3 Creating a county police force: the early years under Col. Cobbe

AFTER MORE THAN a decade of policing under the superintending constable system, the magistrates of the West Riding were required to establish a county-wide force. The challenge facing them and their appointee as chief constable, Colonel Charles August Cobbe, was considerable. The initial size of the force was 487 officers and men, growing to almost 700 in 1868, when Cobbe resigned to become one of her majesty's inspectors of constabulary. Despite being adjudged to be 'efficient' in the annual inspections, the early years were problematic, particularly in terms of retention, but by the late-1860s there were signs that a more stable force was coming into existence.[1]

Cobbe had a vision of a force distanced from civilian society by men, preferably married, drawn from outside the county or from districts other than those they policed, thereby avoiding any familiarity that would undermine the policing enterprise. A policy of rotation between districts would further reduce the danger of constables 'going native.' His model rested on the optimistic assumption that there were sufficient men of the right calibre to be recruited and trained to the job. There were, however, contradictions at the heart of this model of policing. Men were repeatedly exhorted to get to know the people, especially those from the working-classes, they policed and win their confidence. This, as far as it was achievable, required both time and a degree of familiarity between police and policed which was not easily achieved given short-term postings. Similarly, the desire to recruit and retain married men – believed to be more dependable and bringing stability to the force – was undermined by the disruption caused to them and their families by frequent transfers.

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The early growth of the force was lumpy – 1858, 1862, 1864 and 1868 saw significant augmentations but recruitment, as reflected in shortfall figures, was not a quantitative problem. However, the large number of recruits appointed year on year point to the continuing underlying churn of men either resigning or being dismissed from the force. Starkly, in 1863 the authorised strength increased only by one yet 128 men had to be recruited to maintain the overall strength of the force. Recruitment and retention remained a serious and ongoing qualitative problem.

Advertisements were placed in the local and regional press on 29th November 1856 and interviews commenced on Monday 1st December, followed by initial training. On 27th December Cobbe announced a pause on applications and recruitment and announced that the first deployment would be made for the start of the new year, when the men would be 'sufficiently drilled, whilst many had previously served in the police force.' [2] In early January 1857 just over 200 constables with previous police experience were deployed across the twenty-one divisions. A further 175 were undergoing four weeks of training at the Wakefield headquarters with an emphasis on drill, which was intended to instil obedience to the orders of senior officers and a sense of place within the police hierarchy.[3]

Table 3.1 WRCC authorised strength and recruitment, 1857 – 68

Year	Authorised strength	Increase in authorised strength	Shortfall in men at inspection	Total men recruited (calendar year)
1857*	487		0	720
1858	529	42	0	160
1859	539	10	0	126
1860	545	6	4	136
1861	550	5	0	154
1862	578	28	6	125
1863	579	1	0	128
1864	606	27	0	131
1865	618	12	2	128
1866	630	12	6	111
1867	645	15	4	104
1868	656	21	2	99

*This figure includes recruitment in December 1856.

Sources: HMIC annual reports and WRCC Examination Books

Consistent with a strongly-held belief among police reformers that small boroughs were inefficient, Cobbe made clear his intention of taking 'overcharge of the police' from the local boards of Barnsley, Keighley and Rotherham.[4] Despite considerable local dissatisfaction in these towns, they were unable to resist.[5] Cobbe's ambitions extended to the incorporation of the larger Huddersfield and Wakefield police forces into the WRCC but in this he failed. The wrangling over Huddersfield was of more than local interest. It revealed the limitations of reformers to achieve their ends and, more importantly, the perceived shortcomings of the county force. Huddersfield, HMIC Woodford conceded, 'would not be as efficiently watched during the night under the arrangements of the county constabulary' as it was under the Improvement Commissioners.[6]

Nonetheless, Woodford's first report on the WRCC was positive. 'The officers and men,' it noted, 'seem to have been selected by the chief constable with care and discrimination [and] many amongst them [had] served with credit in other police forces.'[7] Although there was some 'deficiency of strength' in one or two divisions bordering on great towns, 'in its present stage this force is entirely equal to a full discharge of [its] duties over a district, so populous and so important as the West Riding.'[8] By the time of the 1858 inspection the force was at its authorised strength. The 'managerial' team comprised the chief constable, Cobbe, twenty-one divisional superintendents and sixteen inspectors and a chief clerk. The hard graft of policing was carried out by 443 constables and forty-eight sergeants, who were considered to be in a 'highly satisfactory state of discipline and efficiency.'[9] The following years saw steady augmentation. By the end of the 1860s, the number of constables was significantly larger (549) as were the number of sergeants (77) and the core management team had been strengthened by the appointment of an assistant chief clerk. Divisional management was enhanced by an increase in the number of inspectors from sixteen to twenty.

During the 1860s, the judgement from above, that is Her Majesty's inspector, was consistently positive. On more than one occasion they were referred to as 'a well-chosen, intelligent and healthy body of men,' sometimes 'very satisfactory' in terms of discipline and efficiency,' more often 'highly satisfactory.' Moreover, according to Woodford, the WRCC provided 'a very complete system of patrolling by day and night … extending in the counties to the most rural and least populous districts.'[10] Cobbe himself was equally

confident about the quality of his force. Addressing the county magistrates at the West Riding Easter Session, at Pontefract in 1861, he asserted that 'the force … is working satisfactorily … its services generally appreciated [and] the conduct of the men … very good.'[11] The official view seemed too good to be true – and so it was. A more detailed analysis using the WRCC Examination books reveals a different picture .[12]

Leadership: superintendents and inspectors

In a matter of weeks, Cobbe was required to recruit, train and deploy just under 400 men initially, rising to over 500 a year later. He needed men to train the new recruits in the short term and to maintain discipline and efficiency in the longer term. Given the urgency of the situation, Cobbe looked to men of proven ability and local knowledge. Of the twenty-one divisional superintendents, eighteen had been superintending constables in the West Riding.[13] Predictably they were older than other recruits. Only one was in his (late) twenties, while ten were over forty, notwithstanding the fact that the upper age limit for the force as a whole was forty. Three men, Ingham, McGregor and Smith were forty-nine years old, and Heaton almost forty-seven. Cobbe clearly valued experience but there was a price to pay in terms of longevity of service.[14]

Eight of these superintendents became long-serving officers, retiring on a pension, and two died in service – William Green (Barnsley), after eighteen years and John Smith (Otley) after eight years. The most successful was William Hall, originally a draper from Stockton-on-Tees. Joining the Durham constabulary, he served for ten years, reaching the rank of superintendent. Moving with his family to the West Riding he was the superintending constable for Lower Agbrigg for five years before being appointed as superintendent of that district in 1857. In a career that spanned more than thirty years in the WRCC, he rose to the post of deputy chief constable. He retired on a pension in December 1890 aged seventy-two. The affection in which he was held by his fellow senior officers was reflected in the generous presentation he received two months later. But the years of service had taken their toll and 'illness and infirmity' led to his death in March 1891.[15] Though never moving beyond the rank of superintendent, Thomas

