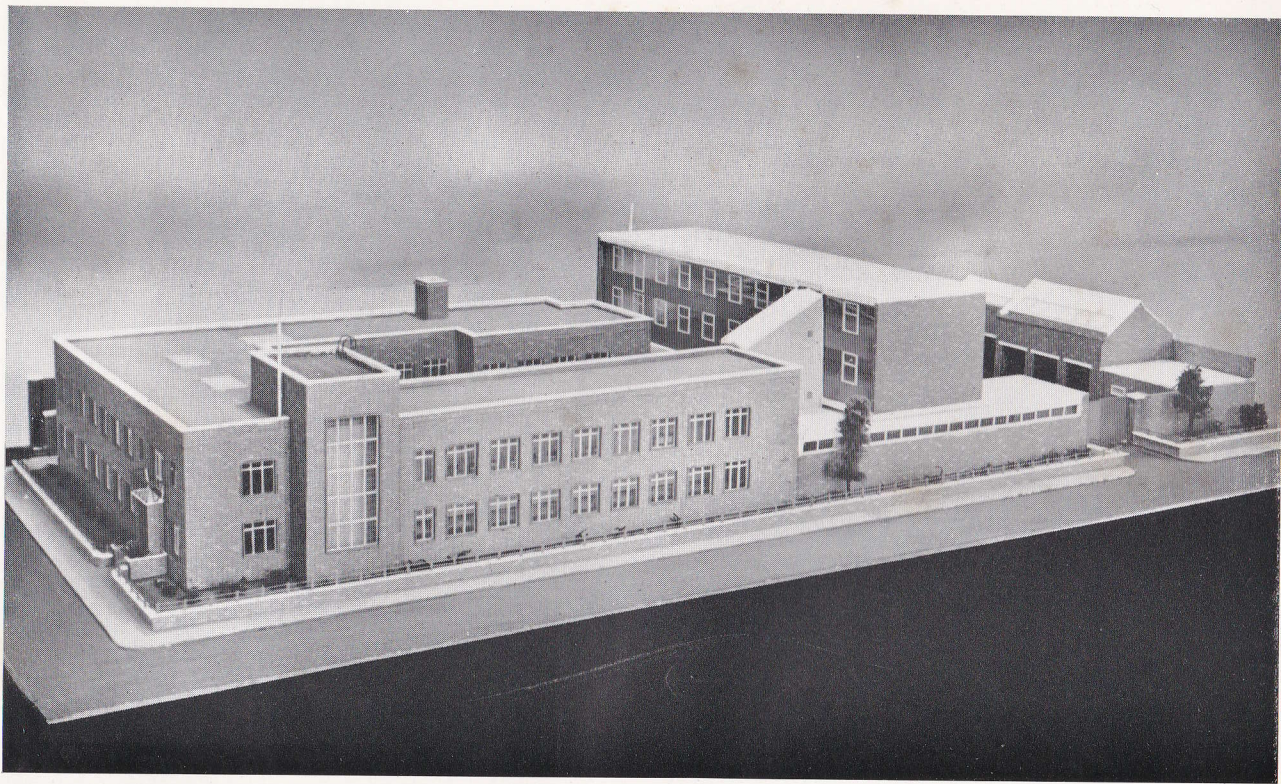


MAINTAINING THE  
QUEEN'S PEACE





*Frontispiece*

A MODEL OF THE COMPLETED POLICE HEADQUARTERS (1957)

# MAINTAINING THE QUEEN'S PEACE

A Short History of the Birkenhead Borough Police

by

S. P. THOMPSON Sergeant,  
Birkenhead Borough Police  
BIRKENHEAD 1958

Birkenhead  
1958

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS book has been written with the object of recording within the pages of a small volume something of the story of the evolution of the Birkenhead Borough Police Force. It has no claim to literary merit, but rather purports to present in chronological form a record of the outstanding happenings in the life of its members.

There are items which might well have been included but the length of the story would thereby have become wearisome. It is also a matter of regret that very early records of the Force are scarce, and incidents which today would have made entertaining reading have passed unrecorded; in fact, some valuable records were actually destroyed by a disgruntled Constable. On the other hand, modern records are abundant in detail and the problem thus created in later years became that of selection or rejection. It is hoped, however, that within these pages the reader will find much of interest. The author has in fact spent many rewarding hours searching through the records of the Force and retaining glimpses, frequently all too brief, of the manner in which our predecessors laid the foundations of forbearance and justice which remain as essential principles of the spirit of goodwill which today exists between the members of the Force and the public whom they serve.

In collating this record I have had the help and guidance of numerous friends and colleagues, but I am particularly grateful to the Chief Constable for his advice, assistance and encouragement in this pleasurable task.

I would also like to acknowledge the help I have received from:

Mr. G. Stratton, A.L.A., A.M.A., F.R.S.A., Chief Librarian and Curator, and the staff of the Central Library, Birkenhead, for permitting access to the records in the Library;

Mr. C. T. Edkins, late of the Liverpool Daily Post and a life-long friend of the Police, for editorial advice and guidance;

Mr. J. R. Denby, Messrs. Dellaganat and Denby Ltd., Duke Street, Liverpool I an ex-Special Constable for supplying all illustrated blocks without charge; The many members of the Birkenhead Corporation and Borough Police Force from whom I have obtained data and information about details of incidents now long past which have helped make up this interesting record.

*SAMUEL P. THOMPSON (Sergt.)*

## WATCH COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN FROM 1874

Councillor T. Evans	1874-1879
Alderman Pryce Morris .	1880-1882
Alderman J. P. Harris .	1883-1886
Alderman T. Evans .	1887-1891
Councillor (later Alderman) G. S. Oldham, J.P.	1892-1899
Councillor (later Alderman) E. G. Mason, J.P. .	1899-1900
Alderman J. Gamlin, J.P. .	1901-1903
Councillor J. Heap, J.P.	1904-1907
Alderman J. Gamlin, J.P. .	1908-1909
Councillor E. H. Brien .	1909-1910
Alderman H. Laird Pearson, J.P.	1911-1913
Alderman J. W. P. Laird, J.P. .	1913-1922
Councillor J. Merritt, J.P. .	1922-1923
Alderman J. W. P. Laird, J.P.	1923-1929
Councillor M. Halligan .	1929-1930
Alderman J. Merritt, J.P. .	1930-1934
Councillor M. Halligan .	1934-1937
Alderman J. Merritt, J.P.	1937-1938
Alderman Dr. H. G. F. Dawson, T.D. .	1938-1942
Alderman W. E. R. Short, O.B.E., J.P. .	1942-1949
Alderman R. N. Melville .	1949-1954
Alderman M. Halligan .	1954-1955
Alderman R. N. Melville	1955-1958
Councillor J. H. Roberts	1958

## RECORDERS OF THE BOROUGH FROM 1882

Mr. Clement Higgins, Q.C. .	1882-1907
Mr. Ellis Jones Griffiths, K.C., M.P. .	1907-1912
Mr. Alexander Mere Latham	1912-1934
Mr. Clyde Tabor Wilson, M.P.	1934-1935
Mr. Francis Bertram Reece .	1935-1943
Mr. John Pascoe Elsdon .	1943-1950
Mr. Francis John Watkin Williams, Q.C. .	1950-1958

## CHIEF OFFICERS OF POLICE FROM 1837

Captain of the Night Watch Gleave .	1837-1839
Superintendent Boughey .	1839-1844
Superintendent Porter (Joint Command).	1841-1843
Superintendent McHarg	1844-1855
Superintendent Birnie .	1855-1863
Head Constable Beswicke	1863- 1869
Head Constable Kinchant .	1869-1875
Head Constable J. B. Barker (Styled Chief Constable from 1882) .	1876-1898
Chief Constable W. S. Davies	1898-1912
Chief Constable E. Parker .	1913-1923
Chief Constable A. C. Dawson	1923-1942
Chief Constable H. J. Vann, O.B.E. .	1942-1958

## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

### **1914-1918**

Constable FRANK EDWARDS Constable DANIEL JONES

### **1939-1945**

Sergeant ARCHIBALD JAMES McTAVISH Constable GEORGE NORMAN GILLIN  
Constable PHILIP HURLEY Constable HERBERT SWETNAM

## **AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE WITH THE FORCES**

### **1914-1918**

Constable ALFRED JONES Military Medal Constable WALTER TAYLOR Military Medal  
Constable HARRY WALKER Military Medal

### **1939-1945**

Constable FREDERICK CHARLES BONE Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar  
Constable (now Sergeant) JOHN CYRIL DAVISON Military Medal

## **FOREWORD**

I T sounds a far cry from the days when the first Birkenhead Police Force consisted only of three night watchmen and one parish constable under the command of a Captain of the Night Watch to the present day with a force of nearly four hundred equipped with all the aids of modern science. But it is only one hundred and twenty years from 1837 to 1957, a period of social revolutions and world wars, accompanied by rapid scientific advances and wonderful inventions. With all these changes the police have had to keep pace and equip themselves to meet the new problems that followed in their train.

In these absorbing pages the reader will see how the Borough Police Force, as we know it today, was gradually built up and developed.

By happy chance, for nearly a third of this period, first as an Advocate and then as Recorder in the Borough Court of Quarter Sessions, I have had good opportunity of seeing this Force at work. Throughout I found them efficient, courteous, helpful, ever ready wherever possible to say a good word for an old lag and fully justifying the confidence placed in them by the Borough.

