately 20 percent served for more than 5 years in the 1860s.<sup>56</sup> The Huddersfield experience (which excludes men in post at incorporation) is summarised in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Huddersfield borough police length of completed career service, 1848–68

RECRUITMENT PERIOD	1848–68 NOS.	1848–68 %	1848–56 NOS.	1848–56 %	1857–68 NOS.	1857–68 %
<i>Length of service</i>						
<i>Less than 1 year</i>	83	56	43	52	40	62
<i>1 year or more but less than 5</i>	42	28	20	24	22	34
<i>5 years or more but less than 10</i>	17	11	14	17	3	5
<i>10 years and above</i>	6	4	6	7	0	0
<i>Total</i>	148		83		65	

Source: Huddersfield Improvement Commission Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1 & 2; Watch Committee Minutes 18/ 2/3/13/1; 18/ 2/3/14/1 & 2

The scale of the challenge becomes even more apparent when the service figures are examined in greater detail. Table 2.5 summarizes the career outcomes for the men who joined the town's police force. Significant numbers either left voluntarily (resigned) or were dismissed. Only a very small number served through to retirement or died while in employment, a reflection, in no small measure, of the belated introduction of a superannuation scheme. The figure for those retiring is slightly misleading as a small number of men (probably no more than four or five in total) were required to resign and then given some form of allowance.

At least of 28 per cent of Huddersfield police recruits resigned and a staggering 46 per cent were dismissed.<sup>57</sup> In comparison, in Halifax between 1851 and 1872 just over a third of recruits were dismissed, in Hull between 1836 and 1866 almost a quarter of recruits were dismissed, while in Sheffield, between 1845 and 1879, the figure was less than 10 per cent. In Leeds in the 1850s the wastage rate averaged 33 per cent (18.5 per cent resignations and 14.5 percent

Table 2.5: Huddersfield borough police force: completed career outcomes, 1848–68

RECRUITMENT PERIOD	1848–68	1848–68	1848–56	1848–56	1857–68	1857–68
2.5 (i): ALL	CAREERS	INCLUDING	UNKNOWN	OUTCOME		
<i>Career outcome</i>	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Resigned</i>	42	28	23	28	19	29
<i>Dismissed</i>	68	46	35	42	33	51
<i>Retired or died</i>	3	2	2	2	1	1
<i>Not known</i>	35	24	23	28	12	18
<i>Total</i>	148		83		65	
2.5 (ii):	KNOWN	CAREER	OUTCOMES	ONLY		
<i>Resigned</i>	42	37	23	38	19	36
<i>Dismissed</i>	68	60	35	58	33	62
<i>Retired or died</i>	4	4	2	3	1	2
<i>Total</i>	114		60		54	

Source: See Table 2.4

dismissals) and falling to 29 per cent (16 per cent resignations and 13 per cent dismissals) in the following decade. Even in the more volatile Middlesbrough force the dismissal rate stood at 36 per cent, significantly lower than the Huddersfield figure.

There was an even greater degree of ‘churning’ taking place on an annual basis. High levels of dismissals and resignations were disruptive at least, demoralizing at worst. In 1849, the worst year for the Huddersfield force, eight men were dismissed and a further three resigned out of a force of eighteen men. The situation eased in the early 1850s but, in the years 1857–59, twenty-one men resigned or were dismissed. This was, in part at least, a reflection of the enlargement of the force to meet governmental expectations as enshrined in the 1856 County and Borough Police Act and the loss of some men to the better-paid West Riding County Constabulary, but the situation was exacerbated by the appointment of an acerbic and controversial new police superintendent, George Beaumont. Similar short-term upheavals, usually associated with significant expansion,

were experienced elsewhere. In Hull in 1836, the first year of the new force, the wastage rate was almost 20 per cent and exceeded 30 per cent in 1857 as the force was expanded following the 1856 County and Borough Police Act. In the Leeds force two periods of rapid expansion in numbers, 1838–9 and 1859–60, saw turnover rates of 46 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. However, there is not a simple explanation for such variations. Some watch committees took a firm disciplinary line, others not. A sacking offence in one force would be dealt with by a reprimand or fine in another. Some watch committees adopted rigorous selection procedures, others not; some were more judicious in their appointments than others. Other factors played a part. The quality of leadership, training and support similarly varied from force to force as did the quality of the recruits. At present insufficient is known about the experiences and practices of individual forces to offer anything but the broadest conclusions. The approaches adopted in Huddersfield will be explored later in this chapter but, whatever the precise causes of such high turnover rates, the upshot was that local watch committees and police chiefs faced considerable difficulties in creating effective forces.