Heaton was similarly highly regarded, at least by his fellow police officers and members of respectable society. Held 'in respect and esteem' he was praised for being 'unusually vigilant, [making] many clever and smart arrests.'[16] Similarly, William Exton was praised for his 'faithful and impartial service,' but it was his success in containing the threat of the navvies, as they built the Settle & Carlisle railway, that was particularly noted.[17] The platitudes in their obituaries – they were 'most able,' 'faithful servants' and 'respected by all' – should not obscure the key role they played in the early years of the WRCC. But there were also failures. Four former superintending constables were dismissed and two more resigned within months.[18] Despite a successful career as superintending constable Thomas Spier's 'services [were] dispensed with' after three months. No reason was given in his police record and there was no mention of his demise in the local press, which for several years had commented positively on his police activities.[19] Charles Ingham's departure was also surprising. He had served in the Bradford borough force for eighteen years and a further eight-and-a-half years as superintending constable for East Morley but, after only nine months, was struck off, 'having been appointed Inspector of Weights and Measures for the East Morley division.' Whatever the precise reasons behind these resignations and dismissals, they constituted a significant problem for Cobbe. Barely eighteen months after the formation of the WRCC, seven superintendents (a third of this group) were no longer in post. That four of them had been dismissed was particularly worrying and raised questions about the wisdom of his decision to rely upon ex-superintending constables. Further, it increased the dependency on the next rank in the police hierarchy – the inspectors from whom were promoted men to the rank of superintendent.

In the initial deployment (January 1857) there were thirteen inspectors, rising to sixteen in March 1858 and to twenty a decade later. This initial deployment threw up some unexplained anomalies – why were inspectors allocated to Upper Agbrigg and East Morley but not to West Morley and Skyrack? – which were addressed over time. A more serious matter was the flurry of redeployments amongst inspectors in the first year. There was no obvious pattern to the early deployment of these men. Eight of the twenty-one divisions had no inspector in 1857, whereas three (including the contrasting divisions of Claro and Dewsbury) had seen four and another two divisions had seen three inspectors. Four men served in two divisions that year while

the unfortunate Robert Tucker found himself moved to four in less than twelve months. Such mobility has hardly conducive to effective policing but the first year, 1857 was exceptional. Looked at from a longer perspective, Cobbe's strategy was to give his inspectors experience of at least two or three divisions before allowing them to settle for a longer period. For some the first posting was a matter of months; for others a year, even two. James Kershaw, for example, started in Keighley and, within a month was transferred to Claro. From there he moved to Lower Agbrigg after three years and to West Morley after five years. In 1868, after another three-year stint, he was transferred to the Sheffield division, where he served as superintendent for ten years. George Sykes spent his first fourteen months in Dewsbury, moving in rapid succession to Upper Barkstonash and Staincross, before a five-year spell in Staincross. Promoted to superintendent in November 1865, after a brief period at Otley, he served out his last fourteen years back in the Staincross division. In contrast, John Nicholson was sent to East Morley in 1857 and stayed there until 1865. He served another five years at Lower Strafforth and Tickhill, before a final period of service of eleven years in West Staincliffe.

In 1857 twenty men were appointed as inspectors and a further five promoted from the rank of sergeant. In 1858 and 1859 a further four men became inspectors, three promoted. As might be expected, they were older, all but one was married on appointment, twenty-one (over 80 per cent) had previous police experience and seven also had military experience. Seventeen (over 60 per cent) had served more than five years, with nine having served for more than ten years. They had served in a variety of county and borough forces but only five had been in the Lancashire constabulary. More surprising, given Cobbe's preference for men from outside the West Riding, eight had been employed locally as policemen.

Career outcomes were varied. Six men were promoted to superintendent and served in post until pensionable age, and a further three served as inspectors and retired on pension. Seven were promoted but subsequently demoted, in all but one case to the rank of sergeant; five were dismissed (one for unspecified 'conspiracy'), one absconded and three resigned. Put simply, three-fifths of early inspectors failed to meet the demands of the post. Of those that did, their experience was of regular movement between police divisions, particularly in the early part of their career. George Bull served

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in three districts in five years before being promoted to superintendent. Similarly, between February 1857 and July 1858, George Lottey served in three before gaining promotion. Robert Tucker served in five before he forced to resign after six years in the force. Even more varied was the career of Seth Parker. In his first seven years he served in four divisions, moving to a fifth on promotion to superintendent. Two years later he was demoted to inspector and moved to a fifth district. By the time he retired in January 1888 he had served in eight division. In the last, Rotherham he served eleven years, significantly longer than any other posting.

Superintendents and inspectors were the leaders of the WRCC at divisional level. Their performances during the Cobbe era were mixed. In view of the importance of these positions in the police hierarchy, and at a time when many of the rank-and-file policemen were inexperienced, the combination of brief tenure of office and poor performance meant that this level of management was weak and added to the broader problem of creating an efficient and effective force. But what of the men they commanded?

The rank and file: constables and sergeants

In two months, December 1856 and January 1857, 442 men were sworn in.[20] These recruits were drawn from a broad socio-economic spectrum. Almost a quarter were from the textile trades, though labourers comprised the largest single occupational category. Overall, the first cohort of the WRCC did not conform to 'the image of rural class relationships' that Steedman claims was commonplace across the country in the early years of the new county forces.[21] Although Cobbe sought to recruit from outside the county, 69 per cent of men in the lower ranks were born in Yorkshire, and more were living there immediately prior to recruitment. 137 men, or 31 per cent of the total in the first cohort had previous police or military experience. Surprisingly in light of criticisms of the early WRCC, only ten had served in the Lancashire County Constabulary. Previous police experience had been gained most commonly in the northern city forces – Manchester, Bradford, Leeds and Liverpool. There were a few men (five in all) with experience of the Met – the same number as had served in Halifax – but there is little evidence to suggest that there was a flood of men from the Huddersfield force, attracted (as

Cobbe claimed) by higher wages.[22] On closer examination, previous police experience was less than impressive, some men having served only weeks, even days, before leaving. In total, 30 per cent of men with previous experience had served less than one year. However, more than half had been in a force for between one and four years and 16 per cent had served for more than five years. Contemporary opinion was divided on the length of time it took for a recruit to become an effective constable. Some said three years, others five.[23] Taking the latter figure, only twenty-two men (or one per division) had meaningful police experience. A significant minority (fifty-nine or 14 per cent) had served as parish constables, paid constables or nightwatchmen under the old system. The evidence of the WRCC Examination Books is incomplete and inconsistent. Twenty-three were identified as paid constables, nine as nightwatchmen, six as parish constables and twenty-one simply as constables. Several of these men had experience of different forms of policing, reinforcing the conclusion that there was a significant degree of fluidity in mid-nineteenth century policing. Their presence also highlights the extent to which the superintending constable system smoothed the transition to the new county force.