The Chief Constable has performed a great service in arranging for the compilation of this History of the Force which will prove a valuable addition to the historical records of the Borough.

FRANCIS W. WILLIAMS,  
Recorder 1950 -1958

## HISTORY OF THE BIRKENHEAD BOROUGH POLICE FORCE

Although rudimentary systems of law enforcement had been in existence in the district of Birkenhead for many centuries it was not until 1829 that any concrete suggestion of a "police force" can be found in written records.

In that year an Act of Parliament was obtained for the establishment of a Constabulary Force in Cheshire by which each Hundred (i.e. about one hundred families) was placed under the direction of a Special High Constable who was responsible for a number of subordinates proportionate to the size of the district. The office of Special High Constable was quite distinct from the parochial or township constables who were appointed by the inhabitants of the area in which they served.

It is interesting to note that Birkenhead was chosen as the Headquarters of the "Special High Constable of Wirral" on account, as records state, "of its being more densely populated than any other part and having greater facilities of communications".

### APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONERS

In 1832 there was violent opposition to an application to Parliament for an Act to supply a public market and to establish Police in Birkenhead. Despite this opposition the Act received the Royal Assent on 10th June, 1833.

Management of the affairs of the township was entrusted to Commissioners, consisting of the Mayor, two Bailiffs and four Aldermen of Liverpool, with 60 other persons, inhabitants of Birkenhead, who were named in the Act. They were empowered to raise £8,000 by rates and tolls with which to erect a market, to pave, light and cleanse the public streets and to maintain a separate police body.

The Act contained an ample penal code for offences against law and good order and embodied most of the offences subsequently included in the Town Police Clauses Act, 1847.

The Commissioners proceeded to carry out the provisions of the Act and a Police Force was appointed.

This Act continued in force until the incorporation of the townships of Birkenhead, Claughton, Tranmere, part of Higher Bebington and Oxtun into the Parliamentary Borough of Birkenhead, on 13th August, 1877.

Unfortunately there are no existing records relative to this early Police Force until 1837, when a minute book of the Lighting and Watching Committee came into use. This book has not been preserved, but as a result of details recorded by a later Head Constable some of its items are known.

### CAPTAIN GLEAVE

In 1837 the strength of the town's Police Force consisted of three night watchmen and one parish constable (who was in charge of the lock-up in Hamilton Street) under the command of Captain Gleave, Captain of the Night Watch. The night watchmen's tour of duty was from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., their 'place of rendezvous' being the Machine House. Their accoutrements consisted of a lantern, cape, glazed hat, stave and stick. Included in their duties was the lighting of 20 public lamps, but during this year a Mr. Jackson contracted to carry out the duties of lamplighter for an annual fee of £4 7s. 8d. per lamp.

### SUPERINTENDENTS BOUGHEY AND PORTER

Captain Gleave was succeeded as Captain of the Night Watch by Mr. Boughey in 1839. By that time the Force's strength had been increased to five night watchmen, two day constables and one parish constable. The watchmen were put in close uniform as

in Liverpool", i.e. a glazed hat, blue swallow-tail Goatee, pair of blue cloth trousers, cape, pair of gloves and an annual issue of a pair of shoes. Also supplied were a rattle, belt, lantern, stick, stave and handcuffs. The issue of the rattle did not appear to be very popular, as in later years numbers of constables are reported for parading with out this equipment. About this time the weekly pay of the members of the Force was 18s. Od. The year 1841 saw a division in the command of the Force. Mr. Boughey, then termed Superintendent, retained his position in charge of the Night Watch, whilst a Superintendent Porter became the Captain of the Day Watch. It is also recorded that in this year the Chief Officer of Police was to make a written report "about every three weeks" to the Watching and Lighting Committee, but whether this referred to Boughey or Porter or some other officer is not clear.

### REST DAYS AND SOME RE-ORGANISATION

Rest days were brought to notice in this year, constables being allowed four days "release" from duty annually, without pay, "on condition that they leave their clothes with their Superintendent".

20th August 1841 is an auspicious occasion in the history of the Force. It is related that on that day Superintendent Boughey found it necessary to report to the Watching and Lighting Committee "that all the night watch were too 'tipsy' to go on duty". The Committee admonished all the men.

A re-organisation of the Force took place in 1843 under Superintendent Boughey. The night and day watches were amalgamated and three reliefs of eight-hour tours of duty were instituted. Presumably Superintendent Porter resigned as he was not mentioned again.

### FIRE FORCE

The year 1843 also saw the first mention of a combined Police and Fire Force, although this had probably been in existence for some time. In that year interested Insurance Companies provided a fire engine at a cost of £200 and constables were given practice as Firemen. The engine was kept at Mr. Gough's stables, Woodside Hotel, at a rent of 5s. Od. per week, and horsed by two horses at 5s. Od. a horse per turn-out.

### NOTABLE EVENTS IN 1844

Superintendent McHarg took charge of the combined Force in 1844, the year the foundation stone of the Birkenhead Docks was laid, and it was during that year that a "Superintendent's Report Book" was commenced. This book, which gave details of all the reports made to the Watching and Lighting Committee, is still in existence.

Dr. Jennette was appointed the first Police Surgeon in 1844 at a salary of £10 per year, and in order to defray the cost of this, constables had 3d. per week deducted from their wages. During 1844 what may have been the first example of special duty came into operation, for in that year one constable was employed, apparently full time, on board the ferry boats crossing to and fro on the River Mersey.

### INCREASE IN STRENGTH

1845 saw an increase in strength of the Force to 30, presumably to keep pace with the increasing population (1831 2,569: 1841 11,998). Part of the strength was now distributed as follows : -



4 constables for park.  
3 constables for market.  
5 constables for docks.  
15 supernumeraries.

The supernumeraries were used to take the place of sick or absent constables, and on a vacancy occurring a ballot was taken for the supernumerary to fill the position.

The first mention of two specialist departments occurred this year also, when Inspector Hall was appointed the first Detective Officer and the Inspector of what appears to have been the Hackney Carriage Department was instructed to look to licences of cabs and coaches plying for hire.

Details of constables being engaged at Monks Ferry during the races at Chester are also shown in this year.

### INCREASE IN INSPECTORS' SALARY

In 1846 the Inspectors presented to the Watching and Lighting Committee a "memorial" praying for an increase in their salaries. This was granted and their weekly wages were raised from 25s. Od. to 30s. Od.

### EXTRA DUTIES

On 13th July, 1846, the Superintendent reported that he had had a number of extra constables on duty all day in consequence of an expected procession of Orangemen, and requested permission to provide them with "a little refreshment".

A shortage of manpower seemed to be in evidence during 1846, as on 23rd November, a request from the Building Surveyor for the services of three policemen to aid him in collecting information on gas and water was refused as "the men could not be spared".

### DIFFERENTIALS IN PAY

With the passing of the Town Police Clauses Act, 1847, a uniform method of policing the town came into being, and with this an increase in the strength of the Force to 52. The additions included the appointment of the supernumeraries as "regulars" and the appointment of a further six constables to police the docks. "Differentials" in the weekly pay of constables occurred at this period, these being quoted as 16s. Od., 18s. Od. and 20s. Od., although there are no indications as to the qualifications needed for the higher rate.

### REQUEST FOR MEN TO ASSIST THE COUNTY POLICE

The district of Rock Ferry was apparently still controlled by the County Police, as in February, 1847, P.C. Burgess resigned from the Birkenhead Force in order to take up the post of County constable at Rock Ferry. However, the County area seems to have been short of police as a letter read to the Watching and Lighting Committee requested the services of six constables for a regatta to be held at Eastham. This request was refused because "the men are only sworn in for the Township and consequently have not power to act elsewhere".

### FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

The year 1848 appears to have been overshadowed by severe financial difficulties and strict economies were necessary. The strength of the Force was reduced

from 52 to 36 and in addition 55 street lamps were put out of commission. Items are recorded of "the sale of cast off clothing as advantageously as possible" and the buying only of necessities "having regard to economy".

On 17th July, 1848, the Superintendent reported that the Force had not had the whole of the annual allowance of clothing, and that amongst "left off" clothing in store there was a quantity which could be made available for a few months.

It appears that times were bad throughout the country as on 23rd October, 1848, the London Assurance Corporation withdrew the fire engine which they had previously provided. Amongst the many officers whose services were dispensed with during these hard times was one who sought to be retained but was told that this was not possible "owing to the depressed state of the Committee's finances".

In the midst of all this stringency an order was issued on 6th November, 1848 for "200 warrant cards for the use of police officers when travelling by rail on police business".

Perhaps the frugal times inspired some pious thoughts amongst the members of the Committee, for an order was issued requesting the Superintendent "to recommend the men to attend Divine Worship on Sundays when off duty church or chapel agreeable to their religious sentiments".

### VIOLENT TIMES

What must have been a very welcome increase in strength occurred in 1850, when the Force numbered 49, as in that year there was a number of outbreaks of violence. Constables stationed on the outskirts of the town were issued with rockets to signal for assistance. The residents of the township of Claughton placed their two night watchmen under the control of Superintendent McHarg, and people living in Conway Street paid for a Constable to patrol that street.