Table 2.6: Huddersfield borough police: resignations and dismissals, 1848–68

LENGTH OF SERVICE	LESS THAN 1 YEAR	%	1 YEAR BUT LESS THAN 2	%	2 YEARS BUT LESS THAN 5	%	5 YEARS OR MORE	%	TOTAL
<i>Recruitment period</i>									
<i>1848–68</i>									
<i>Resignation</i>	22	52	3	7	5	12	12	29	42
<i>Dismissal</i>	40	58	15	22	4	6	10	14	69
<i>1848–56</i>									
<i>Resignation</i>	12	52	2	9	1	4	8	35	23
<i>Dismissal</i>	20	56	6	17	1	3	9	39	36
<i>1857–68</i>									
<i>Resignation</i>	10	53	1	5	4	21	4	21	19
<i>Dismissal</i>	20	61	9	27	3	9	1	3	33

Source: See Table 2.4

The figures for resignations and dismissals need to be broken down according to length of service. This is done in table 2.6. As in Halifax, Hull, Leeds, Middlesbrough and Sheffield, those unsuited to policing soon found their shortcomings exposed. 58 per cent of all dismissals in Huddersfield took place in the first twelve months (often within the first few weeks, even days) and a further 22 per cent in the following year. Long-serving men were far less likely to be dismissed. Similarly, half of those who found the demands of policing too onerous (or the pay too little) resigned from the force within a year. Of those who remained, many made a career of policing, serving for ten years or more, but a significant minority resigned after five or more years' service. From the outset, senior police figures and members of the Watch Committee were well aware of the problems of retention in the early months but only later realised that there was a different retention problem among men who appeared to have adapted to the demands of police work.

Table 2.7: Huddersfield borough police: disciplinary record, 1848-1868

NO. RECORDED OFFENCES	0	%	1	%	2-4	%	5 OR MORE	%
<i>All recruits</i>	65	35	56	30	45	29	8	5
<i>Dismissed</i>	0	0	32	44	34	47	4	6
<i>Resigned</i>	20	49	8	20	13	32	0	0

Source: See Table 2.4

Finally, resignations and dismissals need to be set into a broader context of discipline. Table 2.7 summarizes this position. Discipline was a problem for the majority of recruits. Incidents of neglect of duty, drunkenness on duty, absence without leave, frequenting beer houses and brothels, insubordination and even assaults on fellow officers are scattered through the Watch Committee minutes. Little more than one-third of the men recruited in the town force had an unblemished career record. A further 30 per cent had one disciplinary offences against their names but the remainder were multiple offenders, in one case accumulating a total of nine offences. Those men who were dismissed unsurprisingly had committed an above average number of offences. In contrast almost half of the men who resigned had no record of misconduct, though a

minority (a third of this sub-group) were multiple offenders. Acts of indiscipline were very much the prerogative of men in the early months or years as policemen. Almost 50 per cent of offences were committed by men who had served less than a year but length of service was not a guarantor of good discipline. A quarter of all recorded acts of indiscipline were committed by men who were established members of the force. In the majority of cases acts of indiscipline were penultimate steps in a career that was about to end in resignation or dismissal. However, it is important to note that a poor disciplinary record was not necessarily a barrier to a successful police career. William Townend, for example, had a poor record in his early years but became a stalwart of the force, twice serving as temporary superintendent of police and serving for some forty years while Nathaniel Partridge became a successful detective, albeit one who fell foul of the authorities.

Leaving aside the small number of men who retired on grounds of ill-health and an equally small number who retired for personal reasons (such as caring for a sick relative), resignation was essentially an individual's negative judgment on the force. Over half the men who resigned did so within their first twelve months, some after little more than a few weeks, even days. This pattern remained constant throughout the period. However, there was a second, though smaller upsurge of resignations among men who had served for more than five years and who, on the surface at least, appeared to have made the transition to career policemen. Overall almost 30 per cent of resignations fell into this category but there appears to be a significant difference between early recruits (in the years 1848–56), for whom the figure is 35 per cent, and later recruits (in the years 1857–68), for whom the figure is 21 per cent. With a larger number of incomplete careers among the latter group, this figure is almost certainly an underestimate but it might suggest a greater awareness of the demands of policing among later recruits. Unfortunately, the reasons that drove men to resign have rarely been recorded. Clearly the demands of the job were considerable. Strict discipline, long hours on the beat, especially at night, the physical risks associated with the job – from flat feet and rheumatism to injuries inflicted by runaway horses or irate members of the public – made it a more demanding occupation than many local jobs. Policing undoubtedly held out the prospect of regular pay but, as the recurring demands for higher wages bear witness, many policemen felt that the material

rewards were not sufficient to offset the trials of the job. Such problems pressed most heavily in the early days and months of transition from civilian life, but never entirely disappeared. A man who had served five years but found promotion beyond his reach faced a future in which the disadvantages grew as the advantages faded. Some (albeit a very small number) resigned for more positive reasons – three or four to set up businesses – but these were very much the exceptions.<sup>58</sup> Those who resigned were, for the most part, expressing a negative judgment about their experience of policing. Some jumped before they were pushed and a small number were instructed to resign.<sup>59</sup>

