

## *The Watch Committee, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and the Management of the Huddersfield Police Force*

THE MAIN FOCUS of this book is on day-to-day police work but it is necessary to locate the town's force in its broader political context and to consider, specifically, the relationship with those who were responsible for its overall management. Some of the work of the Watch Committee has already been discussed but this chapter will concentrate on the relationship between local elected politicians and successive superintendents of police before looking briefly at the relationship with the inspectorate of constabulary set up by the 1856 County & Borough Police Act. Huddersfield was unusual in having a high rate of turnover of police superintendents but its experience highlights problems in establishing a working relationship between local politicians and their paid servants that were common to many boroughs in the first generation of 'new' policing.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Huddersfield Politics under the 1848 Improvement Act***

Under the 1848 Improvement Act (11 & 12Vic. cap.cxl), Huddersfield – more accurately 'such Parts of the several Hamlets of *Huddersfield, Bradley, Deighton-with-Sheepridge, Fartown* and *Marsh-with-Paddock* ... as are within a Radius of Twelve hundred Yards in every Direction from the Spot where the Old Cross formerly stood, in the Centre of the Market Place in *Huddersfield*' – was to be governed by twenty-one commissioners, three nominated by the Lord of the Manor (John William Ramsden), the remainder to be elected by male rate-payers duly registered.<sup>2</sup> The commissioners were drawn from a predictable range of trades and professions – manufacturers, merchants, shopkeepers and so forth. Unsurprisingly in a nonconformist stronghold,

many were Wesleyans and Congregationalists with a smaller number of Baptists. Contrary to earlier views, there was also a significant Church of England presence. The town was also a Liberal stronghold, though there were divisions between more conservative Whigs and Radicals but, despite earlier support for Chartism, there was no Chartist presence to compare with nearby Halifax. There was, however, an easily-overlooked Tory presence. A full history of the politics of Huddersfield under the Improvement Act has yet to be written but the broad contours can be identified.<sup>3</sup>

1848 was a pivotal year in the politics of the town – a clear ‘repudiation of the 1820 settlement and a fresh start for the town’s governance’.<sup>4</sup> The old system – the oligarchic Commission for Lighting, Watching and Cleansing the Town established under the 1820 Improvement Act – had been found wanting and was replaced by a system based on a property-based franchise. There were clear winners – notably Joshua Hobson, a driving force behind the 1848 Act and subsequently full-time clerk to the Board of Works – but also losers. For some, unreconciled to the new order and convinced (irrespective of many facts to the contrary) that the town had been run more effectively and less expensively before 1848, it was the end of the road. There was, however, an important element of continuity, personified by Joseph Brook, one of the first commissioners appointed in 1820 but also the first chair of the new Improvement Commission, and by John Jarrett, inspector of scavengers, first appointed in 1838. More importantly, post-1848 politics created new alliances which involved some strange bedfellows. In broad terms, there were two groupings: improvers and economists. The former group, the self-styled ‘friends of progress’ included former political foes. The two leading figures were Joseph Brook, a man of ‘conservative principles’, and Joshua Hobson, one of the leading Chartists of the early 1840s but now committed to sanitary reform.<sup>5</sup> The latter group, railing against the alleged extravagance of the improvers, included disgruntled members of the town’s petty bourgeoisie, as much angered by their loss of political influence as by a desire to reduce rates, and Radicals who felt both cheated by the complex property franchise that was less democratic than the old town vestry and betrayed by their erstwhile colleague, Hobson. The local politics of the first decade of the Improvement Commission were fractious and often highly personalised but the underlying concern with economy was long-lived, flaring up in the early 1860s,

when attempts were made to reduce the size of the town's police force, and in the early 1870s, when the pay of borough officials was a major electoral issue and contributed to the departure of the well-regarded and efficient superintendent Withers.

Particularly in the early and mid-1850s local politics was polarised. The Woolpack committee – named after the inn in New Street where its members met – ran 'economical' slates which were particularly successful in 1853. Nonetheless, there were overlaps between the two factions with the same names appearing on both lists. Further, while there may have been differences within the wider electorate, there was comparatively little difference in socio-economic terms between commissioners belonging to the two groupings. There were more petty-bourgeois figures in the 'economical' faction and they tended to be younger in age. There were also a significant number of Congregationalists in their ranks and, with few exceptions, they voted Liberal rather than Whig. In contrast, members of the 'reformist' faction were more likely to be Church of England or Wesleyan Methodist and to have voted Whig or Conservative. The importance of differences in religious background can easily be overstated. C H Jones, the leading advocate of 'economy' in the 1850s was most loyally supported by three fellow-Congregationalists (Joseph Bottomley, Titus Thewlis and Wright Mellor), two Wesleyan Methodists (Benjamin Robinson and Josephus Jagger Roebuck) and an Anglican (Foster Shaw). It is important to recognise the extent to which the town's politicians were drawn from a relatively narrow socio-economic and intellectual spectrum, which resulted in commonalities of thought and unspoken assumptions that united competing politicians on a number of major issues, not least the management of the police.

### *Politicians and The Police*

The 1848 Improvement Act incorporated the 1847 Town Police Clauses Act which gave the commissioners the power to appoint 'a Superintendent Constable and also such Number of Constables as they judge necessary for the Protection of the Inhabitants and Property' and also to determine their rates of pay. Paragraph VI also provided 'for the Commissioners from Time to Time to remove any such Superintendent Constable, Constables, and Officers as they think fit'. The commissioners were proud and jealous of their police force. This

was seen most clearly in 1855 when they fought tenaciously to preserve the independence of the borough force. More importantly, for day-to-day policing, the commissioners were agreed that they – particularly through their Watch Committee – had clear responsibility for the policing of the town, agreeing the appointment (and re-appointment) of constables and their dismissals; issuing instructions about police responsibilities – from checking warehouses to seizing dangerous dogs – through to reviewing beats and considering ancillary support through improved lighting. In that regard, the commissioners clearly saw themselves as masters and the police as their servants. However, there were two key problems regarding the implementation of this relationship. First, even for a medium-sized force, the scale of activities and the likelihood of unforeseen emergencies meant that the police superintendent (and indeed constables) needed – and acquired *de facto* – a degree of operational independence. This must not be overstated but, as several commissioners recognised, it was impractical to have every decision of the superintendent of police approved by members of the Watch Committee. Second, there was scope for disagreement as to the appropriate model of policing for the town's force and of the appropriate personal qualities of its superintendent. Close scrutiny of a town's police force was common – not least in nearby Halifax – but the micro-management style adopted, particularly but not exclusively in the mid-1850s, and the recurring emphasis on individual morality created, rather than solved, problems of management.

The responsibility for law enforcement in the boroughs of nineteenth-century England rested on local watch committees and justices, both of whom had statutory powers, and chief constables, who retained the common-law powers of constables. The relationship between these three elements was not spelt out in detail and, therefore, was a matter of local negotiation and compromise, often involving trial and error. This gave rise to considerable variations in practice across forces, from close supervision by a watch committee (as in Huddersfield and Halifax) to more of a free hand for a chief constable (as in Hull).<sup>6</sup> Much discussion has focussed on the notion of police independence and the enforcement of specific policies. The clashes between the chief constables of Birmingham and Liverpool with their local watch committees, in 1880 and 1890, dominate the literature. Despite some vigorous arguments by Brogden and Jefferson & Grimshaw, the present consensus is that there was general agreement that watch

committees had the power to instruct their chief police officers on matters of law enforcement policy.<sup>7</sup> However, the power to instruct did not, in itself, resolve the question of the appropriate day-to-day relationship between watch committees and their senior officials. Further, such questions could not be divorced from wider financial considerations, which in some boroughs led to reductions in force size. Demands for ‘economy’ were important – and the town force was reduced by one for a brief period in the early 1860s – but of greater importance in Huddersfield were considerations about the appropriate management model for policing in the town and on the necessary qualities of a superintendent of police.