Rioting broke out in the docks in this year, and at a meeting held on 13th December the police were armed with cutlasses "for the better protection of the public peace".

In January, 1851, one 3rd Class Officer was appointed for duty at the Dock Cottages, "the Dock Company providing a residence for him".

Note: The Dock Cottages consisted of blocks of multi-storey flats situated at the North end of the town near St. James's Church. The flats were erected in the 1840's to house labourers employed in the construction of the docks. The Dock Cottages were demolished after World War II and replaced by modern blocks of flats.

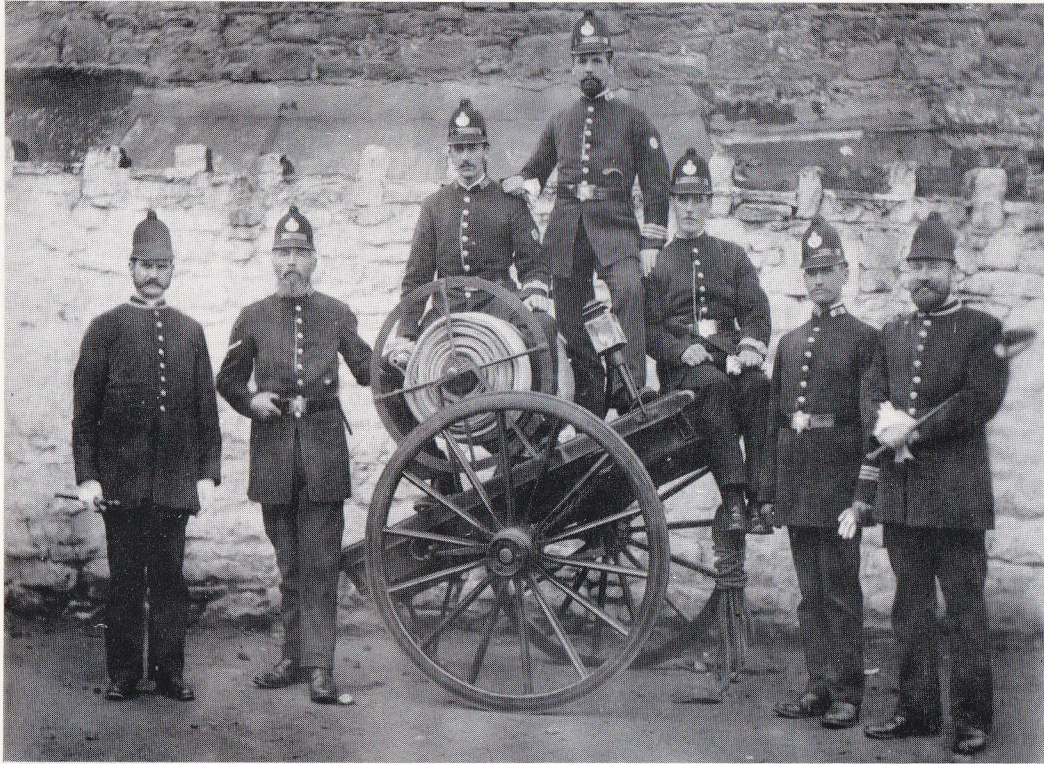
### DISPUTE WITH FERRY COMMITTEE

Little of note was recorded during the next few years, but in 1854 a dispute occurred between the Ferry Committee and the Watching and Lighting Committee. The former maintained that the Constables employed on the ferry were as much under their orders as the orders of the Watching Committee. The latter Committee replied by withdrawing the constables so employed.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN 1855

The retirement of Superintendent McHarg, on a gratuity of £100 in 1855, was followed by the promotion of Inspector Birnie to the rank of Superintendent.

This year was also notable for the introduction of three days annual leave with pay "to those members of the Force who shall have conducted themselves to the satisfaction of the Committee for 12 months".



SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMBINED POLICE  
AND FIRE FORCE (circa 1880)



BIRKENHEAD POLICE TUG OF WAR TEAM (1891)

The Fire Force is again mentioned in 1855 when an Insurance Company presented a new fire engine "on condition that no charge shall be made for attending fires at their insured premises".

The use of the electric telegraph is mentioned in 1855 when, as a result of information received over this medium, a boy who had absconded from home with his father's money was arrested in Birkenhead.

### FIRST GOVERNMENT INSPECTION

The first Inspector of Constabulary was appointed in 1856, and on 19th December that year, Lieut. Colonel Woodford inspected the Birkenhead Force and "expressed himself in the highest terms with the appearance, discipline and clothing of each man". By this time a change of uniform had occurred, in that frock coats took the place of swallow-tail coatees and an army shako ousted the glazed hat.

1857 brought the use of collar numbers and sleeve armlets into being, and also the appointment of the first Chief Inspector with authority to act during the absence of the Superintendent.

### FIRST RECORD OF STATISTICS

During 1857 the first returns of crimes in the Borough were compiled and submitted to the Watching and Lighting Committee for forwarding to the Secretary of State. This is the first indication of any attempt being made to keep any form of statistics and it would appear that for the purposes of the return the year ended on 29th September.

### DIFFICULTIES OF THE FIRST FORCE

Difficulties in the arrangements for the Fire Force are mentioned when it is recorded that a telegraph message was received by the Superintendent requesting the despatch of the fire appliance to Great Sutton. The person who normally horsed the engine refused to do so as the fire was not within the township. However, substitute horses were obtained and the engine arrived at the scene at 8 p.m. (two hours after the request) and remained until 5 a.m. the following day.

### NEED FOR A MORTUARY

The question of the need for a mortuary was brought to light on 21st October, 1857, when a man was found dead at Monks Ferry and the licensee of the Monks Ferry Hotel refused to allow the body to be taken into his hotel. Despite his protests about the absence "of a dead house in a town like Birkenhead" the licensee was severely censured by the Coroner.

### RANK OF SERGEANT

In March, 1858, a recommendation by the Superintendent "that first class officers (which are 10 in number) should have stripes on the arm similar to those used in the Liverpool Police Force" was approved. This seems to be the first indication of the rank of Sergeant emerging in the Force.

## INCREASED DUTIES OF FIRE FORCE

During the next few years the increase in the number of fires attended by the Force is very noticeable, as also are the occasions on which the fire appliances proved almost useless owing to the lack or insufficiency of water in the mains.

## BETTER FINANCIAL TIMES

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act came into force in 1858 and as a result the Commissioners were obliged to provide constables for policing the docks at the expense of the Dock Board. At this time three men were detailed for this duty in addition to those employed on the docks prior to the Act.

Finances appear to have improved as in this year a new lock-up, containing two cells, was built at the junction of Cleveland Street and Bridge Street at a cost of £243. Uniforms were again altered, tunics replacing frock coats and helmets being adopted in place of shakos.

Perhaps the Commissioners were confronted with a difficulty in obtaining recruits, for in 1858 the age of candidates was raised from 35 to 40 years.

The first mention of drill occurs in this year when Inspector West of the Liverpool Force was appointed Drill Instructor at an extra 5s. Od. a week pay.

In 1859 the strength of the Force was further increased to 54. Perhaps this is not surprising in view of the official account of the Burial Board Riots which occurred in June of that year. (See Appendix "A".) Included in this increase were four additional constables requested by the Superintendent in July in the following terms: -

*"The Superintendent begs most respectfully to inform the Committee that the rapid increase in population in the township compels him for the better preservation of peace and order to ask the Committee for an additional four men to the Force. At the same time the Superintendent ventures to congratulate the Committee on the comparative small amount of felonies committed at the present township, but drunkenness, and other disorderly conduct are considerably on the increase, caused by the great influx of the working classes who generally exhibit a pernicious tendency to drunkenness, fighting, etc."*

*(The 1861 census showed a population of 39,548.)*

On 24th October, 1859, the Superintendent presented a bill to the Committee, for forwarding to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, for the services of 12 police constables, including clothing, etc., supplied until 1st November. The amount was £249 18s. 3d. and this appears to be the first of such bills.

Difficulty seems to have arisen during this year in securing a place where the police could be drilled. Monks Ferry had been used for some months but in December the Committee were recommended to remove the loose earth in the Bridewell yard in order that the men could be drilled there.

## MORE VIOLENCE

The year 1860 commenced with a threat of riots in the town as a result of the arrest of a number of persons involved in an affray in Field Street in which two constables received serious injuries. (See Appendix "A".) During these threatened riots co-operation between neighbouring Forces is disclosed, inasmuch as the Chief

Constable of Cheshire despatched men to the town and the Chief Constable of Liverpool had members of his Force standing by in readiness to sail for Birkenhead.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The modern type of police whistle was introduced, to replace the rattle, and an Act of Parliament was passed for a Superannuation Fund for the police. The Birkenhead Fund, by the end of the following year, stood at £ 15 19s. 6d.

The fame of the township was greatly enhanced by the introduction of the first street tramway in Europe in 1860 and, although these vehicles were of great use, it will be seen that later they became a source of much extra work for the police.

The dwelling house at the Hamilton Street lock-up was declared to be unsuitable for the Superintendent, and a house in Duncan Street was taken for his quarters.

In November, 1860, a report from the Superintendent on a fire in an Oliver Street timber yard disclosed the neglect of the hydrant plugs in the area which resulted in there being no water to fight the fire.

### TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

The first record of a traffic accident occurs in May, 1861, when P.C. Reilly injured his foot whilst endeavouring to board one of the "new street railway buses".

### ELECTION OF FIRST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

In December of this year the election of Mr. Laird as Birkenhead's first Member of Parliament took place and, although thousands of people assembled in the Borough, the proceedings passed without any serious incidents "with the exception of a few drunken fights in the streets and public houses". No doubt a certain amount of the peacefulness could be attributed to the fact that the Chief Constable of Cheshire, four superintendents and 150 constables of the county force were in reserve at the Town Hall.

### HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND TRAFFIC JAMS

Hackney carriages again came into the news, their licensing being transferred from the Health Committee to the Watching Committee.

At the end of the year the purchase of the first fire escape was made.

The year 1862 opened with "much clamour and indignation" caused by what must be the first case of a "traffic jam" in the town. This incident occurred at the junction of Argyle Street and Conway Street when four omnibuses came to a stop at the junction "obstructing the thoroughfare for 15 minutes, causing considerable inconvenience to the public". Unfortunately this was by no means the last of such obstructions, as they were continually being reported to the Committee, with the rather amusing note that on each occasion "much excitement was caused".

### MARCH OF PRISONERS

In this year it was agreed that the Petty Sessions would be held twice a week (Monday and Thursday) instead of once, as previously. The site of the Sessions was moved to the County Hall, Abbey Street, which necessitated marching the prisoners through the streets from the lock-up in Hamilton Street. During these marches there

were frequent fights and scuffles and although the Superintendent, time after time, lodged objections to this unseemly routine, nothing was done for many years.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES

On 28th April, 1862, there is the first indication of estimates of expenditure being required for the Police Force. On that day the Superintendent lodged with the Committee an estimate of the probable expenditure of the Watching and Lighting Committee from 24th April, 1862, to 24th April, 1863.

The provision of a horse for the Superintendent and an allowance of £50 a year for its maintenance is also recorded, and during the riots which followed later in the year we read of six constables being mounted.

The need for police officers to be conversant with their duties was stressed on 25th August; 1862, when a resolution of the Watching Committee, addressed to the Superintendent, instructed him that at the time of the weekly drill parade he must examine the members of the Force on their knowledge of the Book of Instructions.

## THE GARIBALDI RIOTS

What are without doubt the most serious riots to have taken place in the township occurred in October, 1862. These were known as the Garibaldi Riots (See Appendix "A"). As a result 55 police officers were injured, 13 very seriously, nine being off duty for a considerable time.

In connection with the riots a section of the Force was mounted and placed under the command of Inspector West. 40 cutlasses, 12 cavalry swords and 1,000 good green-heart staves were ordered to be kept permanently in store.

The conduct of the police at the riots must have created a great impression on the public of the town, as the following month 78 candidates applied to fill the 10 vacancies on the Force.

The year closed with 18 of the rioters appearing at Chester Assizes and being sentenced to imprisonment ranging from six months to 15 years. Constables giving evidence at the trial, which lasted three days, were allowed three days extra pay for the long hours of duty performed by them.

Perhaps the most suitable ending to the year is a memorial from the Commissioners to the justices asking them not to grant any more intoxicating liquor licences "on account of the misery and crime drunkenness has brought to the township".

## CONDITIONS UNDER NEW HEAD CONSTABLE

In 1863 the command of the Force passed to Major Beswicke, late of the 38th Regiment, with Superintendent Birnie as his Deputy. At the same time there was a noticeable increase in the strength of the Force from 59 to 75, the increase including one inspector and 14 constables to the docks and one constable to night duty at Laird Brothers' Yard. (This constable was withdrawn later in the year.)

The new Head Constable appears to have been a man much concerned with the proper conduct of the Force and the welfare of the men. After a great deal of persuasion by him the Commissioners set aside a room at the Town Hall for a Constables' Reading Room. Each man paid 1/2d per week and later the Commissioners agreed to pay 3s. 6d. per week for the purchase of newspapers and periodicals.



An interesting item on clothing appears on 25th May, when 80 leather armlets were ordered to be worn round the left arm (for protection) under the coat sleeves, but there is no mention of the reason why these should have become necessary.

### NESTON LICENSING SESSIONS

It is difficult to understand the connection between Neston and Birkenhead, but on a number of occasions Major Beswicke is reported as "attending a special meeting of the Magistrates at Neston for granting and transfer of public house licences".

### DAMAGE TO PROPERTY, THREATS OF VIOLENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN 1864

A report of a great explosion on board the ship "Lotty Sleigh", berthed in the river opened 1864. A great deal of damage was caused to property in the area of Woodside. (See Appendix "A".)

The year appears to have passed without any great incidents of violence, but there are several mentions of a street preacher named Abraham John Dowling who caused minor gatherings of followers in various part of the town, and was arrested after a number of incidents of obstruction and threatened violence.

A minor change in uniform took place in 1864 when the "Britannia" hat was taken into wear. Again, this was in keeping with the Liverpool Force.

There was a severe winter that year and mention is made of coffee being ordered for the refreshment of the men on night duty.

The year ended with Mr. C. J. Preston being appointed the town's first, and only, Stipendiary Magistrate. Perhaps the most important incident in 1864, from an administrative point of view, was the introduction of the Head Constable's Annual Report to the Watching Committee, including the state of crime. Among the usual returns featured in such a report were some entitled: "Number of Depredators, Offenders and Suspected Persons at large within the District" and "Number of houses of bad character". For the purposes of these returns the year ended on 29th September.

### INCORPORATION OF CLAUGHTON

1865 passed with few noteworthy incidents, but during this year the township of Claughton was incorporated in the township of Birkenhead, and it was recommended that a new Police Station be established in that area in order to prevent the need for constables having to "leave the vicinity of their beats at the mercy of the ever-ready burglar or other equally great scoundrel" in order to visit the Town Hall.

### SUPERANNUATION FUND DEFICIENCIES

The Head Constable was given authority to visit and examine the accounts of the Superannuation Fund in the Treasurer's Office and to his consternation found that the fund had not been credited with various items such as fines for assaults on police; penalties in connection with cases where the police were informers; fines on public houses, and one-third of fines in connection with offences on the docks. On this being reported to the Committee, the Treasurer was instructed to make the necessary adjustments.

### INTRODUCTION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS

The far-sightedness of Head Constable Beswicke is illustrated by a report forwarded to the Committee on 9th October, 1865, which reads: -

*"The Head Constable recommends that a photographic apparatus should be obtained for the use of the police, to enable them to detect offenders by transmitting portraits of prisoners to various parts of the Kingdom, who may be unknown to the Borough Police".*

A further item in connection with accoutrements is recorded in 1865 when it was ordered that staves would in future be carried in the trousers side pocket instead of in a leather case hanging from the belt.

#### NOTEWORTHY EVENTS IN 1866

By 1866 the police station at Cloughton had been established but the exact location is not known. A comprehensive return of all hydrants and water valves was made, and for the first time these were fitted with indicators showing their exact position.

During this year the rank of sergeant was introduced, but was subsequently abandoned, although no reasons for this are given.

The resources of the Force were fully mobilized in June, 1866, when His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh came for the opening of the great northern entrance to the docks and to visit Messrs. Laird's Shipbuilding Yard.

Enthusiasm for cricket seems to have been unbounded in those days for there were frequent applications for the services of the police at matches played in the Park, where an attendance figure of 14,000 was not uncommon.

#### INTRODUCTION OF MERIT BADGE

The introduction of the merit class was established in 1867, for exceptional zeal, gallantry and daring. Admittance to the class entitled the holder to 3d. per day extra pay and the wearing of a small silver badge on the right arm. Constable 65 Moore was the first member to be granted this badge "for his activity and exertion in arresting a gang of burglars".

#### MORE THREATENED RIOTS

Special precautions were taken in 1867 against a threatened outbreak of violence by Fenian rioters. Information had been received from Liverpool that an attempt was to be made to set fire to the docks on both sides of the Mersey. At this time H.M.S. "Donegal" was lying in the river and the Captain arranged with the Head Constable for 120 Marines to be stationed in the town if needed. The necessity for these Marines was to be signalled to the ship from Rock Ferry Pier by means of rockets. Although a number of Marines was landed and billeted in the town and the Chief Constable of Cheshire had a strong force of men in Liscard and Seacombe, the anticipated riots did not develop.

In September and October the township was involved in a certain amount of excitement by a series of lectures delivered by a Mr. Murphy who visited Birkenhead every Saturday from Liverpool. Each time he was accompanied by the Orangemen's drum and fife bands, and it was the view of the Head Constable that the bands, and not the lecturer, caused the ill-feeling in the town. Later in the year Major Beswicke requested the Committee to apply to Parliament for a Bill containing a clause prohibiting the use of drum and fife bands in connection with party meetings.

October, 1867, saw the Police Force in receipt of firearms. On 21st of this month the Head Constable reported that he had received from Chester Castle, 30 pistols, pouches and holsters, together with ammunition, for police purposes. No record is shown of these having been issued to the police so it can be presumed that they were placed in store in case of emergency.