The decision to dismiss was made by the Watch Committee, usually on the advice of the police superintendent. The pattern of dismissals is similar to that of resignations. Overall, 58 per cent of dismissals took place in the first twelve months but with a further 22 per cent within the next year. As with resignations, there was a second, later upsurge with 14 per cent of dismissals among men who had served more than five years. More so than with resignations, there was a contrast between recruits in the years 1848–56 and those in the years 1857–68. Dismissals in the first two years of service rose from 73 per cent in the first period to 88 in the second. However, whereas a significant percentage of dismissals for the first period were among men with over five years' service, there were few in this category for the second period, though this figure is distorted by the large number of incomplete careers among this second group of men. Nonetheless, this evidence suggests that the commissioners were struggling to find suitable new recruits, especially in the 1860s.

The reasons for dismissal – for both newly appointed men and those with a longer period of service – are more fully recorded and are utterly predictable: neglect of duty, drunkenness, insubordination and, to a much lesser extent, immoral or criminal behaviour. 43 per cent of dismissals (for which reasons are recorded) were for drunkenness on duty and another 43 per cent for various forms of neglect of duty (including being asleep on duty or otherwise absent) while the remainder were evenly divided between insubordination and immorality, the latter most commonly being found in a brothel.<sup>60</sup>

Drink was the undoing of many constables. James Watkins had already been reported for loitering on his beat when he went absent for half an hour. When found by the night inspector and sergeant he was drunk and 'his coat was all over mud, as if he had

been laid in the street'.<sup>61</sup> Alfred Crowther, George Woodhead and Henry Newsome were all found 'drunk on their respective beats and utterly unfit for duty'.<sup>62</sup> Newsome might have saved his career had he not lied to the Watch Committee. For Crowther and Woodhead, it was a second offence. All three were dismissed. Even worse was William Hollingrake, found drunk on duty, his behaviour 'so outrageous that he had to be confined in the Lock-up cell all night'.<sup>63</sup> More mundanely, Allen Wood, another night constable, was found 'asleep in his bed and the worse for liquor' when he should have been on duty.<sup>64</sup> Thomas Schofield was also dismissed 'for absenting himself from duty without leave on three occasions and for drinking in a notorious Beerhouse in Castle Gate'.<sup>65</sup> This was a long-standing problem that dated back to the earliest days of the force. Following the dismissal of night-constable Butler, found drinking in the *Crescent Hotel* in the High Street at 3 a.m., while on duty, the Watch Committee lamented 'the practice adopted by some publicans of giving the police drink to prevent them reporting their houses'.<sup>66</sup> A similar complaint was aired in 1864 as the Watch Committee noted ruefully that '[s]everal Licensed Victuallers in the town have been in the habit of entertaining Police Constables or suffering them to linger in their Houses and have liquor during the time of their being on duty'.<sup>67</sup> However, not all incidents of neglect of duty were associated with drunkenness. Henry Sedgwick lost his position having been found simply asleep in an omnibus, as did John Drury who was similarly discovered 'asleep in a yard in Cross Church Street'.<sup>68</sup>

Given the hierarchical nature of the police force, challenges to the authority of senior officers were treated severely. Incidences of neglect of duty which might have led to a reprimand resulted in dismissal when compounded by insubordination. For example, John Lee was charged with neglect of duty and being under the influence of liquor but responded angrily, throwing his lamp into the road when spoken to by the night inspector and showing at the Watch House a 'spirit of insubordination' which resulted in his dismissal.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Charles Cliffe was not only guilty of drinking in a public house while on duty but sealed his dismissal by 'shewing a spirit of insubordination'.<sup>70</sup>

A small number of men lost their position for behaviour that was immoral or criminal, even though no formal legal action was taken. Some combined more routine offences of drunkenness and neglect

with immoral behaviour. Few men could equal the disciplinary record of John Brown, the highly recommended sergeant from Manchester. In a single week in 1849 he managed to be absent from duty, to be found asleep on duty, to abandon his beat because of drunkenness (and requiring PC Megson to 'show him the way home', thereby abandoning his beat) and finally to be found in a brothel. A further complaint that Brown demanded alcohol and women seems almost superfluous in the circumstances.<sup>71</sup> In fact, Reuben Megson was almost as bad. Having been drunk on duty and absent from his beat on a number of occasions, he brought his brief police career to an end when 'he and two others of the Night Constabulary ... left their beats to accompany two Prostitutes to a Brothel at Marsh Cliffe'.<sup>72</sup> Others were clearly criminal, even though no formal charges were made. Thomas Jansen and Joseph Baxter are a case in point. Jansen found a gold bracelet which he sold to Baxter. Baxter, for his part, not only bought the bracelet, knowing how it had been obtained, but then took a 10s (50p) reward, which he shared with Jansen, and lied about how it came into its possession.<sup>73</sup>