All recruits were provided with a book of rules and regulations 'showing the extent of his powers and duties' and, in addition were 'required to keep a journal of the discharge of his duties.'[24] With only basic drill training, the WRCC relied heavily on 'learning by doing,' tempered, where possible, by mentoring by more experienced officers. With relatively few experienced men, many recruits, thrown in at the deep end, failed and were soon lost to the WRCC. The loss of some 40 per cent of recruits in their first year (rising to 55 per cent after two years) was worrying but not significantly out of line with other forces at the time, including the earlier-founded forces of Lancashire and Staffordshire.[25]

Table 3.2 Length of service of first WRCC cohort

	Less than 1 year	1 to 4 years	5 to 9 years	10 to 19 years	20 and more
Number	181	101	37	53	72
Percentage	41	23	8	12	16

Source: WRCC Examination Books A & B

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More encouraging for Cobbe, and easily overlooked, was the 45 per cent of recruits who served for more than three years and the 36 per cent who served for five or more years. These were men, who by contemporary standards, had 'served their apprenticeship.' Further, given the importance of training 'on the job,' the fact that just over 120 men served for ten years or more helped to create a cadre of experienced, if not always physically fit, men.

In terms of career outcomes, broadly speaking, as many men were dismissed as were awarded a pension and twice as many chose to leave the force. Again, the WRCC was not out of line with other county forces. Indeed, the percentage of resignations was higher in Lancashire (59 per cent for the period 1845–70), though the figure for dismissals was the same.[26]

Table 3.3: Career outcomes of first WRCC cohort

	Pension	Dismissed	Resigned compulsorily	Resigned and discharged	Resigned – ill health	Resigned	Died	Other*
Number	95	93	3	33	10	188	18	4
Percentage	21	21	1	7	2	42	4	1

*One absconded, and three incomplete records

Source: WRCC Examination Books A & B

There were a number of success stories, some spectacular, though the opportunities for promotion to the most senior rank were limited by the presence of superintendents appointed in January 1857. In total some twenty-seven men (or 5 per cent of the first cohort) became inspectors and four superintendents. As a result of the churn among inspectors appointed in January 1857 and the need to expand their number, sixteen men were promoted to inspector between 1857 and 1859. The remaining twelve were promoted in the 1860s. It is difficult to see any clear relationship between type and length of previous service and length of service in the WRCC. The experienced Holmfirth paid constable, Earnshaw resigned within months whereas the long-serving Bingley parish constable, served a further sixteen years in the WRCC, while Greenwood and Gibson, paid constables for

Hipperholme and Northowram respectively, were promoted to the rank of inspector by the end of January 1857 but they were the exceptions.

Closer examination of the data reveals other important problems, notably finding suitable men to serve as sergeants. By 1859 there were fifty-four sergeants in post. Of the first cohort eighty-six men, (approximately 20 percent), were appointed or promoted to the rank of sergeant but thirty-one of these (that is over a third) were subsequently reduced to the rank of constable. In addition, several of these men resigned only months after appointment. The problem was, unsurprisingly, most acute in 1857. Of forty promoted men, thirteen were reduced in rank or resigned within weeks and months. A particularly stark example was PC Boothman. With over twelve years' experience in the Cheshire and Lancashire forces, he looked a good prospect when appointed in January 1857. On 1st February he was promoted to the rank of sergeant, only to be reduced in rank two weeks later. Four months later he was promoted again. This time he managed just over two months in the post before being dismissed for unspecified 'irregular conduct.' Only three sergeants went on to a long-term career. One was pensioned after sixteen years, one retired because of ill-health after fourteen years and the third died in service after nine years. A second problem, which became more apparent over time, related to the seventy-two long-serving officers who did not gain promotion and saw little improvement in their material condition. The number of these men dismissed or resigning was significant, eighteen and fourteen (or 25 per cent and 19 per cent) respectively. Further several men who served long enough to be pensioned had disciplinary records that deteriorated over time, being demoted from first to third class on one or more occasion. Efficiency was not helped by the combination of poor performance and age. A final problem was the 20 per cent, or so, of recruits unable to read or write. Three-quarters of this sub-group of recruits left in the first two or three years – 40 per cent in the first year alone. Exceptionally, there were success stories. Thomas Stephenson, an illiterate labourer, served for over thirty years and was promoted to the first class and the good conduct classes. Even more striking, John Symonds, an uneducated farm labourer, also served for thirty years, during which time he was promoted inspector (in 1876) and then superintendent (in 1882).

Overall, a significant minority of the first cohort learnt their trade and went on to be long-serving officers but there were also high levels of

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resignations and dismissals. The former was, in effect a commentary by the men on the police as a force. For a variety of reasons – inadequate pay, the dangers and restrictions of the job and better paid and less stressful alternatives – these men were making clear their dissatisfaction with policing and its demands. The latter was a commentary by the police authorities on the quality (or lack of) of certain recruits. Taken together these weaknesses are a useful corrective to the optimistic claims of police reformers and the police's own inspectorate. A more realistic, though retrospective, assessment from within the force came with the departure of Cobbe. At a dinner of police superintendents in January 1870, where a presentation was made to the recently retired chief constable, Superintendent Grisedale spoke of the Herculean task that had faced Cobbe as he sought 'to mould the force out of very imperfect material.'[27]

The divisional experience

The WRCC was not a homogenous entity. Indeed, in many respects it was a confederation of twenty-one different district forces. It is easy to overlook the importance of geography. Police/population ratios may well have been (very roughly) equal across the county but for both police and policed there were significantly different experiences between lightly and densely populated districts. In Upper Agbrigg, by way of example, the police were a regularly visible presence in places such as Honley and Holmfirth but far less so in Holme or Scammonden, let alone in the surrounding moorland districts where a policeman was more isolated but also a rarer figure. Thus, for a fuller understanding of the early experience, four divisions – Dewsbury, Keighley, Upper Strafforth & Tickhill and Upper Agbrigg – will be considered.

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Table 3.4 Comparative statistics for first cohorts of constables and sergeants in the Dewsbury, Keighley, Upper Strafforth & Tickhill and Upper Agbrigg divisions

	Dewsbury	Keighley	Upper Strafforth & Tickhill	Upper Agbrigg
Cohort size	32	22	29	40
Area (acres)	24,500	37,000	67,500	64,000
Population (approx.)	72,000	42,000	36,000	120,000
In post after 3 years (as %)	12	4	10	17
In post after 5 years	6	2	8	15
Left in 1st year (%)	41	50	66	63
Left by 3rd year (%)	63	82	72	83
Resigned (%)	41	36	45	45
Dismissed (%)	25	18	14	33
Transferred (%)	25	36	31	15

Source: WRCC Examination Books A & B

There is no obvious pattern to a generally grim picture. By 1860 losses ranged from just over 60 per cent in Dewsbury to almost 90 per cent in Keighley. Although men continued to be posted to these divisions, inexperience was very much the order of the day. Starkly, in Keighley none of the original cohort remained in the division by the end of 1861, a mere six in Dewsbury and only fifteen in the large and populous division of Upper Agbrigg. The core of a more permanent force may be discernible in hindsight but the contemporary experience was more of policemen frequently coming and going but rarely staying.