### SPECIAL CONSTABLES

For many years the services of special constables had been used in connection with serious cases of riot and disorder, but it was not until 1868 that they were organised into divisions with proper instructions. The strength of this force is not recorded, but it is interesting to note that during this year an order was received for special constables' badges - 50 officers and 550 ordinary.

### PAY, AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Members of the Force who were qualified as fire-fighters petitioned for, and received, an extra 1s. Od. a week in view of the fact that they were specialists in fire-fighting in addition to their ordinary police duties.

Leave seems to have been a very unorganised affair for during this year we read of members being granted leave for the first time in two and three years.

### APPOINTMENT OF NEW HEAD CONSTABLE

In 1869 Major Beswicke resigned his position as Head Constable and for a few months Superintendent Birnie acted in that capacity until the appointment of Mr. Kinchant, late of the Indian Police, to the post.

### AWARD BY SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

January, 1869, saw a mention of an officer being awarded £5 by the Birkenhead Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for his exertions on behalf of that Society.

### DRILLS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

The difficulty of finding a suitable site for drilling the police was again emphasised when the drill shed was blown down by high winds. The Head Constable recommended that the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board be requested to allow the use of a shed at Morpeth Dock for this purpose.

Reference to the importance of communications between stations is made in January, 1870, when, it is recorded:

*"The Head Constable recommends that the adoption of a telegraph system on the magnetic principle which is most simple (patented by Wheatstone) between Claughton and the Head Office would be of greatest use. The expense would be, it is thought, about £150."*

Unfortunately it was to be some years before this installation was approved.

### DISTRIBUTION OF FORCE, 1871

The census of 1871 showed the population of the growing township to be 45,033, and the establishment of the Force 85. The Force was distributed as follows: -

One Head Constable; one Superintendent; nine Inspectors; two Detective Officers; three Clerks and Bridewell Keepers, and 69 Constables.

There is also an interesting chart, which indicates the nationalities of the members of the Force as 41 Englishmen; 36 Irishmen; four Scotsmen and four Welshmen.

The training of recruits received little attention in those early days, as is shown by the Head Constable's report of that year. In this report he states: -

*"A recruit is sent out during the first week either in company of an experienced constable, or with an Inspector on his rounds. Besides this he attends court daily and receives other instructions in his duties. After the first week he is placed on a beat and his work as a constable really commences."*

1871 also saw the establishment of the first "fixed points" at places in the town "where the traffic is greatest and where persons may always go when they want the services of a policeman".

The Merit Badge, which had been introduced in 1867, came in for criticism by the Watching and Lighting Committee in 1872, when they attempted to abolish the award. However, the Head Constable pointed out that this badge was awarded "as a reward to the men who specially distinguish themselves by gallant and daring conduct, extraordinary vigilance, zeal and energy in the discharge of their duties, unswerving probity, sobriety, good temper, forbearance and coolness - in fact, most exemplary good conduct". The Committee must have relented for the issue of the award continued.

#### OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST IN 1872

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1872, the Government Inspector recommended that all constables on night duty should be issued with lamps. After making enquiries of other Forces in the neighbourhood the Committee agreed.

During this year the Head Constable also found it necessary to bring to the attention of the Committee the need to purchase a steam fire engine for the town, at a cost of £500. He added that he was confident that most of the cost could be covered by subscriptions from various large firms in the town.

Efforts to recover property stolen in the town are illustrated by the fact that in November, 1872, a constable was severely reprimanded for disobeying an order. He had refused to deliver to a pawnbroker in Oxton Road a bill containing a list of property which had been stolen.

The 1872 issue of the Head Constable's Annual Report refers to a constable being invalided from duty as a result of injuries received in the arrest of a prisoner. At the time he left the Force he was granted a weekly sum of £1, which was later reduced to 12s. Od., and for which he regularly forwarded certificates from a justice of the Peace stating that he was still alive. This constable, some years later, attempted to commute the pension to a lump sum, but whether or not he was successful we are not told.

1872 also saw what must have been a regrettable incident for the Force, when a constable was sentenced to 20 years' penal servitude at Chester Assizes for manslaughter. This sentence arose from the fact that he had assaulted a woman in her house, and had struck her father, who had subsequently died from his injuries.

#### CONCERNING PROMOTION

The promotion of a member of the Force to a Chief Constablenesship is reported in August, 1873, when Detective Inspector Hemmingway resigned from the Birkenhead Force, having been appointed Chief Constable of Carlisle.

Prior to October, 1873, it was the practice in filling any rank which became vacant for members of the Force who considered themselves eligible to submit their names for the consideration of the Committee. In this month the Head Constable submitted a recommendation that, as in other town Forces, this system should cease and all promotions should be made by the Committee on the recommendation of the Head Constable.

We also read in this year of the Chief Clerk being required to wear uniform, instead of civilian clothes as in the past.

## REPORTS TO THE COMMITTEE-PLEASANT AND OTHERWISE

A most mysterious item is recorded in March, 1874, when the Head Constable submitted the following to the Watching Committee: -

*"The Head Constable has the pleasure to convey to the Watch Committee the thanks of the whole force for the very handsome supper provided for them last week and of which they partook on the evenings of Tuesday and Thursday."*

The reasons for the provision of this supper are not given and there are no further occasions shown in records of such an event recurring.

A very ominous threat is included in the Watching Committee minutes of 25th May of the same year, when the Head Constable reported that the Government Inspector had stated that the Bridewell cells required alteration, and until he had an undertaking that these alterations would be done he would be obliged to report the Force as not being efficient. In the same report it also stated that the Government Inspector was of the opinion that the strength of the Force was insufficient for the size of the population.

## CHANGE IN UNIFORM AGAIN

February, 1875, brought a further change in uniform, the Superintendent being issued with a tunic instead of a frock coat. Mention is also made of constables having helmets. The references to helmets continue in the following years, but no description is supplied in the records and it is not certain that this reference is to the headgear now associated with the term "helmet".

## DISTURBANCES IN THE PARK

During the years 1874 and 1875 a great deal of trouble was caused amongst the population by the holding of political and religious meetings in the Park. At times the crowds which collected became unruly and called for special police intervention. In view of these disturbances the Head Constable recommended that a byelaw should be introduced prohibiting the holding of any form of meeting in the Park. Whether this was introduced prior to the Park Byelaws of 1882 we are not told, but in subsequent years there are no reports of similar troubles.

## RETIREMENT, PROMOTIONS AND PAY

The end of the year saw the retirement of Superintendent Birnie and, in the following year, the promotion of Inspector Clarke to the vacancy. Mr. Birnie was retired on medical grounds, and it was brought to the attention of the Committee that he had completed nearly 40 years' service, having first served in Liverpool for about 10 years, then at Bangor, before coming to Birkenhead in February, 1845.

A request for an increase in the wages of the Second Clerk was granted by the Committee on the understanding that this clerk was to have the "charge of instructing in local acts and other matters all recruits who are appointed to the Force."

Lack of supervision on the docks had been emphasised for some time and this was remedied in 1875 when three constables were promoted Inspector for stricter supervision at this Division.

The Head Constable made repeated efforts to obtain a different rate of pay for clerks and detectives, in view of the special knowledge required by them.

### "DEAD HOUSE"

Although reports had been submitted in the past claiming the need for a "dead house", it is not until August, 1875, that we read of one having been obtained. In that month it was reported that two keys were needed for the "dead house", one for the door in Cleveland Street and one for the door in Bridge Street.

### RESIGNATION OF THE HEAD CONSTABLE AND APPOINTMENT OF A SUCCESSOR

On 6th December, 1875, Head Constable Kinchant tendered his resignation from the position of Head Constable after having served for over six years. His resignation was accepted, the Committee being told that he had been elected Chief Constable of the County of Warwick. Superintendent Clarke took over the control of the Force until a successor could be appointed.

On 18th February, 1876, Major J. B. Barker, late 5<sup>th</sup> Northumberland Fusiliers, was appointed Head Constable, and it is to this Officer that we are indebted for the earlier records of the Force. He was responsible for compiling a number of brief notes on the history of the Force from 1837 until written records were kept.

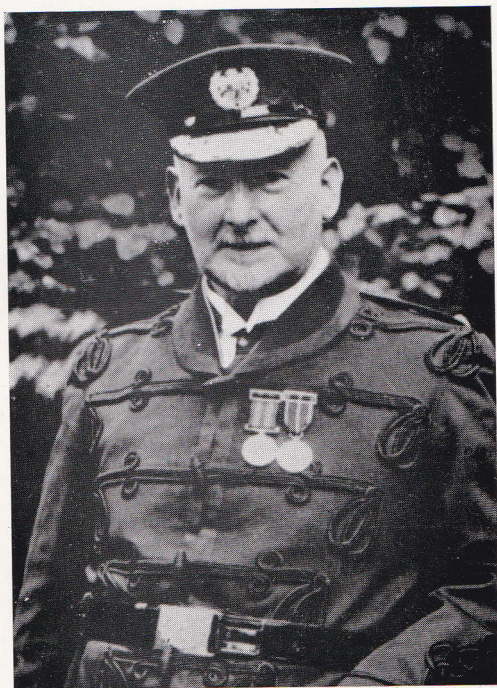
Perhaps because of his Army service Major Barker gives the impression of being a strict disciplinarian, and this is borne out by the fact that early in the term of his office he stated his intention of stamping out cases of constables being late on parade by deducting a day's pay for each time they were late for duty. During his Head Constablenesship it is noticeable that there was a marked decrease in the number of offences of Constables being drunk on duty.