### *The Watch Committee and Police Discipline*

High rates of turnover, very short lengths of service and an ongoing disciplinary problem were the distinctive features of the Huddersfield 'new' police. Why this should be so – and why Huddersfield should compare unfavourably with towns such as Halifax and Middlesbrough – is not easy to explain. It is unlikely that the quality of recruits was significantly different than elsewhere in Yorkshire and the comments of the inspector of police in his annual reports do not indicate that he was aware of a particular problem in the town, though some local commentators complained that the men who joined did not view policing as a career but 'imagined they could suit themselves and leave the force when they pleased'.<sup>74</sup> The broader problem was poor management. The *Chronicle* captured a recurring public mood when it expressed its concerns with 'the continual reports of drunkenness against the privates in the night force' and concluded that 'there must either very little care exercised in the choosing of men to fill the office; or that the force must be in a very defective state of supervision'.<sup>75</sup>

Successive Watch Committees clearly played an active role in recruitment and discipline. Applications were considered, though



only one man was not appointed – and that following a poor reference from Leeds city police – and each case reported by the superintendent of police was considered individually. The range of punishments handed out suggests the Watch Committee tried to respond sensitively, evaluating the strength of the charge brought against the constable, distinguishing between different levels of seriousness of offences and assessing the potential of the individual officer, rather than impose a blanket policy. Ill-disciplined constables were variously admonished, cautioned, reprimanded and severely reprimanded as well as being fined, demoted, suspended and dismissed. On some occasions the Watch Committee accepted a constable's explanation and threw out the charge. Night constables Heywood, Gledhill, Beevers (S), Marsden and Wilson, for example, were all found in the *Horse Shoe Inn* in June 1850. The Watch Committee, however, accepted their explanation that they, 'wet and exhausted' after attending a fire in Hillbank Lane had 'repaired to the Public House ... to procure refreshment which had been taken in only moderate quantity'.<sup>76</sup> More often they found in favour of the senior officers who brought the charges. In many cases, the Watch Committee did not adopt a hard-line policy but gave men a second opportunity, particularly if they saw evidence of potential. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the commissioners did not automatically accept the recommendations for dismissal from their Watch Committee.

Judgement on the success of the Watch Committee's policy is complicated by the incompleteness of the record, but an analysis of 100 disciplinary cases, for which full information is available, yields the following figures. In 35 per cent of the cases dismissal was for a first offence. No leniency was shown, for example, to Paul Bray for his (unspecified) 'gross neglect of duty' in 1856, or for Allen Wood, found drunk and asleep in 1849 and certainly not for Clayton Connard, found ratting in a local beerhouse and stripped to the waist challenging all and sundry to fight in 1866. Even long-serving men like Edward Morton (found drunk in the *Ramsden Arms*) and Joseph Haigh, who allowed 'improper characters' to meet in his house, were not given a second chance. However, for every man dismissed for his first disciplinary offence, two were given a second chance, or more. Of this group, comprising sixty-five men, almost exactly 50 per cent (thirty-two men) were subsequently dismissed and a further 20 per cent (thirteen men) subsequently resigned, most commonly in the

immediate aftermath of disciplinary action. The remaining 30 per cent (twenty men) went on to complete a successful career in the town's police force. These figures reveal that the approach, which does not appear to have varied significantly over the period was, more often than not, unsuccessful.

Looking at the men who were subsequently dismissed, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that judgments were faulty and optimism misplaced. In February 1849 Inspector Sedgwick and Sergeant Townend reported James Watkins for being drunk on duty for a second time and also for being absent from his beat on a number of occasions. The Watch Committee decided to reprimand rather than dismiss Watkins as they believed he was 'in every way likely to make a good officer if he could be induced to refrain from drink'.<sup>77</sup> The following month he was found 'loitering on his beat' in a state of inebriation. This time he was dismissed. Similarly, Alfred Crowther was charged with being 'the worse for liquor', barely a month after he had been reprimanded for having been found drunk, asleep in a stable, while on duty. Deemed to be 'otherwise an efficient officer' he was merely admonished but in July of the same year he was once again charged with being 'the worse for liquor and unfit for duty' but he pleaded with the Watch Committee for a further chance, claiming that he had renounced alcohol. In addition, there was 'testimony to his general intelligence, activity and subordination'. Duly reprimanded, he was allowed to continue in the force but his conversion to teetotalism was a failure and in December 1849, having been found drunk on duty once again, he was finally dismissed.<sup>78</sup> The commissioners persisted with their lenient approach, notably in the case of Hamor Sedgwick. Appointed a night constable in February 1853 he was promoted to day constable in May 1854. In 1856 he was a first-class night constable but in November of that year he was reprimanded for being absent from duty and given a final warning. In February 1859 he was reprimanded again for being 'slightly under the influence of alcohol' and in October 1860 he was severely reprimanded for being absent without leave. No reason is recorded for his continued presence in the force. In December 1861 his good fortune seemed to have run out as the Watch Committee recommended that he be dismissed for being (once again) absent without leave. Sedgwick successfully appealed to the commissioners, pointing out in a memorial both his record as a good policeman and the 'effect of starving my children