Dewsbury

The Dewsbury petty sessional district was one of the smallest in the West Riding, including difficult-to-access Pennine communities, as well as urban centres such as Dewsbury (until 1863), Batley and Mirfield.[28] The Dewsbury division was led by John Martin who became superintendent in late-1857, succeeding William Hall who had been transferred months after his initial appointment in January 1857. Martin, born in Inverness was an experienced

policeman, having served periods of three years in the Edinburgh force, the Lancashire county force and the Salford borough force, and one year as assistant superintendent in the Dumfries police. He was twenty-nine when he joined the WRCC and served for twelve years. He was a key local figure in the early policing of the Dewsbury division but his later years were overshadowed by declining health, which finally saw him resign on the grounds of 'infirmity of mind.'

1857 saw a flurry of changes among inspectors appointed to the division. Five were appointed, of whom two were transferred within months, one transferred just after a year, one demoted and one dismissed for another unspecified 'conspiracy.' Matters stabilised thereafter, particularly in the person of William Weatherill. Weatherill built up a reputation as an active and energetic man but was best-known for his part in subduing a major disturbance at the Methodist Free Church chapel, Batley.[29] His fellow inspector from 1865 to 1869 was Seth Parker, who had been transferred from Upper Agbrigg, where he had been heavily criticised for heavy-handed policing in Holmfirth in 1862. Parker avoided trouble and in 1869 became the superintendent of the Saddleworth division, only to be demoted for misconduct two years later.

Half of the first cohort were single and two-thirds had no previous police or army experience. Only four were born outside the county and three of these were living in the West Riding when they joined. Despite disciplinary problems, overall wastage rates in the first year were in line with the force as a whole and not as bad as in adjoining Upper Agbrigg. Nonetheless, over 80 per cent of the first intake had left the division within five years. More men resigned (39 per cent) than were dismissed (24 per cent) but a significant portion (27 per cent) were simply transferred elsewhere. Drunkenness and (unspecified) misconduct were the most common causes for dismissal. Richard Harley lost his job for 'disgraceful conduct,' having served less than three weeks and Thomas Uttley was in uniform a mere eight days before drunkenness led to his dismissal. For other men, it did not take long before dissatisfaction with the job led to resignation. PCs Dawson and Earnshaw left after three months, PCs Winterborn and Wood after six. A minority went onto longer term service in the WRCC. Both Benjamin Foster and William Irvin where 'work horse' constables, learning their trade in Dewsbury but moving on after two years.[30] There remained a small core of men who became the face of

first-generation policing in the Dewsbury division. Neither Benjamín Berry nor Charles Shepherd rose above the rank of first-class constable in careers that both lasted six years. The stalwarts of the force were James Denley, who served twenty-three years as a constable in the town, before retiring in 1880, and Thomas English, who died in service in his thirty-first year in the WRCC, mostly as a sergeant. Their reward for long service was promotion to the merit and good conduct classes after twenty-three- and twenty-five-years' service. These were essentially consolation prizes for long-serving men with no realistic chance of furthering their career.[31]

The Dewsbury district was nominally policed by the WRCC, but the reality was of an inexperienced force, including inspectors, at best learning their trade in these early years, at worst simply leaving the force within months of appointment. In retrospect one can see the emergence of a core of career policemen but it would take several years for this to impact in any meaningful way, by which time the borough of Dewsbury had established its own force.

Keighley

The Keighley division was also relatively small and covered a diverse area which included some industrial centres, notably Keighley itself, as well as market towns such as Bingley and Ilkley, as well as villages such as Giggleswick, Grassington and Haworth. Its first superintendent, John Cheeseborough, had previous local experience and served for almost six years before resigning. His successor, the highly-successful William Gill, served in the division for thirteen years. Both provided continuity and firm leadership, as did inspector Henry Hay.

The degree of continuity with existing policing practice was clearer in the Keighley division than elsewhere. Ten men (almost 50 per cent of the cohort) had served as nightwatchmen or paid constables in Keighley, Bingley and other localities, with a further three with police experience elsewhere. Few became long-serving men. John Robinson, a Bingley nightwatchman, was promoted to the merit class and received a further commendation but remained a constable until his death in 1864. Edward Whitehead, who had served seven years' in the Lancashire county force, served seven years

in Keighley. Although promoted to inspector in 1859 he was dismissed five years later. For the remainder, with or without police experience, seven resigned in the first three years, three were dismissed and six transferred. The overall divisional experience further highlights the difficulties facing Cobbe and his superintendents in the early years of the WRCC.

Upper Strafforth & Tickhill

The Upper Strafforth and Tickhill division contained important towns, notably Rotherham and bordered on Sheffield which had its own police force. In addition, it contained mining communities, such as Maltby and villages like Wath-upon-Dearne and a large part was relatively inaccessible Pennine-uplands.

The division was well served by Superintendent John Gillett from 1857 to 1880. He had served for almost fifteen years in the Lancashire county constabulary, rising to the rank of inspector. His subsequent career was a vindication of Cobbe's policy of appointing experienced men from outside the county. In contrast, there was a rapid turnover of inspectors. Robert Tucker, served for seven months before being transferred. Thomas Black, transferred from Staincross and promoted to inspector on 1 October 1857 was demoted two weeks later for neglect of duty. He was followed by Joseph Howarth, a man of ability as his subsequent career demonstrated but his stay in Upper Strafforth and Tickhill lasted a mere eight months before he was transferred to Upper Agbrigg. His replacement, Michael Cavanagh, was compulsorily resigned a year later. There seemed to be an element of continuity in the person of John Ashley but he was demoted after three years. The rapid turnover of men points again to a major weakness in divisional leadership.

The first cohort of policemen was equally problematic. As in Keighley, almost half the first cohort had previous police experience – a figure rising to two-thirds if army and other public service is included. The first year was again critical – 60 per cent of recruits left or were asked to leave. The following years saw fewer losses, though only 30 per cent of the cohort was in post after three years. Married men with no police experience were more likely to resign, but for reasons that are not apparent, the largest group to be dismissed were married men with prior police experience. The reasons for dismissal

were utterly predictable – drunkenness, insolence and neglect of duty – but it is the brevity of certain police careers that is striking. William Gill* was dismissed after less than a week, while William Taylor managed all of three days before being 'dismissed by order of the chief constable.' Others lasted a little longer before being discharged. During his first two years in the division, John Cantwell moved his way up to first-class constable. The return journey took only two months (December 1861 and January 1862).Three days after his final demotion to third-class constable, he resigned. Samuel Robertshaw served for eleven years in the division but was reduced in rank for misconduct on four occasions. The record of these men, and of other early leavers, again casts doubt on the claim that the force had been carefully selected.