### CANINE MADNESS

Canine madness seems to have caused much trouble in 1877 and, in order to prevent the spread of this disease, printed notices were issued warning dog owners to confine their animals, and all stray dogs were seized and destroyed.

### INCORPORATION OF THE BOROUGH

The Incorporation of the Borough took place on 13th August, 1877, and many reports were submitted to the Watch Committee relative to the new establishment of the Borough Force, but it was not until 1878 that the matter was finally decided.



Mr. E. PARKER  
CHIEF CONSTABLE 1913-1923



CAPT. A. C. DAWSON  
CHIEF CONSTABLE 1923-1942



In November, 1877, application was made to the Chief Constable of Cheshire for the services of his constables to continue to police Oxton, Bebington, Clifton and Mersey Wards until such time as they could be replaced by Borough constables. It was also reported that eight County constables were willing to change their allegiance to the Borough Force should that be necessary.

### YEAR OF RE-ORGANISATION

The title "Year of Re-Organisation" may aptly be applied to 1878, as it was in that year that the Force was placed on a basis which proved to be the prototype of future establishments.

The estimated population at that time was 80,567 and the strength of the Force 136. For police purposes the Borough was divided as follows: -

"A" or Town Division	- 6 Inspectors, 44 Constables.
"B" or Claughton Division	- 3 Inspectors, 21 Constables.
"C" or Tranmere Division	- 3 Inspectors, 22 Constables.
"D" or Docks Division	- 3 Inspectors, 24 Constables.

It was not until 1st March, 1878, however, that the whole of the Borough was brought under the control of the Watch Committee and until that date County constables continued to police the outlying districts.

It was obvious that new Police Stations would be required in the districts which had been newly taken over, and in view of this a temporary Station was obtained in St. Paul's Road with living accommodation for an Inspector. This Station was to be superseded at a later date by a new Station in Meadow Lane. The site of the Station for the Oxton area caused some trouble. The Committee suggested the purchase of a house in Victoria Road, but a petition from the residents of the area objecting to this caused them to abandon the idea. During the same period the Watson Street Bridewell was considered unsuitable as a Station for the Docks Police, and as a result letters were exchanged between the Watch Committee and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board for the erection of a separate Station on the Dock Estate. Letters seem to have been as far as this project went, for we do not read of a Station being built or plans being drawn up for its erection.

1878 saw the appointment of one Inspector as the Officer of the Local Authority under the Explosive Substances Act and another as an Inspector under the Food and Drugs Acts. This latter appointment was made following a number of complaints regarding the quality of milk being received in the town.

Although there cannot have been previous Regulations dealing with the payment to constables of an allowance for moving their homes, in this year 10s. Od. was paid to each of 10 Constables who moved their homes in order to police the newly incorporated districts of the Borough.

It appears that there was no such person as Police Prosecuting Officer in the Courts in those days, but should any case involving legal arguments arise the services of a paid attorney were sought. The Head Constable pointed out the expense involved in this procedure but it was some years before the police were allowed to prosecute their own cases.

### PROGRESS IN 1879

1879 commenced with a great strike of dock labourers which resulted in the import of other labourers to carry out the dock works; fortunately, this did not occasion the strife which had been feared.

Police Stations were again much in evidence, for in this year, the new Meadow Lane Station was taken into service. It had a Bridewell consisting of four cells and accommodation for the fire appliances. The administration of the Force was temporarily transferred to the Queens Hall, Cloughton Road when alterations were carried out to the Central Police Office to meet the long standing complaints made by the Government Inspector.

Throughout the early years of the combined Police and Fire Force there are continual references to the lack of water power in the hydrants and plugs in the town. On the night of 7th March, 1879, this unsatisfactory state of affairs was again brought to notice when, through lack of water pressure, a large flour mill in Price Street was destroyed by fire. The estimated damage was £9,000 and it was reported that the water pressure in the hoses failed to reach even the second storey. Despite all these reports, nothing of a definite nature seems to have been done to effect an improvement.

The first "Black Maria" was mentioned in 1879, when tenders were invited for "a prisoners' conveyance van divided into two compartments and capable of holding six persons each, with a driver's box for two constables and a conductor's covered seat behind, to be drawn by one or two horses".

Although there is no definite mention of it, it would appear that by 1879 all police stations and waterworks were connected by telegraph.

December, 1879, saw a report from the Head Constable that he was having difficulty in obtaining constables to perform plain clothes duty as they objected to the amount of wear and tear on their clothes involved by this duty. This report was accompanied by a recommendation that 3s. 0d. a week should be paid to constables wearing plain clothes.

## 1880

Following the completion of the alterations at the Central Police Office (to the satisfaction of the Government Inspector), arrangements were put in hand to enlarge the Watson Street Bridewell to meet the increasing requirements of the Dock Police.

The Head Constable's Annual Return of 1880 lists a very interesting figure in connection with offences. He reports that, estimating the Borough's population as 85,000, one in every 60 persons was proceeded against for offences of drunkenness during the year.

In January of this year representation was made to the Committee that in future Inspectors should have silver lace round the collars of their tunics "as they are frequently taken for ordinary constables".

This year also shows the first use of the St. John Ambulance Brigade to instruct members of the Force in "First Aid to the Injured". This instruction bore fruit during the year as it is recorded that in two instances doctors had stated that, but for the prompt treatment by constables, injured people would have died.

The ever-increasing need for greater knowledge of the law is exemplified in a request made by the Head Constable in May for the purchase of Archbold's "Pleadings" (price 26s. 10d.), "a book much required in the Head Constable's office".

At the request of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, six constables were added to the strength of the Docks Division in August, thus bringing that Division to a greater strength than either the Cloughton or Tranmere Divisions.

The report book for the year concluded with a printed list of the rates of pay of the various officers of the Force, and this is given overleaf: -

Rank	On Appointment	1 yr.	2 yrs.	3 yrs.	5 yrs.	7 yrs.	10 yrs.	15 yrs.
Head Constable	... £450 per annum							
Superintendent	... £200 per annum							
Chief Clerk, Main Bridewell Keepers and Inspectors	... 34/- weekly	35/-		37/-	38/-	40/-	42/-	
Constables	... 24/- weekly	25/-	26/-	27/-	28/-		29/-	30/-

In addition to the above rates the following allowances were paid: -

Chief Clerk	6s. Od.;
2nd Clerk	5s. Od.;
3rd Clerk	4s. Od.
Inspector under Explosives Act,	5s. Od.
Chief Assistant Fire Inspector,	5s. Od.
Assistant Fire Inspector,	2s. 6d.
Firemen,	1s. Od.
1st Merit Class,	3d. per day.
2nd Merit Class,	1s. Od. per week.
Drill Instructor,	5s. Od.
Assistant Drill Instructor,	1s. Od.
Plain Clothes Duty,	2s. 6d.

For many years the Head Constable had been pressing a claim for increased accommodation in the Clerks' office and for a Detective office, but without success. In the Annual Report for 1881 these needs were reiterated in the following terms: -

"I bring these insufficiencies under the serious consideration of the Watch Committee at this time, when it appears probable that all other departments of the Corporation are to be suitably provided with office accommodation, and that not the least important, viz. the Police Establishment, is to be left out of the consideration of the Council."

It is obvious that the above report had no effect for we find that in the Annual Report of the following year the statement is repeated.

#### CONSTABLES' NIGHT SCHOOL.

The provision of a night school in the section room at Headquarters appears to have been taken seriously by the constables as it is stated that many men volunteered to attend and paid for the privilege of doing so.

#### UNDETECTED CRIMES

From the many reports of undetected crimes recorded in the Head Constable's Report Book over these early years, it would appear that, unlike the present day, the Head Constable was responsible to the Committee for the state of crime in the Borough and the members of the Committee frequently called on him to submit reports on serious crime occurring.

## HIGHER TRANMERE

During October, 1881, the use of the prisoners' van was discontinued and it was suggested that, instead of striking the driver off the strength of the Force, he should be added to the Tranmere Division "as the Head Constable and the inhabitants of Higher Tranmere are of the opinion that the district is insufficiently watched". It generally happened that there was only one constable available for three beats in the morning and two beats in the evening (each beat taking one and a half hours to cover), and he was kept patrolling Church Road most of the time in order to be available to the inhabitants when wanted.

## FIRST USE OF THE TERM "CHIEF CONSTABLE"

The use of the title "Chief Constable" is first used in the Report Book dated 9th January, 1882, and from then this is the term used for the Head of the Police Department.

## ESTIMATES

The continued advance in the methods used in police duties for communication is emphasised in June this year when estimates were submitted to the Watch Committee for the connection by telephone of all Bridewells, but there is no evidence that this was carried out during that year.

## QUARTER SESSIONS GRANTED

On 26th July, 1882, a Court of Quarter Sessions was granted to the Borough, and Clement Higgins, Esq., was appointed to the post of Recorder.

## MORE DISTURBANCES

1883 passed with little of note so far as the policing of the Borough is concerned, but in that year there were disturbances in connection with processions organised by the Salvation Army. (See Appendix "A".)

## POLICE ATHLETIC CLUB

There is also a note that in this year the Police Athletic Club was formed, but no details of this are available.