who are innocent' that would follow from his dismissal. Sedgwick was suspended for two weeks.<sup>79</sup> In 1862 he was finally dismissed, having been, yet again, absent from his beat. But not all cases were as extreme as this. Benjamin Marsden, for example, appointed in 1849, worked his way up to the rank of sergeant and, on a number of occasions, displayed considerable courage in dealing with violent individuals, but he had a drink problem. In June 1852 he was reprimanded for it; in October 1854 he received a severe reprimand and, finally, in August 1858 the Watch Committee decided to dismiss him for being drunk and neglecting his duty.

However, in a significant minority of cases the decision of the Watch Committee (or the commissioners) was vindicated. Nowhere was this clearer than in the case of William Townend. Townend, the one-time parochial constable, became a senior and much-venerated figure both before and after incorporation and yet his early police career was far from unblemished. He was twice severely reprimanded in October 1851 for being drunk in the street and for insubordination after a drunken fight in the police office. In July 1852 the Watch Committee recommended his dismissal for being drunk and absent from duty. For reasons that were never recorded, the commissioners decided merely to suspend him for one month. Nor was that the end of the matter. In January 1856 he was severely reprimanded for attending a masquerade ball when he should have been on duty. Fortunately, for both the individual and the force as a whole, Townend was extremely fortunate to survive but went on to give sterling service. Nor was he alone. Hugh Moore and Ramsden White were a further two men who justified the faith held in them (see chapter four).

### ***Conclusion***

After the 1856 County & Borough Police Act, the continuing approval of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary was undoubtedly important, not least because of its financial implications. Woodford declared himself satisfied with the 'smart, active ... and thoroughly effective' men he inspected but he was aware of the day-to-day realities of the Huddersfield police force that were not captured in the once-a-year annual inspection. However, it would be wrong to dismiss totally Woodford's comments as superficial or wholly inaccurate. They contained an important germ of truth. A core of

experienced men came into being over the course of the 1850s and 1860s that provided stability to the force and offset the problem of drunken constables and sexually-incontinent senior officers. A snapshot from 1860 makes the point.

Table 2.8: Huddersfield borough police: length of service, 1860

LENGTH OF SERVICE	10 YEARS OR MORE	5 TO 9 YEARS	1 TO 4 YEARS	LESS THAN 1 YEAR
<i>Rank</i>				
<i>Inspector</i>	2			
<i>Sergeant</i>	2		1	
<i>1st Class PC</i>			3	
<i>2nd Class PC</i>	2		1	
<i>3rd Class PC</i>	3	3	7	7
<i>Total</i>	9	3	12	7
<i>As % of total force</i>	29	10	39	22

Source: Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/1, 23 January 1860

Furthermore, the development of policing was ongoing. The force became larger, more complex and better organised over time, particularly under the guidance of the experienced William Hannan. The process continued under the final superintendent appointed by the Improvement Commissioners, James Withers. Given 'the full charge and superintendence of the whole Police Force' and being 'responsible for the general conduct and management thereof', he informed the Watch Committee that he wished to bring Huddersfield more in line with 'the Metropolitan System'.<sup>80</sup> Withers was tactful enough to recognize that improvements had been made but his comments were an implied criticism not only of his predecessors but also of previous Watch Committees for not improving the quality of the force. The details of Withers' plan of reform is summarized below.

Table 2.9: Huddersfield borough police: Supt. Withers' reorganisation, 1868

HOW EMPLOYED	HEAD CONSTABLE	INSPECTOR	DETECTIVE INSPECTOR	SUB-INSPECTOR	SERGEANTS	ACTING SERGEANTS	PCS	TOTAL
<i>Day Duty</i>		1				1	4	6
<i>Night Duty</i>					2	1	15	18
<i>Office Duty</i>					1		2	3
<i>Specially Employed</i>	1		1				1	3
<i>Total</i>	1	1	1		3	2	22	30

Source: Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 30 December 1867 Reorganisation, 1868