The hiring and firing of ordinary constables was clearly an important function of the Watch Committee but there was a greater responsibility: appointing an efficient superintendent of police and developing an effective working relationship with him. In this the Watch Committee failed, almost without qualification. If Huddersfield had ‘an unenviable notoriety in regard to its police and their irregularities’, nowhere was this more apparent than at the very top of the force.<sup>8</sup> During the existence of the Improvement Commission there were five superintendents of police, all but one of whom left unwillingly following friction with the town’s political leaders. The disputes, particularly those that took place in 1854/5, raised important questions regarding the qualities of a head constable, his role and responsibilities and his relationship with the Watch Committee and the Improvement Commission. Finding the right man was problematic enough but matters were exacerbated by political conflict and personal animosity. The importance of strong leadership was clearly recognised and the members of the Watch Committee, not unreasonably, looked outside the town for men of proven ability and experience in an established urban police force. Unfortunately, on more than one occasion, their judgement was lacking, both in terms of the individuals selected and, more importantly, in their determination to be involved in day-to-day police matters.

### *The 1850s: Superintendents Thomas and Beaumont*

Problems emerged at a very early stage, though the untimely enforced resignation through ill-health of Superintendent Cheeseborough was unfortunate and unforeseeable. The other senior appointments (Sergeant Brown and Inspector Thomas) were more problematic.

Brown's staggering indiscipline has been noted in chapter two but Thomas's early months were little better in disciplinary terms. In August 1849 he was in trouble on three separate occasions. One evening he failed to visit his men on duty between the hours of 10.30 p.m. and 2.40 a.m., spending the time in various local beerhouses. 'Worse for liquor' he then verbally abused Sergeant Sedgwick in the street. Later that month he was accused of immorality by two of his fellow officers. PC Mellor gave evidence that he 'had seen Inspector Thomas in the *Unicorn Inn* ... with a female'. Sergeant Sedgwick was more explicit, alleging that Thomas 'had had improper connections with a woman that had been taken to the Watch-house for shelter ... [and] improper intimacy with another man's wife in Castlegate'.<sup>9</sup> Amidst criticisms of 'gross neglect' and 'gross impropriety', the Watch Committee recommended his dismissal for being drunk, unfit for duty and abusing a fellow officer. The commissioners decided to override the decision of their Watch Committee, for reasons that were not recorded in the minutes but which were probably influenced by the incapacitation of Cheeseborough.<sup>10</sup>

On the enforced resignation of John Cheeseborough, Thomas took over as superintendent of police. For three years there were no serious problems. Indeed, Thomas proved himself to be a determined senior officer, playing an active role in quelling disturbances in Castlegate and tackling the problems of immorality, disorderly houses and cruel sports. In May 1850 the commissioners praised him and fellow-officer, Townend, for 'exerting themselves in the most praiseworthy manner ... to check this great and growing evil [of] these plague spots ... brothels'.<sup>11</sup> In January 1851 he brought to court nine men charged with organising a dogfight in the cellar of a house in Bradley Street, while a year later he showed his personal courage in quelling, albeit with some difficulty, a major disturbance in Castlegate.<sup>12</sup> 1852 was a very successful year for Thomas. He made a number of high-profile arrests – including a thief arrested in a Dewsbury singing-room and a forger tracked down and apprehended in Manchester – while his conduct in the aftermath of the Holmfirth disaster highlighted another positive aspect of policing.<sup>13</sup> However, his very hands-on approach was to be a source of contention under the new political grouping, led by C H Jones (later to become the first mayor of the newly-incorporated Huddersfield), which was elected to power in 1853.<sup>14</sup>

The early years of the Improvement Commission had seen significant reforms in the town and, while this was a source of considerable local pride, it also gave rise to concern among some rate-payers. In the run-up to the 1853 election of commissioners 'economy' became a central issue. Addressing a public meeting in August 1853, a local solicitor, J I Freeman, was unequivocal: 'many offices might be abolished; many salaries curtailed; and the whole affair [of local government] carried on upon a much more economical scale'.<sup>15</sup> The election was a triumph for the faction headed by Jones and his right-hand man, Joseph Boothroyd. Their impact was immediate and dramatic. An Enquiry Committee was set up and chaired by Jones, who was determined to root out lax book-keeping by the earlier commissioners. Hobson, a major figure behind many of the reforms in the town after 1848, having been attacked in the pre-election campaign, found himself heavily criticised for negligence; John Jarrett, superintendent of scavengers, was brought to court and found guilty of embezzlement in the spring of 1854 – an incident which precipitated Hobson's resignation; and in July of the same year Jones explicitly stated his belief that 'sufficient supervision was not exercised in the departments occupied by Superintendent Thomas'.<sup>16</sup>

Jones was clearly determined to exercise tighter control over financial matters but this was part of a wider vision of the role of the commissioners in relation to their officials. He and his supporters adopted a business model of local government, likening their role to that of a company's board of directors.<sup>17</sup> Jones had no doubt that it was his responsibility to keep a close eye on all aspects of the work undertaken by the Improvement Commissioners and to intervene if necessary. He informed the Watch Committee at its meeting on the 4th of August 1855:

[h]e considered it the duty of the chairman to watch what was going on; and if he apprehended that any officer was liable to be damaged, or an office was likely to be damaged by the conduct of an officer, he was bound to look on and prevent the injury.<sup>18</sup>

In general terms, this meant asserting repeatedly the authority of the commissioners over the town's police force, including its senior officer. More particularly, it translated into taking an active role in the investigation of charges of improper behaviour and the disciplinary action that might be required.

As early as June 1854 Jones raised the question of the relationship between the officials sworn in at the Court Leet and policing within the limits of the Improvement Act. Jones' argument that the swearing in of Thomas as an officer of the manorial Court Leet was 'a dangerous precedent' owed more to his experience of policing in Manchester and revealed an ignorance (genuine or feigned) of the honorific nature of the post and the benign relationship between the Court Leet and the town police authorities that had developed since the mid-1840s. He also overlooked the fact that it had been sanctioned by the commissioners themselves.<sup>19</sup> Of greater significance was his decision to 'originate a conversation' on the seemingly technical issue of 'the necessity of keeping the efforts of the town police within the limits of the Improvement Act'.<sup>20</sup> This was not a straightforward matter. As the town's magistrates had observed, it was folly for the borough police to stop their enquiries or halt a pursuit simply because a suspect moved out of the area defined by the Improvement Act. The situation was further complicated by the relationship with the superintending constable for the Upper Agbrigg district, Thomas Heaton, whose salary was paid in part by the ratepayers of Huddersfield, which meant that Thomas could call upon Heaton for assistance but not *vice versa*. In practice, Heaton had developed a good working relationship with Thomas and other town officers, notably Townend and Sedgwick, which resulted in mutually advantageous reciprocal action. Further, as the Holmfirth tragedy clearly demonstrated, it was important to leave 'some discretionary power ... in the hands of Superintendent Thomas [because] many emergencies happened where there was neither time or [*sic*] opportunity for running after commissioners to grant permission'.<sup>21</sup> Initially no others had joined the conversation but Jones, undeterred, spurred on the Improvement Commissioners to instruct Thomas, in January 1855, 'not to allow the night or the day police to act beyond the limits of the act without the previous joint sanction of two members of the [watch] committee'.<sup>22</sup> This decision had more to do with the politics than the practicalities of policing. Jones was determined to assert his authority and curb the independence that Thomas had shown on a number of occasions.<sup>23</sup>