## POLICE SURGEON

After over 40 years' service as Police Surgeon, Dr. Jennette retired in 1885 and was succeeded by Dr. Cornwall at a salary of £65 a year. At the time of this change of Surgeons, the Chief Constable took the opportunity of bringing to the notice of the Watch Committee the fact that the weekly deductions in pay (3d. for Inspectors and 2d. for Constables) for medical treatment were in excess of those paid by local sick clubs, and suggested that they be reduced to 1d. per week to bring them into line with these clubs.

## PRINTING OF HANDBOOK

The 1882 estimates for the Police Force included £60 for printing a Handbook for the guidance of the Force, but it was not until 1885 that this was printed and issued.

### "LITTLE PROFIT IN READING THE PRESS"

In May of this year light is thrown on what, in the present day, might be considered a peculiarity of the Chief Constable. In that month, the Superintendent sought the advice of the Watch Committee regarding articles printed in the local press accusing him of irregular conduct. In the report presented to the Committee the Chief Constable made the following observations: "The Chief Constable has not himself seen the article, as for six years past he has not read any of the local papers, finding little profit in reading the vulgar personal remarks which they systematically made about him, a custom which appears to have been peculiar to the Birkenhead Press for many years in insulting public officials". The Superintendent, after inquiry, was informed that he retained the fullest confidence of the Committee.

### PETITION TO PARLIAMENT

Officers of the Police were at this time barred from voting at elections, and in July, 1885, a petition was raised by the members of the Force for presentation to Parliament by the M.P. for Birkenhead for the removal of this ban. The petition was first presented to the Watch Committee who did not object to it being so forwarded.

### "GREAT EASTERN"

The famous ship "Great Eastern" was anchored in the River Mersey in 1886, and in May application was made by Lewis's Great Eastern Exhibition Ltd. for the services of three constables on board. The Watch Committee at first refused this application but, after receiving two letters from the Secretary of State on the matter, they supplied two Special Constables for duty.

### VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER

The great Prime Minister, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, visited the Borough on 28th June, 1886, and, after crossing the Mersey on a luggage ferry boat to Woodside, travelled along Hamilton Street, Haymarket, Grange Road, Charing Cross, Whetstone Lane, Church Road, Well Lane, Grove Road to Rock Ferry Station. From the brief mention made of this incident it is obvious that Mr. Gladstone was not at that time held in the great esteem he enjoyed in later years.

### FIRE FORCE FINANCES

Difficulty arose in this year in obtaining payment for the services of the fire engine outside the Borough. On a number of occasions the Insurance Company insuring the premises attended refused to pay the bill, and once the owner of the property had to be summoned before the Company would settle.

Pressure of water in the Oxtan area also caused much concern, and mention is made of the Chief Constable visiting the area to test the hydrants.

### "CANINE MADNESS" AGAIN

Rabies again broke out in the town in 1886 and the ban on dogs being at large in the street was reintroduced. There are several mentions of constables killing dogs suspected of having "the canine madness" but only once are we told that this destruction occurred by shooting.

### POLICE AND SESSIONS COURT BUILDING COMPLETED

1887 proved to be a very auspicious year in the building programme of the Corporation, as it was in that year that the Police and Sessions Court Building behind the Town Hall was completed. After a number of years of complaints by the Chief Constable (endorsed by the Government Inspector) that the accommodation supplied to the Police was insufficient the Chief Constable expressed his great satisfaction with the amenities supplied in the Bridewell, Courts and Police buildings.

### TELEPHONE'S

Another long standing complaint of the Chief Constable was rectified in this year when all Stations were connected by telephone for the first time.

### COMPLAINTS AGAINST FIRE FORCE

Unfortunately the year did not prove altogether satisfactory for during the summer months a number of complaints was laid against the efficiency of the Fire Force. In reply the Chief Constable submitted to the Committee details of the distribution of all fire appliances, with the following footnote: -

"This system (of fire fighting), of course, is professionally inefficient. To make it efficient a number of constables should be in waiting at each Fire Station, and a horse ready harnessed to take out a hose reel. As it is, there is only one clerk on duty and a constable in waiting at the Central Station, while at the other Stations there is only the P.C. on the beat. At the Central, Watson Street, Claughton and Tranmere Bridewell Stations he has to run round the beats and get the men together as quickly as possible. At Oxton and Higher Tranmere he rings a fire bell, when the men on the beats run to it. It is creditable that under these circumstances the Brigade is as efficient as it is."

### DISTRIBUTION OF FORCE 1887

On 18th February, 1887, the Chief Constable submitted a report to the Watch Committee on the distribution of the Force, and as this makes interesting reading it is copied below: -

Strength:	1	Chief Constable.
	1	Superintendent.
	1	Clerk.
	14	Inspectors.
	2	Bridewell Keepers.
	92	Constables.
	111	Total.
Distribution	2	Clerks.

of Constables	1	Summons Server.
	2	Detectives.
	3	Plain Clothes Men.
	1	Town Hall Man.
	5	Sick.
	2	Vacancies.
	4	Escort Duty.
	1	Court Duty.
Total	21	leaving 71 available for street duty.

There are 95 miles of streets; 3,389 acres (exclusive of 506 acres Dock Estate); 87,000 inhabitants; 15,300 houses.

1st Relief - From 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

17 Constables giving each man 5 1/2 miles of streets to cover.  
196 acres; 5,111 inhabitants; 900 houses.

2nd Relief - From 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

21 Constables giving each man 4 1/2 miles of streets to cover.  
159 acres; 4,142 inhabitants; 728 houses.

3rd Relief-From 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

35 Constables giving each man 24 miles of streets to cover.  
95 1/4 acres; 2,485 inhabitants; 437 houses.

Every house in the Borough is tried by this relief after lights are out.

The new Bridewell appears to have lacked only one important feature, and this was rectified by a request from the Chief Constable for the supply to the cells of safety beds "as there had been instances of drunk and incapable persons rolling off their wooden beds and cutting their heads seriously. When brought to Court the prisoners had been unable to explain their injuries and it is most important that not the least suspicion should be attached to the Police of having used unnecessary force."

## NEW FIRE STATION

1888 and 1889 passed without anything of note being recorded, but in the latter year it is stated that a Fire Station was established in Dale Street, adjoining Charing Cross.

## STRIKE OF DOCK LABOURERS

In the beginning of February, 1890, a strike of dock labourers on both sides of the River Mersey commenced "and occasioned the Police Authorities considerable anxiety as to the preservation of the peace and protection of property". The services of 20 Cheshire County constables and 30 Leeds Borough constables were obtained. These men were sworn in as members of the Birkenhead Borough Force and performed duty in the town, whilst the local Force concentrated their attentions on the docks. At the end of March the strike collapsed, without any incidents, and the visiting constables were returned to their Forces. The Watch Committee granted the Chief Constable £50, to be divided amongst the men, for the amount of extra duty they had performed in connection with the strike.

## SEA AIR FOR THE SECOND CLERK

The Watch Committee, in September, granted the Second Clerk three months' leave of absence, as the Police Surgeon certified that he needed a sea journey to recover from a chest complaint. Messrs. Allen Bros., shipowners, to whom the Chief Constable had mentioned the case, offered a passage to Calcutta and back, free of charge, in their ship, "City of Chios". The Second Clerk's wife was granted half-pay during her husband's absence.

## RISE IN PAY

In November, 1890, the Inspectors and Constables petitioned the Watch Committee for an increase in pay of 1s. Od. a week to bring them nearer the rate paid to their colleagues by the Liverpool Watch Committee. The decision on this matter was deferred until January the following year, when the increase sought was granted.

## HOLDING OF INQUESTS

It is interesting to note that although the Sessions Court Building had been occupied for some time, inquests conducted by H.M. Coroner were still conducted at various licensed premises in the town. The idea of holding an inquest in the Sessions Court does not seem to have been suggested by any of the officials concerned.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

The Police Returns Act, 1892, altered the form in which returns had previously been forwarded to the Secretary of State and in addition ordered that annual returns were to be submitted from 1st January to 31st December.

This year produced a second copy of the Constables' Handbook. In addition to female searchers who had been employed at the Bridewell for many years (usually the Bridewell Keeper's wife), 1892 records the first Female Warder being appointed at a weekly wage of 5s. Od. Her duties were to take charge of all female prisoners brought to the Main Bridewell.

The title "Chief Detective Inspector" was first used in 1892 when the holder of that office requested the Watch Committee to grant him an increase in his pay. The Detective Department at that time consisted of one Chief Inspector and three constables "as it has done for the past twenty years".

## PREPARATIONS FOR SEPARATE FIRE BRIGADE

The very vexed, and almost annual, question of sending the fire engine out of the Borough was raised at the Watch Committee meeting on 8th May, 1893, when the Chief Constable gave the Committee a full history of the finances and difficulties involved in the past. After much discussion it was finally resolved that after 1st January, 1894, the fire engine would not attend fires outside the Borough.

The 12th June of that year saw a very lengthy report from the Chief Constable detailing the distribution of the Fire Force and its equipment, the boundaries of the divisions and the deployment of all constables. The many difficulties that were experienced in the combined Police and Fire Force were listed with a recommendation that a separate Fire Brigade should be set up in the town.