During the daytime, the first relief of two men, always wearing white gloves but not permitted to carry sticks, patrolled the town from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and again from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. while the second relief (also of two similarly attired men) were on duty from 9 a.m., to 2 p.m. and again from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thus day duty was arranged so that there were four constables, an acting sergeant and an inspector on duty between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. 'when the operatives are returning from their work and moving about'.<sup>81</sup> During the night two sections patrolled the town from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., thereby ensuring that 'the town is never left without Constables'. Inspectors and sergeants were clearly instructed to 'visit the men on their beats at their usual points and also at uncertain times at different places on their beats' and to ensure that full records of such visits were kept. Finally, arrangements were made to improve the running of the police office and cells. The range and scale of these improvements provides an eloquent commentary on what had *not* been achieved under the 1848 Improvement Commission. Nonetheless, this was the 'effective and well selected body of men' from which the enlarged borough force would be developed after 1868, but there was clearly scope for improvement. At the annual borough police dinner, held at the *Ramsden Arms* in May 1868, Joel Denham, chair of the Watch Committee, spoke of the harmony and good feeling which prevailed between the commissioners and the force but stressed that commissioners were determined to continue 'to raise the standard of discipline and the efficiency of the [men of

the] force' as well as 'to elevate them socially'.<sup>82</sup> The rough diamonds still required further polishing.

### Endnotes

- 1 The 1848 Act retain the geographical limits laid down in the 1820 Improvement Act, namely an area which extended "Twelve hundred Yards each Way from the Spot where the old Cross stood in the Centre of the Market Place in *Huddersfield*". This meant that certain areas, which were commonly thought of as being part of Huddersfield and which were so included for census purposes actually fell outside the act. In the late 1840s, when it was estimated that the population of Huddersfield was in the region of 25,000 people, only 20,000 fell under the 1848 Act.
- 2 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Year Ending Sept. 1868, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1868–9 (22), p.104.
- 3 This section draws heavily upon D Griffiths, *Pioneers or Partisans? Governing Huddersfield 1820–48*, Huddersfield, 2008.
- 4 Quoted in Griffiths, *Pioneers or Partisans*, p.21.
- 5 *An Act for lighting, watching, and cleansing the Town of Huddersfield*, 1 George IV, cap. xlviii, §xviii.
- 6 *Ibid*, §xix.
- 7 *Halifax Guardian*, 10 Sept. 1840.
- 8 Even more striking was the hostility in Sheffield to the proposed creation of a county force. The *Sheffield Independent* (hereafter *Sheff.I*), waxed eloquently against the 'indignity' of Sheffield being put on a par with 'petty places' such as 'Penistone, Holmfirth and Delph' (12 December 1840) and the 'despotic' threat to 'free local government' posed by the proposed police force (17 October 1841). Within little more than two years Sheffield became an incorporated borough. Paradoxically cost considerations played an important part in derailing the incorporation movement in Huddersfield at this time.
- 9 The 1842 Parish Constable Act has been largely overlooked by police historians but was to be an important piece of legislation in the West Riding as is detailed in Part 2 especially chapter seven.
- 10 *Leeds Mercury*, [hereafter *LM*], 20 September 1845. See also 9 & 16 August 1845, 14 November 1846.
- 11 *B. Obs*, 13 January 1848. See *LM* 9 March, 20 September & 13 December 1845; 21 March, 15 August & 14 November 1846; and 22 May & 30 October 1848 for examples of Townend and Sedgwick successfully apprehending both major and petty criminals.
- 12 *LM*, 1 May 1841 and 12 September 1846. Earlier in the year the paper referred to 'a great deal of drunkenness and profligacy' among the Huddersfield watchmen. *LM*, 13 June 1846. See also *LM* 1 January 1848 on the use of private constable to supplement the town's night watch.
- 13 For further details of policing arrangements before the 1848 Improvement Act, see Griffiths, *Pioneers or Partisans?* esp. pp.22–26.