The clash between the two men undoubtedly had a strong personal element. Jones, a gentleman and Congregationalist, 'a sturdy Nonconformist of the old-fashioned type,' had little in common with a man who had a reputation for drinking and gambling.<sup>24</sup> Neither

did he approve of Thomas's 'hands-on', thief-taker style of policing. Matters took an unexpected but significant turn in the spring of 1855 when Thomas was attacked by Henry Lord in the *Zetland Hotel*.<sup>25</sup> Lord, no lover of the local police, was part of the wider 'economical' faction headed by Jones. Later the same month Lord wrote to the Watch Committee alleging two counts of misconduct by Thomas, which set off a long running clash that culminated in Thomas's dismissal.<sup>26</sup> The first charge, relating to the incident at the *Zetland*, was dismissed and it was noted that 'the person bringing the charge [i.e. Lord] had been subject to penal consequences for an assault upon the superintendent and two out of the four witnesses were relatives of the complaining party'.<sup>27</sup> The second allegation, that Thomas had been at a fancy-dress ball and subsequently drinking at the *Cross Keys*, High Street, from the evening of Easter Monday through to seven the following morning, was also dismissed, though Thomas was criticised for being in a public house for such a length of time when his professional presence was not required. Lord then made a third accusation that Thomas had been drinking and gambling at the *Golden Lion Inn*, Pontefract, when he (and another officer) had accompanied a prisoner to the quarter sessions. The Watch Committee enquired into the allegation, upheld the charge and recommended the dismissal of Thomas for misconduct.

A special meeting of the commissioners was called to consider this recommendation, by which time news had spread round the town and memorials were delivered to the Improvement Commissioners from the magistrates of the Huddersfield bench, the Superintending Constable of the Upper Agbrigg district, '166 of the principal inhabitants of the town' and the town's pawnbrokers. Each of them 'spoke warmly of the excellent qualities of Superintendent Thomas, and of his great efficiency as a police officer'.<sup>28</sup> The ensuing debate was more than a dispute about the fitness of the police superintendent. The politics were often murky but it is clear that political factionalism fuelled an often ill-tempered series of exchanges. Dirty linen was washed in public as earlier allegations of Thomas's drunk and disorderly behaviour were aired. There was a widespread acceptance that Thomas was 'an officer of great talent... fully alive to all his duties [who] had served them efficiently for five years'.<sup>29</sup> His defenders conceded that he had 'little venial peccadilos' [*sic*] but argued that it was 'sometimes necessary for a policeman to appear to be fit company for the bad characters they might have

to associate with. Some had to get liquor in order to get others in a similar state'.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Commissioner Thornton asserted, it was not possible to get 'the most pious and moral men to become policemen'.<sup>31</sup> Such arguments cut no ice with the chairman, Jones and his leading supporter Boothroyd. They conceded that Thomas had been an effective officer, but the central issue in their eyes was one of morality and fitness for position. Boothroyd in particular dwelt upon the details of Thomas's behaviour at Pontefract and argued that not only had this charge been proved beyond 'the shadow of a doubt' but also that this proof of his present drinking and domino-playing (albeit while off duty) 'quite removed the doubt entertained respecting former charges'.<sup>32</sup> To complete his case he resurrected charges against Thomas dating from 1849. In a similar vein commissioner Shaw argued that 'they ought to have an upright and honest man' as police superintendent.<sup>33</sup> The attempt to save Thomas failed. A motion to suspend him for a month was defeated by nine votes to five.<sup>34</sup>

Then matters became somewhat farcical. A new police superintendent was needed; advertisements were placed; a shortlist drawn up; candidates interviewed and a decision made by the Watch Committee – that the best man for the post was none other than John Thomas!<sup>35</sup> The decision provoked a crisis in local politics. There were questions about the constitutionality of reappointing a man who had been dismissed by the commissioners; further clashes between pragmatists and moralists; and heightened personal feeling. The first special meeting of the commissioners took place in mid-July. Thomas's enemies were accused of prior collusion in mounting their attack and Jones was specifically accused of 'vindictiveness and persecution'. Despite strong support from Benjamin Thornton, who claimed that Thomas was 'a most useful, vigilant and excellent officer [who] was very popular with the ratepayers ... [and] liked by every body except thieves, rogues and vagabonds', there remained a powerful group who were totally opposed to Thomas. When it came to the vote the commissioners were evenly split (eight votes for dismissal, eight votes against), leaving the chair, none other than Jones, with the casting vote. This he refused to use, notwithstanding the fact that he told the meeting that he could 'never act with him [Thomas] again [as] all my confidence in that officer is forfeited' and that should Thomas be appointed 'he [Jones] should feel obliged to resign his office as chairman'.<sup>36</sup>

The local press was unimpressed with the behaviour of the commissioners. The question had become 'the occasion of a series of party moves as unprincipled as they are contemptible [that were] waged with an intemperance and virulence ... [that was] not very creditable to those concerned'.<sup>37</sup> Instead of debate there was 'a long and irregular conversation' conducted in 'a regular babel of sound'.<sup>38</sup> The *Examiner* made a veiled criticism of Hobson and 'his puppets' who were 'disgracing and degrading' the commission and was scathing in condemning the 'Jonathan Wilde' defence that 'it is necessary for a police superintendent to be a rogue and vagabond, a drunkard and gambler' to catch criminals.<sup>39</sup> However, if the first special meeting showed the commissioners in a bad light, the second was worse. Held in early August, it was even more heated. Jones's resignation prior to the meeting further heightened personal animosity. In a lengthy and often vituperative speech, explaining his decision to resign, Jones became increasingly shrill as he defended himself. He listed all those who had made major errors of judgment: the magistrates who had 'decided wrongly' in the original case involving Lord and Thomas; the Watch Committee, with whom 'he entirely differed' regarding the *Cross Keys* incident and even the commissioners who 'now were in a wrong position'.<sup>40</sup> Jones continued his excoriating personal attacks on Thomas, accusing him of 'encouraging gambling and drunkenness' and condemning him as 'a violent worthless character'. Boothroyd was little less intemperate. Thomas was 'utterly incompetent'. 'The simple question', he asserted, 'was whether Thomas was morally qualified for the post'. Commissioner Shaw supplied the answer for the 'moralist' faction. 'How could [he] properly carry out his duties?' he asked rhetorically. 'Would he not feel it necessary to wink at the faults of others or feel that he was acting unjustly towards them?' It was clear: Thomas was not 'a fit man to be at the head of the police'.<sup>41</sup>