However, there were men who made a long-term career of policing. Joseph Haworth, a man with more army than police experience, spent less than a year in the division but was first promoted sergeant and then inspector, at which point he was transferred to Upper Agbrigg. William Horn, who had no previous police experience, rapidly moved to the first class and merit class. After thirteen years he was made an inspector and promoted to Saddleworth in 1870.[32] Also promising, but ultimately less successful, was John Ashley, appointed in January 1857. He quickly made sergeant (March 1857) and inspector (January 1858) but after three years, and for reasons not officially recorded, he was demoted to sergeant, moved to Dewsbury and, three months later, retired on grounds of ill-health. For most long-serving men there were few opportunities for promotion. John French and John Smalley both served in the district for six years. French managed to work his way up from third-class to first-class constable and gain entry to the merit class by 1865 by which time he had been transferred to Staincross. John Smalley progressed from third- to first-class and back down to third in his first two years. In 1863 he was promoted to sergeant and also transferred to Staincross. But overall few men remained in post after five years from the arrival of the first cohort – building a stable force was a protracted (and uneven) process.

* Not to be confused with the successful William Smith Gill, rapidly promoted to superintendent and later chief clerk and deputy chief constable.

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Upper Agbrigg

Upper Agbrigg was one of the larger, more heavily populated and diverse divisions, including a number of industrialised villages, such as Kirkheaton, Lockwood and Golcar, close to Huddersfield, through the mixed-economy villages of Honey and Holmfirth to the wilder districts in the Pennines, such as Hade Edge, Holme or Scammonden.

The experience of senior police management in the early years in this division was of short tenures and some unsatisfactory appointments. The notable exception was Thomas Heaton, one-time superintending constable, appointed superintendent in 1857 and serving until retirement in 1875.[33] His considerable contribution to the policing of the Huddersfield district should not be overlooked but he necessarily depended upon others to ensure the division was properly policed. Thomas Parkin, the first inspector, was stationed at Holmfirth. He had served in the Blackburn borough force for over five years and a further five years in the Lancashire County Constabulary, but such was his ability he was recalled to headquarters in June 1858 and subsequently became a superintendent. His replacement was Joseph Haworth, who came in June 1858. Promoted first-class inspector in November 1859, he was transferred to the Ainsty division but during his brief time at Holmfirth he did much to foster good relations between the new police and the villagers. His successor, Seth Parker, another ex-Lancashire County Constabulary man was altogether a flintier character. His aggressive action against local beerhouses was an important factor in precipitating the mass protests of 1862, which led to his transfer out of the district. His successor, William Airton, born in Skipton, but having served briefly in the Met, did much to restore relations in the mid- and late-1860s. His work as inspector of nuisances and particularly his actions during the cattle plague won him local support. Of the two other inspectors who served in Upper Agbrigg there is little to say. Airton's successor, the successful career policeman, Walter Nunn, who had worked his way up from constable to inspector, moved to Upper Agbrigg in January 1868 but died shortly afterwards. Samuel Hockaday was promoted to inspector and transferred to Upper Agbrigg in July 1868 but was forced to resign six months later. The combination of brief tenure of office and poor performance led to weak divisional management, only partly offset by Heaton's dedication.

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The first cohort of constables were inexperienced men. Only seven men had three years' previous experience or more. Not that that guaranteed success – Earnshaw, despite a successful time as the Holmfirth constable, was dismissed after five months. Losses in the first year were particularly high and four out of five men had left by the end of the third year – almost as many dismissed as resigning. Cobbe's faith in married men was misplaced. They were twice as likely to resign or be dismissed as their single counterparts and again, the reasons for dismissal were predictable – drunkenness, insubordination and neglect of duty. However, as in other divisions, there was the kernel of a more stable, professional force. Abraham Sedgwick, the often-embattled paid constable of Meltham, was promoted to sergeant after one month, and eighteen months later was promoted to the merit class, at which rank he remained until he was pensioned on the grounds of ill-health in 1872. Another workhorse of the division was James Smith, who served for seventeen years. He moved through the ranks, with a reversal in 1862, becoming a first-class constable in 1865. His career stalled at that point. Eleven years later he was moved to the good conduct class, which brought a small financial gain, but he made no further advance during the remaining eight years of his police career. His reward for twenty-seven years' service – a pension of 2s 6d per day.

Thomas Heaton rarely spoke in public but in his first year as a superintendent, he had noted how policing had been made easier under the WRCC. Whether he remained of the same opinion is unknown, but the problems he faced were considerable and suggest that there were more similarities with the old policing order than he would have liked to admit. Indeed, in 1862 he was to be faced with the greatest challenge to the legitimacy of the WRCC ever experienced in the Victorian years, as will become clear in chapter four.

The focus on divisional experiences reinforces much – both negative and positive – from the overall analysis of the WRCC but it also brings home forcefully the scarcity of experienced men with knowledge of a district, let alone a town or village therein. Transfers between divisions, with the exception of Upper Agbrigg, were as important as resignations in creating short-term careers. And the early-year problems are compounded by transfers within divisions, which are unrecorded in the WRCC Examination Books.

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The 1860s – years of slow progress

The turmoil associated with the rapid creation of a county force from scratch in 1857 was never to be repeated but the early years continued to be problematic in terms of recruitment and retention. Of 154 men appointed in 1861, over a third resigned and a similar proportion were dismissed. Half the recruits left in their first year and barely a third were in post five years later. A conscious effort had been made to stabilise matters by recruiting experienced men. 40 per cent of all recruits (fifty-eight men) had previous police experience. But the policy proved a failure. There were some successes – John Barrett and Thomas Sutherland both became long-serving sergeants, while John Boshier and John Symonds both became inspectors – but they were the exceptions. Some lied and were found out and dismissed with weeks, though some like the notorious Antrobus (of whom more later) hid their indiscretions longer. Some had testimonials that should have sounded alarmed bells. William Howlett, according to the report from the York borough force, was known to be 'silly,' and yet was appointed, only to be dismissed for inefficiency a year later. Others had records that spoke of failure. William Acton had served in three different forces, including the WRCC, for periods of three, seven and twelve months – an appointment that smacked of optimism; George Baker was dismissed in March 1861, only to return four months later – an appointment that smacked of desperation. Taken as a whole, almost half of these men were dismissed, most within the first two years, and a quarter resigned, also after a short time.