- 14 *Minutes of Proceedings on a Preliminary Inquiry on the Huddersfield Improvement Bill*, held February 1848 but published 1851, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees, KMT 18/2/1/1, esp. pp.17-19. See also QQ, 39, 613-4, 739, & 747. Parochial constable William Townend commented on the threats made to him at the annual vestry meeting (Q.1348) and bemoaned the absence of 'a properly regulated police force' (Q.1342).
- 15 See for example, Townend's evidence given to the Preliminary Enquiry on the Huddersfield Improvement Bill in February 1848, KMT, 18/2/1/1, p.10.
- 16 The geographical coverage of the 1848 Improvement Act remained the same as under the 1820 Act. However, the township had grown considerably and important districts, such as Lindley, Marsh and Paddock fell outside the act. Responsibility for policing these areas fell to the West Riding County Constabulary and its predecessors. See Part 2.
- 17 Huddersfield Improvement Commission [hereafter HIC] Minutes, KMT18/2/2/1, p.86.
- 18 *Ibid*, p.62.
- 19 *Ibid*.
- 20 *LM*, 25 August 1849.
- 21 HIC Minutes, KMT18/2/2/1, p.84-5.
- 22 Little is known of Cheeseborough's background but his period of office was brief and terminated by an incapacitating illness. As magistrates' bailiff he helped prove the case against John Sutcliffe, who was charged with permitting dicing in his beer house. *LM*, 15 July 1848
- 23 Danson was an experienced man, having been appointed in 1837, but his appointment owed something to sentiment. He had been seriously injured in 1840 in an incident which saw the brutal murder of head constable Dukes. The injuries there sustained and a subsequent decline in his health reduced his physical efficiency and the new Commissioners paid him less than the other two day constables in 1848. Danson resigned because of ill-health in March 1849. HIC Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, pp.88-9.
- 24 In Hull, such was the dissatisfaction with the old police that the new force established in 1836 contained no men with previous experience of policing the city. D R Walsh, *The Reform of Urban Policing in Victorian England: A Study of Kingston upon Hull from 1836 to 1866*, unpublished PhD, University of Hull, 1997. For Halifax see J Posner, *The Establishment and Development of the New Police in Halifax, 1848-1914*, unpublished PhD, University of Huddersfield, 2015. For Sheffield see C A Williams, *Police and Crime in Sheffield, 1818-1874*, unpublished PhD, Sheffield University, 1998 and for Leeds see D C Churchill, *Crime, Policing and Control in Leeds, c. 1830-1890*, unpublished PhD, University of Leeds, 2012.
- 25 Unusually the new police force in Halifax was smaller than the earlier watch. The success of a large number of Radicals and four Chartists in the first elections is an important factor, though policing does not appear to have been a major issue in the incorporation campaign in Halifax. Posner, *Establishment and Development*, pp. 37, 39 & 42.
- 26 *HC*, 5 January 1856. At the same meeting of the commissioners Mr Moore put down this criticism with the observation that if 'Mr Turner lived at Seed Hill and saw the congregation of Castlegate vagabonds so frequently

- assembled ... he would not think the police too numerous.' In fact, Turner, self-styled defender of the rate-payer, appears to have believed the day police numbered six men – in fact, there were three.
- 27 HIC monthly meeting, 3 July 1861, *HC*, 6 July 1861.
- 28 HIC monthly meeting, 4 September 1861, *HC*, 7 September 1861.
- 29 HIC monthly meeting, 2 October 1861, *HC*, 5 October 1861.
- 30 Contrast this with Leeds where the local watch committee, constrained by the economical faction on the council in the late 1850s was forced by HMIC to increase the size of the city force. Churchill chapter three.
- 31 In the following year the town's boundaries were significantly extended and the town's force expanded accordingly.
- 32 The annual returns show that police population ratio constant at 1:711 but, as this was based on an unchanging (1861) population figure, in reality the ratio worsened over the decade.
- 33 HIC monthly meeting, *HC*, 13 June 1863.
- 34 HIC monthly meeting *HC*, 4 July 1863. This contrasts with the more serious police pay strike in Hull in 1853.
- 35 The HIC minutes refer to the re-introduction of the second-class category in 1861 but not to the year in which it was abolished.
- 36 This contrasts with the approach adopted in Halifax where a detective was part of the initial force established in 1848. Posner, *Establishment and Development*, p.42.
- 37 The approach adopted was to identify all town policemen in the censuses of 1851 and 1861 and to trace then back and forward thereby covering the five censuses from 1841 to 1881.
- 38 C Emsley & M Clapson, 'Recruiting the English Policeman, c.1840–1940', *Policing and Society*, 3 (1994), pp.269–86.
- 39 Compare this to recruitment to the Buckinghamshire County Constabulary where the long-term decline of the furniture trade yielded many police recruits or to Middlesbrough where short-term, cyclical fluctuations in the iron and steel trade impacted on police recruitment.
- 40 *Morning Chronicle, The Manufacturing Districts. The Cloth Districts of Yorkshire – The Huddersfield Fancy Goods, and the Dewsbury "Shoddy Mills"*, Letter XIV, 18 January 1850.
- 41 HIC monthly meeting, *HC*, 9 August 1856 and 10 January 1857. In fact, the WRCC police registers suggest that this was less of a problem.
- 42 The figures come from the annual returns of the inspector of constabulary for the northern region. Huddersfield police were below the median wage figures for the country at large in 1857 but at the median in 1865. See C Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The formation of English provincial police forces, 1856–80*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p.109.
- 43 HIC monthly meeting *HC*, 6 September 1856 and 17 & 24 June 1857
- 44 HIC monthly meeting, *HC*, 21 June 1862.
- 45 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/13/1, 14 & 28 January 1850. In addition, sums of £1-5-0 (£1.25), £1 and 15s (0.75p) were handed out to other men.
- 46 Townend and White were responsible for twenty-two and twenty-eight cases