Jones condemned Thomas for his 'improper conduct, including drunkenness [which] would be an encouragement to crime' whereas he should be 'superior to the vices he was employed to check'.<sup>42</sup> However, there was a further concern. Jones argued that 'the chief constable ought to act as a head constable not as a thief taker [and] ought to be the director of the thief takers'.<sup>43</sup> Passions were inflamed on both sides. Hobson (himself subject to much criticism from Jones and his clique) saw Thomas as a victim of 'rancorous and vindictive feeling' and condemned the 'system of espionage'

that had been resorted to by Jones and his supporters. Thomas, they argued, had been ‘tracked down from street to street, from house to house, and all his faults observed’.<sup>44</sup> Tempers flared as Boothroyd was denounced as a man ‘who assumed the tone of a person who thought himself purer and better than others’; Jones was attacked for attempting to brow beat the Watch Committee and pursuing Thomas malevolently. Once again the commissioners were evenly divided (nine men on each side) but this time the new chair, John Firth, voted in favour of not reappointing Thomas.<sup>45</sup>

This was the end of Thomas’s police career but not the end of story. A month after his dismissal Thomas met Jones in Market Street. Words were exchanged, Thomas tweaked Jones’s nose and found himself indicted on a charge of assault and actual bodily harm. The case was heard at the Wakefield Quarter Sessions and Jones’s evidence was ridiculed in the local press. ‘We fancy,’ opined the *Chronicle*, ‘that some of the many who saw Mr. Jones passing up and down the street so prominently after the encounter will be surprised to learn that “his life was greatly despaired of” in consequence of the “bodily harm” which the nose-wringer inflicted’.<sup>46</sup> After two hours’ deliberation the jury found Thomas ‘guilty of a very slight assault under very aggravated circumstances; and ... therefore recommend[ed] the defendant to the merciful consideration of the court’.<sup>47</sup> Jones’ behaviour in court did little to enhance his reputation. He told the magistrates that he was not pressing for imprisonment, an ‘effort at magnanimity [which] excited derision and merriment among the spectators at court’.<sup>48</sup> In fact Thomas was fined £5 and had to find sureties for good behaviour for six months of £100 and an additional two of £50 from others, a sentence which ‘created considerable surprise’.<sup>49</sup>

The Jones/Thomas conflict made good copy because of the clash of personalities but it is important not to lose sight of the principles involved. Jones was arguing for a model of policing in which ultimate responsibility rested unequivocally with the Improvement Commissioners, who would exercise detailed oversight of police practice. The decision not to appoint Thomas delighted Jones as it presented him with an opportunity to introduce his alternative, ‘a new system, [with] new discipline, new orders [and] new men’.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, steps had already been taken before the decision of the 4th August not to appoint Thomas. Boothroyd had already written to ‘Mr. Crossley of Halifax’ but jumped the gun by proposing

the appointment of Mr. Beaumont, inspector of the night police in Halifax, at the general meeting of the commissioners.<sup>51</sup> Proper procedure was followed and the Watch Committee considered a number of applicants, including two local candidates, Abraham Sedgwick and William Townend, before deciding the strongest candidate was indeed George Beaumont!

Beaumont proved to be a new broom. Constables deemed to be inefficient were dismissed, beats increased in number from fourteen to sixteen and police discipline tightened up. The changes aroused mixed feelings. The constables were unhappy with an order not to smoke on duty (not least because Beaumont continued to do so), and another to touch hats when meeting commissioners. Others expressed concern at the high number of dismissals and resignations. In particular, the resignation of the long-serving Inspector Sedgwick aroused controversy. Jones was accused in the local press of fabricating charges against Sedgwick in particular and of 'pettifogging interference of every kind' and also operating 'a system of espionage'. Beaumont had powerful friends among the commissioners and particularly in the Watch Committee, which called a special meeting in November 1857 to discuss 'the management of the police ... and its efficiency or otherwise'.<sup>52</sup> Constables were called to air their grievances but the Watch Committee members were 'disgusted' at the 'paltry' complaints of the constables. Such was their faith in Beaumont that they awarded him a salary increase.

Others were less impressed. The *Chronicle*, now edited by Hobson and using leaked information, mounted a year-long campaign against the Watch Committee's cover-up of their 'pet officer' but to no avail. Then in August 1858 a sex scandal involving the superintendent erupted. The town magistrates found Beaumont guilty of indecent assault in the police-office and fined him £5 and costs. The principal witness, Mrs. Poppleton, told the court how Beaumont 'took hold of me, pulled a half crown out of his left trouser pocket, and made improper proposals to me'.<sup>53</sup> This, it might be thought, would bring Beaumont's police career to an end, but that would be to underestimate the strength of the support he had. Two days after the trial a special meeting of the Watch Committee took place to investigate further the case against Beaumont. A crowd of over a hundred gathered in the street to await the outcome. More significantly, a deputation supporting Beaumont not simply expressed their support for the superintendent but also offered

further evidence against Mrs. Poppleton, whom they asserted was ‘a woman, according to popular report, of very questionable veracity’. To make matters worse an unrepresented Mrs. Poppleton was called before the Watch Committee for questioning that lasted until midnight. The chairman sought to pacify the crowd by stating that there was ‘no fault to find with the manner in which the enquiry was conducted’ and that ‘nothing improper was asked of the woman’. Finally, the decision was announced. After considering the ‘additional evidence’ (none of which was made available to the public) the Watch Committee had decided *not* to recommend the dismissal of the town’s superintendent of police. Unsurprisingly ‘a good number of the crowd received the committee’s decision with unmistakable signs of disfavour’.<sup>54</sup> The *Chronicle*, referring also to the peccadilloes of Inspector White and other examples of police immorality, ran the banner headline: THE TOWN’S SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE IN TROUBLE AGAIN. Expressing amazement that ‘the Watch Committee, from some cause or other hitherto unexplained, came to a different judgment on the matter from that arrived at by the magistrates’, the paper once again criticised the Watch Committee for protecting their ‘pet officer’.<sup>55</sup>

The *Chronicle* had also hinted at other allegations of ‘petty peculations, embezzlement, and ... long continued fraud’. Once again, the Watch Committee had stood behind their man and dismissed the complaints against Beaumont on the grounds that the complainant ‘was labouring either under a wilful desire to impugn the Superintendent, or an entire misapprehension of the fact’.<sup>56</sup> Beaumont was ‘fully acquitted’ and the matter appeared to be dead until, almost exactly a year later, PC Morton presented the Watch Committee with detailed information that demonstrated ‘not a single or isolated offence but a series of petty but fraudulent acts’ by the superintendent over several months.<sup>57</sup> Beaumont admitted that monies had been received but not properly accounted for and the Watch Committee had little option but to dismiss him, though they still defended their man by claiming that it was a case of ‘gross carelessness’ but with ‘no evidence of intentional fraud’ – an opinion never tested in court. The failure of the Beaumont era reflected badly on the Watch Committee in general and the Jones faction in particular. Not only had the wrong man been chosen – his professed ignorance of the whereabouts of the notorious Castlegate

was the final straw – but a style of (micro-) management had been implemented that proved to be counter-productive.