Despite these problems, a growing number of men were making a career of policing. Thirty-six men from this cohort went onto to serve at least ten years, including twenty-four for over twenty. Roughly half achieved one promotion (to sergeant) but only six men reached the rank of inspector and a mere three became superintendents in the WRCC. On average it took between six and eight years to become a sergeant and a further five to six to become an inspector. For some the wait was long indeed. John Sutherland waited twelve years to become a sergeant and John Boshier fourteen years to become an inspector. The majority of long-serving men never rose above the rank of constable, though they were eligible for promotion to the merit and good conduct classes. For some the guaranteed all-year employment was sufficient and they served their time with few blemishes on their disciplinary record

and receiving a pension in due course. Others (a quarter of all long-serving men) manged to serve until pensioned but often with a poor disciplinary record. William Balderstone was promoted seven times and demoted four times in a thirty-year career, which boded ill for the efficiency of the force. Similarly, Samuel Nichols, who was one of a number who failed to make the grade as a sergeant, and then there were the remainder, just over 50 per cent of long-serving men, for whom the frustrations of a stalled career manifested itself in resignation or (in at least five cases) dismissal. The implications for efficiency are, again, clear.

Nor did the situation improve in the remaining years of Cobbe's reign. Recruiting suitable men remained problematic in a flourishing regional economy, even after the pay increases of 1866. Even the Inspector of Constabulary for the Northern District, prone to putting a favourable gloss on matters where possible, noted in 1866 'the difficulty of procuring properly-qualified men for service in the police [which had been] so recently aggravated by the high rates of wages now paid for labour'. Indeed, he felt there was 'a danger of the service [in the county] becoming seriously impaired.'[34] Retention problems were equally stubborn. Roughly three-quarters of recruits served less than five years, two men resigning for every one dismissed. The percentage of men receiving a pension rose slightly (from about 12 to 14 per cent) but disciplinary problems (short of dismissal) remained.

But what was the state of the force when Cobbe left office? There is no muster roll for the WRCC but the information in the force's examination books can be used to construct a snapshot of the force in any given year.[35] The following analysis is based on the records of 459 men in post on the morning of 1 January 1868, of whom 385 had five or more years' experience. A first estimate of 'efficient' men in the force, that is excluding consideration of illness and ill-discipline, gives a range from 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the overall force which had an authorised strength of 645 in 1867, rising to 656 the following year.[36] The largest group by far of these 'experienced' men had joined in 1857, the foundation year of the force. They accounted for c.40 per cent of the total and had ten years' experience in the WRCC. A further 40 per cent had served between five and nine years. However, these figures underestimate the extent of overall police service. Several men, as noted earlier, brought with them experience of policing in a variety of forms. Abraham Sedgwick, exceptionally, joined the WRCC, aged 40 in 1858,

having served as a paid constable in Huddersfield from 1840 until he joined the Huddersfield borough force and served a further thirteen years. Sedgwick was unusual but several men had previous police experience running to years, though others had served for a matter of months, in some cases weeks and days. Unfortunately, the WRCC records were not always complete, hence the exclusion of this partial information in the following analysis.

Almost two-thirds of these 'experienced' men went on to receive a pension, although, less so for men with only three or four years of service in 1868. The overall potential of long-service was diminished in three ways. A small number of men (thirty-four or some 6 per cent) were dismissed. A further fifty (9 per cent), particularly the longest-serving men, were forced to retire early because of either physical or mental ill-health or died in service. Exceptionally, PC Hargreaves was killed on duty but many others had impaired health from a variety of work-related causes – arresting a suspect, stopping a runaway horse or impounding a dangerous dog as well as the more mundane flat feet and bronchitis. Rarely considered are the psychological pressures of the job. PCs Merkle and Tillotson left the force because of 'infirmity of mind' and 'insanity' but others will have suffered from real but unrecorded psychological problems. The third and most important reason, was voluntary resignation, especially for men with only three or four years of service. These figures highlight the ongoing problem of retaining experienced men. It is no coincidence that many of these resignations came after career progression had stalled. Thomas Brannigan, for example, had become a sergeant and promotion to the merit class within four years. Between 1869 and 1871 he was reduced in rank on four separate occasions. Deprived of his position in the merit class, he resigned. Voluntary resignations were the product of a complex mix of frustrated expectations and the ongoing quotidian demands of the job but also an evaluation of alternatives – and in the 1860s a relatively healthy regional economy saw higher wages in several alternative occupations.

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Table 3.5 WRCC, 1 January 1868 – totals and career outcomes for men with three or more years' service

Years of service	Total (all ranks)	Pension	Dismissed	Resigned	Resigned ill-health	Died (+ killed)
10	198	146	6	19	15	11 + 1
9	38	28	2	5	0	3
8	35	27	1	5	2	0
7	40	27	1	9	3	0
6	44	27	6	7	1	3
5	30	18	5	6	0	1
4	34	11	8	10	3	2
3	40	16	5	14	2	3
Total	459	299	34	75	26	24
As %	100%	65%	8%	16%	6%	5%

Source: WRCC Examination Books A & B

Superintendents were key figures at divisional level. Twenty-one had been appointed in December 1856 and January 1857, two more were promoted later that year and a further two in 1858. For the most part they were men with considerable prior police experience. Daniel Astwood had over sixteen years' police service, Thomas Heaton eight. The majority served satisfactorily into the 1870s. Exceptionally, Robert Ormsby and William Smith Gill were still in service at the turn of the twentieth century. Superintendents, however able, were also dependent upon the support from their inspectors. Eighteen were appointed in January and February 1857. Again, many had considerable police experience. Inspector Parkin had over ten years' experience in the Lancashire and Blackburn constabularies. Christopher Copeland, likewise, had served ten years in the same force. The majority served many years before being pensioned but a minority (about 10 per cent) proved unsuited to the post and were either required to resign or were reduced to the rank of sergeant. Several seemingly promising inspectors proved to be highly unsatisfactory. Inspector Caygill, nine years in the Bradford constabulary, was reduced to the rank of sergeant within months of appointment and was compulsorily resigned five years later. Inspector Hudson, eleven years in the Lancashire force, was dismissed also within months – for yet another unspecified 'conspiracy.'

The appointment of senior men took place in a very short space of time and it is understandable that men with past police experience (particularly in the

West Riding) were appointed to most of these posts. A clear majority (about 75 per cent) were in post a decade after appointment. However, the very fact that so many served for several years meant that promotion opportunities were limited. Only five inspectors in post in 1868 had been promoted in the previous three years. Promotions to inspector or superintendent, were confined to a small minority (c.10 per cent) of men in this cohort and, again, there were quality concerns arising out of the number of men who were reduced in rank as their shortcomings became apparent. More generally, two-thirds of the cohort remained constables, albeit for some in good conduct and merit classes. This was the reality and was apparent to the rank and file, as well as their senior officers, and was only partially solved by the creation of additional classes for good conduct and length of service. There was a further managerial problem. Of approximately 100 men who were promoted to the rank of sergeant, thirty-two were subsequently reduced in rank or dismissed. Given the importance of sergeants in the police hierarchy this was an important weakness.