- respectively, Ramsden thirty-seven and Mellor and Morton thirty-five each. Only one other officer exceeded these totals.
- 47 The details of the superannuation scheme have not been considered, primarily because the impact was not felt until the 1870s by which time Huddersfield was no longer run by the Improvement Commissioners.
- 48 The Watch Committee also made a small number of discretionary awards for various forms of commendable behaviour, but these were less important than the annual payment from the perquisite fund.
- 49 See chapter four for a fuller discussion of career outcomes.
- 50 There were, of course, more men appointed as night constables whose careers were extremely short-lived (i.e. less than one year). Only one man served more than one year but less than five as a night constable.
- 51 Although there was much talk of improving police efficiency and effectiveness in the 1850s and 1860s, the main criterion used to determine efficiency was the ratio of population to police.
- 52 D Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town: the development of the police in Middlesbrough, c. 1840–1914*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, esp. chapter three. Middlesbrough, despite its distinctive pattern of industrial growth, was not unique. On several occasions HMIC complained that industrial prosperity was making recruitment difficult for many forces in northern and central England and south Wales.
- 53 In December 1853 there were twenty-two applications for four new night constables; in May 1857 twenty-four applications for three permanent posts as night constable; and twenty for another three posts as night constable in 1859. Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/13/1 19 December 1853, KMT 18/2/3/14/1 30 May 1857 and 24 January 1859.
- 54 The precise number of men recruited into the Huddersfield police is difficult to calculate. In the absence of a police register or conduct book, the minutes of the Watch Committee and of the Improvement Commission are the principle sources of information. However, published accounts of Commissioners' meetings in the town's two newspapers the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* throw up a few names not found elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, it is not always possible to establish the career records of all recruits. Nonetheless, the broad patterns that emerge from this data are unlikely to have been significantly distorted by the missing information.
- 55 The precise figures are as follows: 52% of recruits served less than one year in the period 1848–56 compared with 62% in the period 1857–68.
- 56 Posner, *Establishment and Development*, p.93 and Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town*, p.42.
- 57 The minutes of the Watch Committee and of the Improvement Commission do not contain full information on the town's police. The figure in the text is based on returns for a total of 148 men known to have been appointed. For only 111 men are reasons given for leaving. If this figure is used the percentage retiring rises to 35 per cent and 61 per cent for resignations and dismissals respectively.
- 58 Strikingly, only one Huddersfield policeman sought promotion in another force – and he was unsuccessful.

- 59 For the purposes of analysis those required to resign have been included with those dismissed on the grounds that the Watch Committee was making a negative judgment on these men. From an individual point of view being able to say that he resigned rather than having been dismissed could be important for future job prospects.
- 60 There were also a small number of supernumerary constables, dismissed for their inadequacies as would-be policemen, who have been excluded from this analysis.
- 61 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/13/1, 12 March 1849.
- 62 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/13/1, 9 July 1849.
- 63 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/13/1, 1 December 1851. See also Sam Beavers KMT 2/3/13/1, 30 December 1850 & 28 December 1853; Thomas Wright KMT 2/1/13/1 1 September 1851 & Henry Beevers 2 June 1855; John Spivey KMT 18/2/3/14/1 24 May 1858; James Lodge KMT 18/2/3/14/2 13 November 1862 & John Drury 28 December 1858; James Buckley, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 23 July 1866.
- 64 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/13/1, 9 July 1849.
- 65 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 29 December 1862
- 66 *HC*, 9 July 1859.
- 67 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 24 October 1864.
- 68 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 25 November 1861, 28 July 1862 and 25 April 1864.
- 69 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/1, 23 February 1857.
- 70 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/14/1, 24 January 1859.
- 71 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/13/1, 15 January 1849.
- 72 KMT 2/3/13/1, 15 January 1849.
- 73 KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 9 August 1865.
- 74 *HC*, 16 December 1865. There were other contemporary critics of the quality of local police recruits but, as they looked for a force comprised entirely of teetotallers, their views can be discounted as unrealistic.
- 75 *HC*, 2 November 1850.
- 76 Watch Committee Minutes KMT 18/2/3/13/1, 24 June 1850.
- 77 Watch Committee Minutes KMT 18/2/3/13/1, 12 February 1849.
- 78 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/13/1, 9 July & 3 December 1849.
- 79 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 24 December 1860 & KMT 18/2/2/2, 4 December 1861.
- 80 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2 23 December and 30 December 1857.
- 81 The two reliefs changed duty 'every alternate day' to balance the workload.
- 82 *HC*, 23 May 1868.