### *The 1860s: Superintendents Priday and Hannan*

Another new broom was needed and in November 1858 Samuel Priday, Inspector of the Manchester B Division was duly appointed. On the surface, at least, it appeared as if the commissioners were adopting a new approach in the light of the recent unhappy experiences. The chairman of the commissioners, J Freeman, stated explicitly that the new superintendent ‘shall have a complete command of the policemen, both day and night.’<sup>58</sup> One of Priday’s first concerns was to restore morale within the force after the bitterness of the Beaumont era. Soon after he had been appointed he addressed a private meeting of the force, assembled to recognise the services of the recently-retired Sergeant Kaye, who had served ten years in the force. The testimonial meeting and presentation was the first of its kind in Huddersfield and Priday took the opportunity to express his hope that the event ‘would have the effect of uniting them more closely together and of inducing them to forgive and forget old grievances.’<sup>59</sup> The extent of his success is difficult to measure but there were no overt outbreaks of discontent in the following months. More problematic was Priday’s relationship with the Watch Committee. The decision of the commissioners, concerned by levels of expenditure, to reduce the size of the town force in the early 1860s created tension. Further, he lacked the support that Beaumont had enjoyed among the Improvement Commissioners and was hampered by the Watch Committee’s ongoing determination to be involved in matters of day-to-day management. Despite the assurance given on his appointment, Priday did not enjoy ‘complete control’. Relations deteriorated and came to a head in the summer of 1862. When the Watch Committee passed over a complaint against detective Partridge, Priday informed its members he was considering tendering his resignation. At this point he was effectively forced to resign as the chair, commissioner Keighley, informed him that ‘the next business of the Committee was to consider ... serious charges against his conduct’ contained in a letter from Mr. Love, one of the town’s pawnbrokers.<sup>60</sup> Initially no details were made public but after a letter to the *Chronicle*, in which Priday complained his reasons for resignation had been misrepresented by the Watch Committee and

a hostile editorial, also in the *Chronicle*, an ill-tempered exchange of letters between Priday and Keighley were published in the local press in October 1862.

Priday was adamant that he had been badly treated and undermined by the Commissioners. There was 'a want of that cordiality and support which are essential to the effective working and discipline of the force' but, more significantly, he found himself in a 'very subordinate and anomalous' position in which

the restrictions placed upon the exercise of my judgment are calculated unduly and prejudicially to limit the independent authority and action which in the interest of public justice a Superintendent of Police should have at his control.<sup>61</sup>

Keighley claimed the claims were 'utterly unfounded' which provoked a further letter from Priday in which he spelt out an alternative model of policing to that of the Watch Committee.

The prerogative of control which I consider essential to the due discharge of the functions of a Superintendent of Police has been limited in my hands. The principle of responsibility which proper control involves has thus been entrenched (*sic*) [encroached?] upon and in fact frittered away.<sup>62</sup>

Keighley's response to this 'more offensive' letter provoked Priday to a third missive in which he added more substance to his claim regarding his position *viz-a-viz* the Watch Committee.<sup>63</sup> Reminding Keighley of the promise that had been made on appointment, Priday claimed that his access to the Watch Committee had been restricted and his recommendations regularly ignored but, more importantly, his authority had been undermined in two ways. First, an unnamed 'principal officer of the Commissioners ... [had taken] upon himself to countermand my orders, thereby neutralizing my position and making me a nonentity in the eyes of the force.' Second, and more significantly, his authority had been undermined by the Watch Committee itself. 'Officers who have been brought before the Committee for improper conduct,' he wrote, 'have been lightly excused and acts of insubordination almost entirely passed over'.<sup>64</sup> The incident with Partridge was the final straw. In contrast to Halifax, where the Watch Committee handed over responsibility for routine disciplinary matters to the superintendent of police, in Huddersfield a system of micro-management remained. Members

of the Huddersfield Watch Committee not only believed in (and exercised) their right to be involved in disciplinary matters – notwithstanding the mixed success of such an approach as explored in chapter two – but also they showed no willingness to acknowledge the expertise of their senior police officer. Worse, they failed to appreciate how their interventions in disciplinary matters undermined the authority of this man.

Priday left in September 1862 but his reputation was further tarnished by another sexual scandal as he faced a bastardy charge. The complainant, Martha Hilton, fell outside mid-Victorian definitions of respectability, getting ‘her living by cleaning and charring and other domestic occupations and also by hawking oranges in public houses at night’.<sup>65</sup> In the face of Hilton’s revelations about an incident in the Police-office and references to twice-weekly visits to the superintendent, Priday agreed to make a weekly payment of 2s (10p) towards the upkeep of the child. It was not the most dignified way to be remembered in the town.

For the next new broom, the commissioners looked to the boom town of Middlesbrough and its superintendent, William Hannan, notwithstanding the presence of the strong, experienced local candidate, William Townend. Hannan was very much the founding father of ‘new policing’ in Middlesbrough and, initially, he made a positive impact in Huddersfield. The day and night police were amalgamated, record-keeping improved and new regulations introduced. He persuaded the commissioners to introduce a superannuation scheme and, most importantly, took a strong and successful line against the scandal of beerhouse-brothels. The high-profile and successful prosecution of two husband and wife beerhouse keepers for procuring young girls and keeping them as prostitutes (see chapter five) brought considerable praise. His monthly reports in the mid-1860s were increasingly positive and the evidence he presented of improved police efficiency led to some improvement in relations with the Watch Committee. Nonetheless, there were complaints of police brutality under Hannan and his own personal conduct came in for criticism. The first sign of major trouble came following the 1865 Huddersfield election won, unusually, by the Tories. Election day itself had been something of a triumph as Hannan and Cobbe acted together but the aftermath proved problematic. Complaints of intimidation by the losing candidate (Leatham) led to a parliamentary enquiry to which Hannan was called to give

evidence. His performance before the Select Committee gave rise to criticism on the Improvement Commission where he was accused of acting for 'party purposes' and giving false evidence of violence by the Leathamites. Joel Denham, in particular, argued that the matter reflected on 'the character of one of the servants of the town'.<sup>66</sup> Although Hannan survived, when he appeared before the Watch Committee he ruefully noted that 'not one Superintendent had left Huddersfield to go to a better situation but had left in disgrace'.<sup>67</sup> Matters worsened in 1867, following the addition of a 'godly leaven of the Puritan element' in the Improvement Commission.<sup>68</sup> Hannan found himself under attack but this time on matters of morality rather than politics. The first issue was the question of drunkenness in the town. Hannan was a long-time critic of beerhouses and had played an active role in prosecuting the proprietors of beerhouse-brothels but in the late-summer of 1867 matters flared up, following the appearance of a report that purported to show that Huddersfield had one of the worst rates of drunkenness in the country. Hannan was asked to provide the Watch Committee with an explanation. His report was highly critical of the 'places of low amusement where obscene song, filthy comedy and degrading conversation ... excite the worst passions', bemoaned the 'non-existence of any public park, or any place of public recreation' and made a plea for 'better educated [working-class] people'.<sup>69</sup> He also drew attention to the marked differences of recording from force to force. Unlike in many towns, in Huddersfield all known cases of drunkenness were recorded thereby creating an exaggerated impression of the scale of the problem. As commissioner Clough conceded: 'Huddersfield was not such an abominable place as has been represented'.<sup>70</sup> This was not good enough for those who believed that a solution could be found through the enforcement of the existing law and the passing of new. Denham, again, was scathing in his criticism of Hannan's failure to improve the moral condition of the town. Hannan, not least with his knowledge of the extent of the problem in Middlesbrough, felt, not unreasonably, that he was being unfairly criticised.