The hard graft of policing was carried out by sergeants and constables, who unsurprisingly accounted for the majority of resignations and dismissals. The WRCC examination books are frustratingly patchy in recording disciplinary matters. The evidence provides some illuminating examples of the reasons behind some dismissals or resignations but is insufficiently robust to go further. Fuller information relating to demotions and removal from merit class is summarised below.

Demotions, with few exceptions, were linked to disciplinary failings. Virtually every long-serving man had a blemish or two on his record. But a clear minority (averaging 25 per cent and worsening over length of service) had a poor record, some men being losing rank five, even seven times. The WRCC appears not to have had a consistent policy regarding disciplinary breaches. Some men were given the benefit of the doubt on the first occasion. William Cherry was one of several men who finished their careers as a first-class constable in the good conduct merit class after an early career reduction in rank. Others benefitted more than once. John Smalley was one such man. Twice promoted sergeant, he was reduced in rank five times. Similarly, George Woodcock who twice reached the rank of first-class constable. Initially, the decision to retain him appeared to be vindicated when he became a sergeant and was promoted to the merit class in 1872. Five years later he was back as

a constable and no longer in the merit class. Nonetheless, he remained in the force a further two years before being pensioned at the end of a twenty-two-year career. John Hollies, a first-class constable, was pensioned after twenty-three years' service. During those years he was reduced in rank no less than six times. Although not explicitly stated, the problems of recruitment and retention in these years probably explained these men's survivals – only the worst were dismissed!

Table 3.6 WRCC, 1 January 1868 – constables' and sergeants' disciplinary records

Years of service	Total PCs and Sergeants	PCs and Sergeants with poor disciplinary record (3 or more demotions etc)	PCs and Sergeants with poor disciplinary record as % of total
10	165	46	28
9	33	10	30
8	31	9	29
7	37	8	22
6	37	9	24
5	26	5	14
4	31	6	19
3	38	6	16
Total	398	99	25%

Source: WRCC Examination Books A & B

William Burgess was an example of a man unable to take a second chance. Within three years he had become a sergeant, only to be reduced to the third-class constable three years later. Given an opportunity to resurrect his career, he became a sergeant for the second time in 1867 ten years after being sworn in. Three years later, having been reduced in rank a further three times, he was finally dismissed. Henry Green followed a similar career trajectory. Promoted to sergeant in 1859, less than two years after joining, he was reduced to the rank of second-class constable three years later. Twice he worked his way back to first-class constable only to be reduced a class on both occasions. Patience was exhausted and Green dismissed in 1868. In the absence of a clear policy statement regarding disciplinary matters and of detailed records of the performance of individual constables, it is difficult to arrive at firm conclusions. The willingness of the authorities to tolerate one

or two disciplinary offences paid off in quantitative terms. A majority went on to be long-serving men with no further problems. For a minority (about 25 per cent) with poor disciplinary records the picture is mixed. Over half of this group received a pension, the remainder were dismissed or resigned. Their direct and indirect impact on efficiency is impossible to quantify.

Some conclusions

Any assessment of the WRCC at the end of its first decade must balance the ongoing problems of recruitment and retention, especially in the first three years of service, against the growing core of experienced constables, albeit with a minority of questionable policing ability, around whom a more stable and effective force could be developed. Similarly, weakness in the ranks of sergeants and inspectors, while undoubtedly worrying for Cobbe and his successors, had to be set against the relative success of the majority.

The introduction of the WRCC brought a discernible quantitative improvement to policing in the West Riding, though one that should not be overstated. Thomas Heaton as superintending constable of Upper Agbrigg, had at best about a dozen dependable men with whom he could work in the mid-1850s. As the newly appointed superintendent, he had in the early 1860s fifteen men from the initial cohort with five years' experience, as well as those with three- or four-years' experience, who had been appointed subsequently. However, there was much to be done in terms of efficiency and experience. Indeed, one of the more striking similarities between the reforming 'old' policing of the early 1850s and the 'new' policing of the late-1850s and the 1860s was the number of ill-educated, ill-disciplined and often incompetent men charged with the responsibility of policing their local community. There were important, positive signs, nonetheless. While there is no escaping the continuing churn of men in and out of the force, there was also an underlying mathematical logic that saw an increasing number of men serving long enough to learn their trade. This will be developed further in chapter 5 but suffice it to note now that by 1868 a majority of men – 60 per cent or 75 per cent depending on the criterion used – had the experience deemed necessary by contemporaries to become an efficient officer.

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There were also advantages to a county-wide police force. It made easier collaborative action between divisions, especially when faced with threats to public order. There were other positive signs of co-operation between divisional and borough forces. Woodford in his report for 1862 commented on 'the merit of [the Sheffield borough force] co-operating cordially and harmoniously with the constabulary of the county … to the undoubted advantage of the public.'[37] In similar vein, the chief constables of the three ridings established 'a system of conference points' for constables working on the borders between forces.[38] Further, the new police hierarchy, which itself developed over time as new classes were created, allowed for the promotion of able men, albeit on a limited scale, in a way that simply did not exist before 1857. It also created a hierarchy of supervision and reinforced among new recruits an awareness of their place as wage-earning employees on the lower rungs of the force.[39]

Given the scale of the problems associated with creating a county force, and the difficult context in which it took place, the early years of the WRCC can be seen as a success. There was, in the eyes of HMIC, an 'efficient' force in being but this was an efficiency conceived in terms of brute numbers (related to the size of the policed population), drill capabilities and administrative structure as reflected in well-kept books and regulations pertaining to police responsibilities and conduct. It was, in effect, setting a pragmatic minimum standard below which – in their estimation and given prevailing wisdom – meaningful policing was not possible. As inspectors in more private correspondence or conversations conceded, there was still much to do if the West Riding, was to be effectively policed – but a start had been made.

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Appendix 1: 1st Superintendents in the WRCC, 1857

Division	1st Superintendent	Location of Superintendent
Lower Agbrigg	William Hall	Wakefield
Staincross	William Green	Barnsley
Upper Strafforth & Tickhill	John Gillett	Rotherham
Lower Strafforth & Tickhill	Daniel Astwood	Doncaster
Upper Osgoldcross	R S Ormesby*	Pontefract
Lower Osgoldcross	Martin Burke	Goole
Lower Barkstonash	T Robinson	Selby
Upper Barkstonash	John Hudson	Sherbourne
Claro, Kirby Malzeard & Ripon Liberty	G Akrigg	Knaresborough
Otley	John Smith	Otley
Skyrack	John Pollard	Leeds
East Staincliffe	A Beanland	Skipton
West Staincliffe	W H Cockshott	Settle
Ewcross	William Exton	Ingleton
Keighley	John Cheeseborough	Keighley
East Morley	Charles Ingham	Bradford
West Morley	Thomas Spiers	Halifax
Saddleworth	Thomas Grisedale	Saddleworth
Upper Agrbrigg	Thomas Heaton	Huddersfield
Dewsbury	William Hall	Dewsbury
	*initially inspector	