The second issue also had to do with popular recreation. This time in the form of Guy Fawkes night celebrations. Earlier in the century Huddersfield had had a reputation for being one of the most riotous towns on the 5th of November. Attempts to clear the Market Square in the late 1840s had led to the humiliation of the police, notably the newly-appointed superintending constable, Thomas Heaton,

(see chapter seven) but there had been relatively little trouble for over a decade. Hannan's approach was low-key not least because arrests were likely 'to result in conflict with the police, if not in riot'.<sup>71</sup> In terms of 'policing by consent', this was a sensible stance on the part of the police but it was insufficient for the recently-elected 'Puritans' under a chairman, who was a man 'who advocates the making of drunkards sober by Act of Parliament and the force of authority'.<sup>72</sup> The new Watch Committee rejected Hannan's advice not to change existing policy. As well as instructing the police to take firm action, members of the Watch Committee also took to the streets of the town, particularly St. George's Square, to arrest revellers, letting off squibs. The outcome was predictable. Bonfires were lit, fireworks set off and the 'over-zeal and frog-swelling pride of "authority" ... [made them] the butts of fun, frolic and scorn of the assembled crowd'.<sup>73</sup> The events also proved to be the final straw for Hannan, whose health was also deteriorating. In late October he had intimated that he was considering resignation but when he did so the Watch Committee themselves had recommended that the commissioners should not accept his resignation. There was but a brief delay. Rumours swept the town that Hannan was about to resign and take over the *Bull and Mouth Inn* and on the 6th of November the Watch Committee resolved that 'the conduct of many of the Police Force ... was very inefficient and deserving of the censure of the Commissioners'.<sup>74</sup> That was the end of Hannan's career as superintendent of police; he resigned to become a publican. Given his track record, as much in Middlesbrough as Huddersfield, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, once again, personality and local politics as well as the practicalities of policing, played a crucial role.

By this time the days of the Improvement Commission were coming to an end and the next new broom, James Withers from Preston, was brought in with an eye to the needs of the new, enlarged borough. His success is part of another story.<sup>75</sup> However, there was evidence of a new outlook on the part of the commissioners. The Watch Committee resolved that Withers would 'have the full charge and superintendence of the whole Police Force'.<sup>76</sup> This time words were backed up by deeds. Withers introduced a new system of policing, closely based on that of the Metropolitan police and set about tightening up discipline. There was no evidence of friction between the superintendent of police and his masters, among

whom was the influential figure of the town's first mayor, C H Jones, the same man who had fought literally and metaphorically with a former superintendent of police in the mid-1850s! Despite his success, Withers left in 1874 when his request for an increased salary was rejected. Once again, the question of the salaries of public servants was controversial and Jones was unable to convince his colleagues of rewarding a man with a proven track record. Withers moved to nearby Bradford where he served as Chief Constable with distinction for twenty years.

### *Conclusion: the Role of the Watch Committee*

As for Huddersfield under the 1848 Improvement Act, it bowed out with 'an unenviable notoriety' – a somewhat inglorious but not unjustified epitaph. Successive Watch Committees seemed singularly inept in choosing men to be superintendents of police. This was very much the case with regard to George Beaumont but it was not obvious that John Thomas and William Hannan, for all their rough-and-ready ways, lacked the ability to head up a relatively small borough force. A significant part of the problem rested with the Watch Committees (or certain of its members) who not only had a particularly moral view of what a police superintendent should be but also, on many occasions, felt that they should keep the force, including its senior officers, under close scrutiny and intervene in matters that were of a more day-to-day management nature. There is a striking contrast between Huddersfield and Hull in this regard. While it is undoubtedly the case that Hull's chief constable, Alexander MacManus, was a very able officer, it is also the case that successive Watch Committees viewed the police as competent professionals, who could be entrusted with the operational responsibility to police Hull and whom they would support in times of criticism.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, the first generation of 'new policing' in Halifax was characterised by a positive relationship between the Watch Committee and the town police, notwithstanding the close scrutiny exercised by its Watch Committee.<sup>78</sup> Hull might have been exceptional but so too, in a very different way, was Huddersfield.<sup>79</sup> The relationship between any borough chief constable or superintendent of police and his Watch Committee was one that had to be negotiated. The Watch Committee might 'hire and fire' and determine local policy priorities but there was a degree of day-to-day operational control that had to reside with senior police officers. Drawing the line was

not easy but, as more forces came into being and time passed, some chief constables were able to carve out a degree of autonomy, not least as their watch committees acknowledged their experience and developing expertise. There could still be problems – not least the spectacular clash between the Head Constable of Liverpool and the local Watch Committee – but in most boroughs a *modus vivendi* was established relatively smoothly in the first decade or so of a new force being established.<sup>80</sup> This was not the case in Huddersfield where several commissioners held strong views about the police, their conduct and the extent to which local politicians should be directly involved in the management of the police. To think in terms of master and servants was commonplace but operationalising that relationship, while difficult, was not necessarily insoluble. However, in Huddersfield successive Watch Committees acted like the head of a household, who not only employed a cook and told her what he expected for dinner, but also told her what ingredients to use and how to cook them! Culinary metaphors apart, this interventionism led to repeated confrontations between key figures which, exacerbated by personality clashes, hindered the development of an efficient force.

### ***The Borough Police Force, The Government and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary***

Policing in Huddersfield (as elsewhere) operated within a broader framework created by government legislation. That framework was to be changed significantly in the mid-1850s as proposals for police reform were discussed in parliament. Palmer's detailed analysis of the legislative battle that led to the defeat of Palmerston's first police bill in 1854 and the subsequent success of Grey's bill in 1856 rightly makes much of the opposition from the incorporated boroughs, led by the mayors and aldermen of cities such as Leeds and York.<sup>81</sup> However, the predicament faced by a town such as Huddersfield, policed under an Improvement Commission, was often ignored at the time and has been neglected by later historians.

There was a strong and broad-based sense of local pride in Huddersfield, manifesting itself in a variety of ways. Opposition to the subsuming of the town's police into a larger, more distant county force was one example.<sup>82</sup> The permissive Rural Police Act of 1839 had provoked considerable concern, but this paled into insignificance as the implications of the later reform proposals were grasped by the town's politicians. In March 1856 the Improvement Commissioners

decided to petition parliament, opposing Grey's bill. An indignant C H Jones bemoaned the fact that 'members of parliament seemed almost ignorant of Improvement Commissioners' and, as a consequence, their failure to recognise the town as a borough within the meaning of the bill would result in Huddersfield 'being treated in the same manner as the humblest village'.<sup>83</sup> Local differences were overlooked as the commissioners stressed the efficiency of the town's force in glowing terms.

[T]he police force ... has been fully adequate to the requirements of the ... town; and its efficiency has been seen not only in the detection and suppression of crime, but also the removal of those haunts of infamy and the correction of debasing practices once so numerous and so prevalent in [Huddersfield].

Such efficiency, they argued, was based on local control.

[T]he general efficiency of the police arrangements is attributable to the fact that the ... police force has been governed and conducted by a local board intimately acquainted with the requirements of the ... town, and the practices of its inhabitants.<sup>84</sup>

Success was far from guaranteed. Grey was strongly opposed to further modifications to the police bill, fearing that a concession for one town would open the floodgates and delay or even derail the bill in its passage through parliament. Despite some sympathy for Huddersfield's position from the under-secretary at the Home Department, Massey, the absence of support from other similarly placed towns weakened the argument.<sup>85</sup> Fortunately for the commissioners, the town's Liberal MP, Viscount Goderich, lobbied Grey at considerable length, stressing the existence of 'a perfectly efficient police'. Indeed, this became his central argument: if the present police system 'is done away with it will be impossible to carry out effectively the Improvement Act of 1848'.<sup>86</sup> The effect of this behind-the-scene lobbying became apparent towards the end of a long debate in the House of Commons during the committee stage of the bill. Goderich rose to ask Grey what would be the impact of the bill on Huddersfield. Grey reassured him that 'Huddersfield would continue under the power of the existing [i.e. 1848] act'.<sup>87</sup>

This was not entirely the end of the matter. Colonel Cobbe, chief constable of the WRCC, made it clear in meetings with Grey and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for the northern counties,

Colonel Woodford, that he wished to see the Huddersfield police incorporated into the county force. Grey was unsympathetic unless there was evidence of inefficiency in the town's force.<sup>88</sup> Woodford's first inspection, scheduled for the 10th of March, was critical. He judged the twenty-six constables 'with one exception ... to be smart, active men and thoroughly effective.'<sup>89</sup> Later that month he wrote to the Watch Committee, requesting them to consider appointing additional men, because of the length of certain beats, but stressing that this was 'with a view to the greater efficiency of the establishment with which I had in all other respects reason to be well satisfied'.<sup>90</sup> In fact, the matter was largely a foregone conclusion. Prior to the official inspection, Woodford had met with members of the Watch Committee and expressed himself 'highly pleased with the character and efficiency of the force at Huddersfield', noting that at a recent meeting of magistrates at Wakefield the town's force had been held up as a model. Indeed, he also let it be known that Huddersfield 'would not be as efficiently watched during the night under the arrangements of the county constabulary' as it was under the Improvement Commissioners.<sup>91</sup>

Relations with the inspectorate remained good during the next decade. The force was deemed to be 'efficient' from 1857 to 1868 and was not singled out for particular criticism. The cells, it was true, were criticised in 1858 and again in 1864 when 'their isolation and faulty construction' was identified; while in 1861 'the inaccurate and very careless manner in which some of the books had been kept' was noted.<sup>92</sup> The attempts to reduce police numbers in the early 1860s was a potential source of conflict with potentially negative financial implications. The 'economical' faction was challenged on precisely this point. In the event the slight reduction in numbers passed with little comment: Woodford noted that it 'did not appear ... to have impaired the general efficiency of the establishment'.<sup>93</sup> However, when Keighley broached the subject of further reductions, Woodford made it clear that 'he did not think it advisable, under existing circumstances, to reduce the force' further.<sup>94</sup> Notwithstanding such shortcomings the 'general efficiency of the establishment' was noted on a regular basis.<sup>95</sup> Thus, despite the problems between Watch Committees and superintendents, the Huddersfield police force in the 1850s and 1860s developed into an efficient force in the judgement of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. In no small

measure this was due to the emergence of a core of ‘long-term’ policemen, to whose careers we now turn.

### Endnotes

- 1 A brief survey of northern forces (Cheshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Lancashire and Yorkshire) shows that only Birkenhead, Oldham and Rochdale experienced a number of short-serving head constables. In contrast Bradford had only three head constables between 1847 and 1894, all of whom served twelve years or more; in Halifax head constable served for twenty-one years between 1851 and 1872; in Hull head constable MacManus, thirty years (and dying in post); in Middlesbrough Hannan served for eight years and his successor Saggerson for twenty-three in Sheffield Rayner served for fourteen years, his successor, Jackson, twenty-nine; in Hartlepool head constable Waters served seventeen years; and in Wakefield the first head constable served twenty years from 1848 to 1868. More research is needed on several of these forces. The problems in Birkenhead, for example, were not necessarily the same as those in Huddersfield. Finally, the assumption that longevity of service guaranteed police efficiency should be resisted. M Stallion & D S Wall, *The British Police: Police Forces and Chief Officers, 1829–2000*, Police History Society, Gateshead, Athenaeum Press, 1999.
- 2 Para.XIV named the first eighteen commissioners: Joseph Armitage Esq., George Armitage Esq., James Booth, Joseph Beaumont junior, John Brook, Thomas Pearson Crossland, Thomas Firth (Tea Dealer), Thomas Atkinson Heaps, Abraham Hirst, William Kaye, Jere Kaye, Thomas Mallinson, William Moore, John Newhouse, Samuel Routledge, John Sutcliffe Esq. and Joseph Shaw.
- 3 D Griffiths, *Joseph Brook of Greenhead: ‘Father of the Town’*, Huddersfield Local History Society, 2013 contains some clear and succinct observations on the politics of the town in the 1840s and 1850s.
- 4 D Griffiths, *Pioneers or Partisans? Governing Huddersfield, 1820–1848*, Huddersfield Local History Society, 2008, p.57.
- 5 George Loch, the agent of the Ramsden estate from 1844, was another key figure in the drive for improvement.
- 6 See M Brogden, *The Police: Autonomy and Consent*, London, Academic Press, 1982, T Jefferson & R Grimshaw, *Controlling the Constable*, London, Frederick Muller/Cobden Trust, 1984, L Lustgarten, *The Governance of Police*, London, Sweet & Maxwell, 1986 and R Reiner, *Chief Constables*, Oxford University Press, 1992.
- 7 Reiner, *Chief Constables*, p.13.
- 8 *HC*, 16 October 1858.
- 9 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 2/3/13/1, 13 August 1849.
- 10 In the absence of detailed information in the minutes of the Improvement Commission and the Watch Committee (and the absence of a local newspaper) one cannot say with confidence why this happened. However, the evidence of the early 1850s suggests that Thomas was an active officer, enforcing many of the commissioners’ policies regarding beerhouses and brothels, and well-regarded by some, if not all of the commissioners. See for,

- example, *HC*, 18 May, 14 September 1850, 18 January, 1 February, 17 April, 26 June 1851, 9 September & 4 November 1854.
- 11 *HC*, 11 & 18 May, 1850.
  - 12 *HC*, 18 January 1851 and 17 April 1852.
  - 13 *HC*, 7 February, 13 March & 2 October 1852.
  - 14 The concern with policing was one part of a wider campaign to improve the efficiency and economy of local government, which falls beyond the scope of this book.
  - 15 *HC*, 13 August 1853.
  - 16 *HC*, 4 March, 8 April & 15 July 1854.
  - 17 For example, see Commissioner Shaw's comparison of the members Watch Committee to company directors, *Huddersfield Examiner*, [hereafter *HEX*], 4 August 1855.
  - 18 *HC*, 4 August 1855.
  - 19 As the clerk to the commissioners informed members regarding the decision to swear-in Thomas as deputy-constable at the Court Leet. *HC*, 6 January, 1855.
  - 20 *HC*, 9 December 1854.
  - 21 Commissioner Thornton. *HC*, 4 November 1854. Jones also objected to Thomas's decision to allow two officers to assist the Hull police during the Queen's visit to that city, claiming erroneously that the Hull request had not been considered.
  - 22 *HC*, 6 January, 1855.
  - 23 At times Jones played fast and loose with the truth. He accused Thomas, on one occasion, of permitting two constables to assist the Hull force during the visit of the queen, without the permission of the commissioners. In fact, the Watch Committee had discussed and approved Thomas's proposal in response to a request from the authorities in Hull. *HC*, 4 November 1854.
  - 24 A W Sykes, *Ramsden Street Independent Church, Huddersfield. Notes and Records of a Hundred Years, 1825–1925*, Huddersfield, 1925, p. 99–100 cited in E A H Haigh, ed., *Huddersfield: A Most Handsome Town*, Huddersfield, 1992, p.128.
  - 25 Henry Lord is a somewhat enigmatic figure who had a chequered career and aroused strong feelings. A painter and decorator, living in Zetland Street, he was found guilty of assault on a number of occasions but also accused the police of assaulting him. In August 1852 he had written to the commissioners complaining about Inspector Sedgwick, though this was not upheld. He was also accused of receiving 'a large job of work without a contract' in 1853 and stood surety for the disgraced John Jarrett in the following year. More generally, he was prominent in local matters, alleging favouritism among local officials (at a public meeting regarding the Huddersfield cemetery in April 1852), questioning alleged police perquisites (at the Improvement Commission's annual meeting in June 1853) and asserting that police "added nought" for the £1,257 spent on them in the previous year. He was also a member of the Working Men's Committee and a supporter of the Huddersfield Temperance Drum and Fife Band.
  - 26 *HC*, 19 & 28 May 1855; *KMT*, 2/2/1, 6 June, 13 July & 1 August 1855.
  - 27 *HC*, 28 May 1855.
  - 28 *HC* & *HEX*, 9 June 1855.