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Appendix 2: WRCC pay rates, 1858 & 1866

1858

Rank	Pay per annum.
Chief constable	£500
Chief clerk	£150
Superintendent	£120
Inspector	£70 & £75
Detective	£110
	Pay per week.
Sergeant	23s-0-½
PCs	18s-1, 19s-10 & 21s

1866

Per annum (£-s-d)					
Rank	Initial pay	After 3 years	After 7 years	After 10 Years	After 13 Years
Chief constable	£500				
Chief Clerk	£150	+£25	+£25	+£25	+£15
Asst. Chief Clerk	£91-5	+£13-13-9	+£13-13-9	+£9-2-6	+£9-2-6
Superintendent	£120	+£20	+£20	+£15	+£15
Inspector	£91-5s	+£4-11-3	+£4-11-3		
Storekeeper	£91-5	+£4-11-3	+£4-11-3		
Detective					
Inspector	£110	+£15	+£15		
Per week					
Sergeant	25s-8d	+1s-2	+1s-2d		
PC 1st Class	22s-2d	+7d	+7d		
PC 2nd Class	21s	+7d	+7d		
PC 3rd Class	19-10d				
Merit	1s-2				

Source: HMIC annual reports, 1858 and 1866

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Endnotes

1 Cobbe was one of 66 applicants for the post. He was interested in policing matters but had no direct experience. He was a close friend of John Woodford, one-time chief constable of Lancashire and at the time one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary and acknowledged his debt to Woodford on a number of occasions.

2 *Wakefield and West Riding Herald*, 21 & 28 November 1856 and *Bradford Observer*, 4 December 1856. For an example of the adverts see *Yorkshire Gazette*, 6 December 1856

3 For details see *Leeds Times*, 10 January 1857

4 *Sheffield Independent*, 10 January 1857. For details see chapter 12.

5 *Sheffield Independent*, 20 December 1856

6 Huddersfield Improvement Commission minutes, KMT 18/2/2/1, 4 March 1857 and *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 7 March 1857.

7 HMIC , annual report, 1857/8 paragraph 5

8 HMIC annual report, 1857/8 paragraph13

9 HMIC, annual report, 1857/8 , paragraph 3

10 HMIC annual report, 1857/8 , p.50

11 *Barnsley Chronicle*, 13 April 1861

12 Not every entry was accurate. There were discrepancies between evidence on an individual in different parts of the archive. Further the evidence provides a snapshot at a particular point in time, i.e., when the individual joined the force. Changes in marital status went unrecorded.

13 Of the three men who had not been superintending constables, only one had no police experience at all.

14 Heaton served for eighteen-year, Smith for eight while Ingham and McGregor lasted less than a year,

15 WRCC Examination book Superintendents and Inspectors, *Wakefield and West Riding Herald*, 21 February 1891

16 *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 27 March 1875 and *Huddersfield Examiner*, 27 March 1875

17 *Leeds Times*, 14 August 1875

18 A further two resigned after two and five years respectively.

19 Similarly, Thomas Robinson, (Lower Barkstonash) was dismissed after two months but with no reason given,

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20 WRCC Examination Books A & B accessed via Ancestry. Not all records are complete, nor were they always accurate. Men lied about previous police experience that had ended in dismissal. Some were found out.

21 C Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: the Formation of English Provincial Police Forces, 1856–1880*, London, Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1984, p.70.

22 The police background is quite diverse. There were men who had served in the county forces of Devon, Gloucester, Hampshire and Somerset as well as nearby Lincolnshire; and men from Roxborough, Sidmouth and the Irish Constabulary.

23 Sir Thomas Henry, chief magistrate of the London police courts claimed that 'very few men can learn the duties of a constable in under two years.' *Report of the Select Committee on Police Superannuation Funds*, 1875 Q.5018. Received wisdom among senior police officers giving evidence to the *Select Committee on Superannuation*, 1890, was that it took between three and five years to make an efficient officer.

24 HMIC, annual report, 1857/8 p.39

25 W J Lowe, '"The Lancashire Constabulary 1845–1870: the Social and Occupational Function of a Victorian Police Force', *Criminal Justice* History, vol. 4, 1983, p.55 and Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp.93 & 94.

26 Lowe, 'Lancashire Constabulary', p.57. Steedman's figures for the Buckinghamshire and Staffordshire forces are not directly comparable. Her figures relate to individual years and are sub-divided according to length of service of recruits in each year. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, pp.95–6.

27 *Barnsley Independent*, 15 January 1870

28 See chapter 13 for the Dewsbury borough force.

29 Bibles and hymnbooks were scattered around and a Sunday school teacher had 'a large piece bitten off his thumb.' *Nonconformist*, 7 April 1869 and widely reported across the country.

30 Irvin eventually became a sergeant in 1869 but soon after was demoted and lost his good conduct status.

31 This was a common problem across all forces. Senior officers and local politicians were well aware of the problem of retaining longer-serving men and the introduction of various classes (merit, good conduct, long service and so forth) was a means of recognising the service these men had given but at the same time offering consolation for a career that was not going further. For a detailed consideration of an urban force seeking to tackle this problem see D Taylor, *Policing the Victorian Town: The Development of the Police in*

Middlesbrough, c.1840 -1914, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002, chapter 7.

32 He became superintendent in Ewcross in 1875, where, in 1888, aged sixty he died of 'diarrhoea and exhaustion!'

33 For further details of Heaton's career, see D Taylor, *Beerhouses, Brothels and Bobbies: Policing by Consent In Huddersfield and the Huddersfield District in the mid-nineteenth century*, Huddersfield University Press, 2016, Part 2.

34 Reports of Inspectors of Constabulary to Secretary of State, 1865/6, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867 (14), p.81. The maximum wage paid to a WRCC constable remained at 21*s* (£1.05) a week from 1858 to 1866 when it rose to 22*s* 2*d*. The Lancashire County force, which had paid its men at the same level as the WRCC in the late-1850s and early-1860s began offering more (24*s* 6*d*) from 1865.

35 The process is extremely time-consuming and the evidence not always complete. The figures thus generated should be seen as a good approximation rather than an exact measure but sufficiently robust to allow conclusions to be drawn.

36 The actual strength in these years was 641 and 654.

37 HMIC annual report, 1862

38 *Yorkshire Gazette*, 24 October 1857. For an example of co-operation between the east and west riding forces see *Beverley Recorder*, 20 October 1860.

39 For further discussion see Shpayer-Makov, *Making of a Policeman*, especially chapter 1 and Williams, *Police Control Systems*, especially chapters 2 – 4. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, chapter 1, also stresses the importance of a hierarchy of command, though probably overstates (p.6) the limited scope for individual action by rural policemen.

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