- 29 Messrs. Dransfield and J Brook, *HC*, 9 June 1855.
- 30 *HC*, 9 June 1855.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *HEX*, 14 July 1855.
- 34 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 6 June 1855.
- 35 *HC*, 30 June 1855.
- 36 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 13 July 1855 & *HC*, 14 July 1855.
- 37 *HEX*, 28 July 1855.
- 38 *HC*, 14 July 1855.
- 39 *HEX*, 28 July 1855.
- 40 *HC*, 4 August 1855.
- 41 *HC*, 4 August 1855.
- 42 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT, 18/2/2/1, 6 June, 4 & 13 July & 1 August, 1855.
- 43 *HC*, 4 August 1855.
- 44 *HC*, 4 August 1855.
- 45 HIC Minutes, KMT, 18/2/2/1, 1 August 1855.
- 46 *HC*, 29 December 1855.
- 47 *HC*, 5 January 1856.
- 48 *LM*, 3 January 1856.
- 49 *LM*, 3 January 1856.
- 50 *LM*, 3 January 1856.
- 51 Boothroyd defended his action on the ground that it was 'only a private communication' but it is highly unlikely that Jones was unaware of the letter. The evidence, though incomplete, points to careful planning to bring in a favoured candidate.
- 52 *HC*, 7 November 1857. The Watch Committee minutes are silent on the matter.
- 53 *HC*, 14 August & 4 September, 1858.
- 54 *HC*, 16 October 1858.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 HIC Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 27 October & 4 November 1857.
- 57 HIC Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 4 November 1857.
- 58 *HC*, 6 November 1858.
- 59 *HC*, 3 March 1859. It is not known how or why Friday's speech was leaked but it is probable that whoever was responsible was confident that the *Chronicle*, whose editor was Joshua Hobson, would be sympathetic to anti-Jones sentiments, however indirectly expressed.
- 60 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/1, 25 August 1862.
- 61 *HC*, 11 October 1862. The letter was dated 25 August.
- 62 *Ibid.* Letter dated 30 August 1862.
- 63 *Ibid.* Letter dated 2 September.
- 64 *Ibid.*
- 65 *HC*, 20 June 1863. Hilton had a criminal record, having been found guilty of foul and abusive language when arrested by Detective Partridge as she hawked oranges at the railway station. She is not to be confused with Mary Ann Hilton, discussed in chapter six.

- 66 *HC*, 7 July 1866.
- 67 *Ibid*, 7 July 1866. See also *HC*, 1 September 1866.
- 68 *HC*, 9 November 1867.
- 69 *HC*, 7 September 1867.
- 70 *Ibid*.
- 71 *HC*, 9 November 1867.
- 72 *Ibid*.
- 73 *Ibid*.
- 74 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3/14/2, 6 November 1867.
- 75 See D Taylor, 'A fit man to be at the head of the police'. Head constables and watch committees in the first generation of 'new policing: a Yorkshire perspective, c.1840-1870' in K Stevenson, *et. al.*, eds., *Leading the Police: A History of Chief Constables*, London, Routledge, 2017, forthcoming. The author is also working on policing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century as part of a collection of essays to be published by the Huddersfield Local History Society to celebrate the 150th anniversary of incorporation.
- 76 Watch Committee Minutes, KMT 18/2/3//14/2, 26 December 1867.
- 77 See particularly the robust defence by the Watch Committee of the town's police following accusations of misconduct made regarding the 1857 Blanket Row fire. 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, pp338ff.
- 78 There were problems in Halifax in the early 1870s. The emergence of an increasingly powerful temperance movement and accusations that the superintendent of police was too close to the local drinks trade led to the dramatic resignation of Superintendent Pearson in 1872. J Posner, *The Establishment and Development of the New Police in Halifax, 1848-1914*, unpublished PhD, University of Huddersfield, 2015, p.107ff.
- 79 More research is needed on the relationship between watch committees and police superintendents in the first generation of 'new policing', especially in the medium-sized boroughs.
- 80 The central issue was the prosecution of brothels. The police adopted a pragmatic approach, prosecuting problematic and notorious brothels but turning a blind eye to 'respectable' ones. The Watch Committee ordered that all brothels be prosecuted contrary to the judgement of the chief constable, William Nott-Bower. One of the unforeseen consequences was the relocation of city-centre brothels to more respectable suburbs. The policy of indiscriminate prosecutions of brothels was quickly abandoned even though the Watch Committee had asserted its authority over its chief constable. W Nott-Bower, *Fifty Two Years a Policeman*, London, Edward Arnold, 1926, pp.139-46.
- 81 S H Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Wales, 1780-1850*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, chapter twelve, section II, esp. pp.504-516.
- 82 There were some who supported amalgamation. The *Chronicle*, continued to argue for it on grounds of economy, see 14 March 1857.
- 83 *HC*, 8 March 1856. Such sentiments were not unique to Huddersfield.
- 84 HIC Minutes, KMT 2/2/1, 5 March 1856 and *HC*, 8 March 1856.
- 85 Belated a similarly case was made for exempting Barnsley.

- 86 Report of Jones's meeting with Goderich and subsequent letter to Grey, reported to Huddersfield Improvement Commissioners. *HC*, 10 May 1856. For details of Goderich see [www.oxforddnb.com/article/35792](http://www.oxforddnb.com/article/35792) accessed 19 May 2015.
- 87 *Hansard, House of Commons debate*, 25 April 1856.
- 88 HIC Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 4 March 1857.
- 89 Reports of Inspectors of Constabulary to Secretary of State, 1856–7, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1857/8 (20), p.71.
- 90 Letter dated 31 March 1857 read to commissioners meeting of 25 April 1857, *HC*, 9 May 1857.
- 91 HIC Minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 4 March 1857 and *HC*, 7 March 1857.
- 92 Reports of Inspectors of Constabulary to Secretary of State, 1857/8, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1859 (17), p.74 and 1865 (32), p.96 for cells. *Reports of Inspectors of Constabulary to Secretary of State, 1860/1, Parliamentary Papers*, 1862 (28) p.67 for books. A year later the inspector found the 'same want of care and accuracy'. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863 (20), p.75. Beaumont's financial irregularities in 1858/9 were not picked up.
- 93 Reports of Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ending 29th September 1862, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863 (20).
- 94 *HC*, 12 July 1862.
- 95 The term 'efficiency' needs to be understood in terms of contemporary expectations. The newly-appointed Inspectors of Constabulary did not have a sophisticated measure of efficiency. To the contrary they applied a rough-and-ready criterion of one constable per 1,000 population to determine 'efficiency' and Huddersfield had a police/population ratio of 1:900 (or better) throughout the late 1850s and 1860s.