As if to emphasise the difficulties stressed by the Chief Constable in the above-mentioned report, the following month a serious fire occurred at Griffiths and Sons,



Printers, Hamilton Street, when many complaints were lodged against the method of fire fighting. A number of special Watch Committee meetings was held and several reports on various aspects of the problem were submitted by the Chief Constable, until in September, 1893, his suggestions were approved. The following month the position of Superintendent in charge of the Borough Fire Brigade was advertised at a salary of £120, with residence, coal and gas provided.

It was not, however, until many months had elapsed that the arrangements for the complete severance of the Brigade from the Police took place, under the command of Mr. Monk, Superintendent of the Poplar Division, Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

The latter part of this year saw the Chief Constable reporting to the Committee that despite the intended organisation of the Fire Brigade the strength of the Police Force should not be decreased. After much discussion the Committee agreed that the strength should remain at 147.

## SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

The activities of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children are recorded in 1894, when £5 was allowed to them by the Watch Committee for the use of their home in Victoria Street. This home had already been appointed "a place of safety" by the Committee and was used a great deal by the Police.

## DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE PRESS

The Chief Constables' aversion to local newspapers has already been mentioned, but in 1894, this aversion must have been increased tenfold by two reports which appeared in connection with Birkenhead.

In September of that year a number of articles were printed in a Liverpool newspaper criticising the manner in which prostitutes were allowed to solicit in the Borough Road area of Birkenhead. According to the newspaper the Police treated this matter with apathy. The Chief Constable, in defence of the Police, entered into lengthy arguments with correspondents to the paper, finally supplying the editor with a list showing the date, name, offence and street where committed and sentence passed in 232 cases involving prostitutes during 1893 and 1894.

The second incident occurred in December of the same year, when a dramatic account appeared in the same Liverpool newspaper of a prize fight which was said to have occurred in Birkenhead after "articles for a fight to a finish with the bare knuckles and for £25 a side" had been signed. The fight is alleged to have taken place between George Cole, of Liverpool, and Anthony Smith, of Widnes. The newspaper report spoke of the fight being attended by about 30 people and of the gentry present laying wagers of up to £200.

The Watch Committee requested the Chief Constable to report on this matter and he did so, stating that the whole story was a complete fabrication. He was asked by the Committee to contradict the newspaper report but refused to do so, writing later, "I told the Committee . . . that I should take Lord Rosebery's advice, which he gave at the Mansion House dinner in speaking of newspaper false reports, as 'the sheer absurdity of them requires no contradiction'".

## LIGHTS ON BICYCLES

Bicycles are first mentioned in 1895 when, as a result of a man being killed at Ince Blundell after his horse bolted on seeing a bicycle with lights, the Chief Constable recommended the adoption of a byelaw that bicycles and other similar machines should

only use lights produced by a candle or mineral or vegetable oil and not "the electric light lamp which has been invented". The Town Clerk opposed the byelaw and it was not passed.

### INDEPENDENT FIRE BRIGADE

The same year the Fire Brigade was finally made independent of the Police with the opening of the Central Fire Station at Charing Cross. The services of six constables were, however, retained by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board for fire duties on the docks.

### MORE ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

In November, 1895, it was decided that in future meetings of the Watch Committee should be held fortnightly instead of weekly.

Superintendent Clarke died in 1896 after 41 years' service (21 years as Superintendent), and was succeeded on promotion by Inspector Bennett.

In this year the strength of the Force was increased by eight constables to 155, even though the duties of fire-fighting had been surrendered.

In the Chief Constable's Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1896, it is stated that two constables received caps in the Cheshire County Rugby Football team, but no further details are recorded.

For the first time we are told of the site of the Cloughton Police Station established in 1865. It seems that the Station was in Post Office Place, Cloughton, and that in 1896 the lease had expired and it was found necessary to find another site. The Chief Constable and the Borough Surveyor suggested a site in Shrewsbury Road, but the Committee disagreed and the matter was adjourned sine die.

### DIAMOND JUBILEE OF H.M. THE QUEEN

The year 1897 was celebrated as Queen Victoria's Diamond jubilee and in commemoration 12 silver medals were issued to the Officers of the Force with 20 years' or more service and 13 bronze medals to Constables with similar service.

### HOLDING OF INQUESTS

The venue of Coroner's inquests was settled in the same year when the practice of holding inquests in licensed premises was abolished. Arrangements were made for the jury to be sworn in at the Sessions Court and then, with the Coroner, taken by omnibus to view the body, returning to the Sessions Court for the completion of the enquiry.

### CHILDREN AND LICENSED PREMISES

In May the Chief Constable, at the request of the Watch Committee, forwarded a letter to all licensees pointing out that in the opinion of the Borough justices, children apparently under 13 years of age should not be served with intoxicants, whether for consumption on or off the premises.

### POLICE-AIDED CHILDREN'S CLOTHING ASSOCIATION

Mention is also made in this year of the Police-Aided Children's Clothing Association, which was to do such fine work in future years. In the season ending March, 1897, nearly 600 children had been clothed by the Association.

#### APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE AND NEW METHODS INTRODUCED

After 22 years service, Major Barker resigned from the position of Chief Constable in 1898, and was succeeded by Mr. Walter S. Davies.

The first interesting alteration introduced by Mr. Davies was the provision of a door in the wall of the exercise yard between the Bridewell and the rear of the Town Hall, in order that prisoners being conveyed to Walton Prison could be loaded into the van without "the unseemly scenes" which occurred when this was done in Brandon Street.

In the same year it was agreed that in future constables should be subjected to one year's probation instead of one month, as previously.

The beginning of the year 1899 saw many alterations and innovations by the Chief Constable. In January he requested an increase in the strength of the Force by 25 constables, giving as his reasons that the town was not adequately policed, the necessity of changing the areas of the beats, the provision of one rest day in fourteen for the men, and his desire to allow men "time off" for attending Court and similar duties in their own time. These recommendations were approved by the Watch Committee and later in the same year the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board agreed to employ three additional constables for similar reasons. By the end of this year the strength of the Force was 183.

In February, 1899, the Chief Constable submitted a Standing Order to the Watch Committee, which they approved, that "All promotions from the rank of constable will be made to that of sergeant and not to that of inspector. If otherwise qualified from good conduct and general efficiency, a constable will be required to pass a simple examination in the following subjects: Dictation, simple arithmetic, making a short official report, and police duties". The examination pass mark was 33 1/3 per cent. and the papers were to be marked by an independent person.

The following rates of pay for Sergeants were approved: -

On appointment	...	...	34s. Od. per week
After three years	...	...	36s. Od. per week
After seven years	.....		38s. Od. per week
After 10 years	...	...	40s. Od. per week

The first form of transport for use by the members of the Force was introduced in July, 1899, when the Chief Constable received instructions to purchase a bicycle for the use of the members of the Detective Department. This new experiment must have been a success for later in the year a second bicycle was obtained for the use of superior ranks.

On a previous occasion a prisoners' van had been introduced and then withdrawn, but in this year the Chief Constable received the Watch Committee's authority to invite tenders for the construction of another such vehicle. It was to weigh 17 cwt. and carry eleven prisoners. In order to express the need for this van, the Chief Constable made the following report: -

"The conveyance now used is an old and dilapidated looking omnibus.... The prisoners are huddled together, male and female, vicious and unfortunate, clean and unclean. The blinds are pulled down in order to hide the prisoners from the public gaze but the back window is left open for the purpose of ventilation. The prisoners' friends



Mr. H. J. VANN, O.B.E.  
CHIEF CONSTABLE 1942-1958



MEMBERS OF THE "C" OR TRANMERE DIVISION (1920)

who can see them through this necessary aperture shout remarks to them and are frequently answered in oaths and ribald language. . . . On a recent occasion when returning from Walton the door of the omnibus fell off."

At the end of the year allowances were paid to the wife and dependants of two constables who were engaged in the South African War. They were P.C. Davies, Shropshire Light Infantry, and P.C. Carron, 3rd Grenadier Guards.

### POST OFFICE MURDER

1900 was a notable year in the history of Birkenhead so far as crime is concerned, for in that year the murder known as the "Post Office Murder" was committed. The crime occurred on 9th September when George Fell, a watchman at the General Post Office, Conway Street, was brutally murdered.

The murderer escaped with a considerable sum of money, leaving no clues as to his identity.

### NEW POLICE STATIONS AND INCREASE IN STRENGTH

The Chief Constable's Annual Report for 1900 mentioned that two new Police Stations were in an advanced state of construction, namely in Price Street and Slatey Road.

By the end of 1901 the strength of the Force was 191 in comparison with the population of 110,926. The increase in strength included two constables attached to the Docks Division for duty on Woodside Ferry goods and passenger stages, and four men to attend to traffic points established at Argyle Street, junction of Conway Street, and at Central Station.

The lease of the old Claughton Bridewell expired and as a temporary measure, the house 1 Victoria Mount was used as a Station until Slatey Road Station was taken into use. During the same year Price Street Station was completed, and electric light was fitted in the Central Police Office for the first time.

### ALLEGIANCE TO KING EDWARD VII

The modern practice of a constable being sworn in to serve the reigning monarch and successors cannot have been the case in 1901, as there is a report from the Chief Constable to the Watch Committee pointing out the need for all members of the Borough Force to make new declarations of service to H.M. King Edward VII.

### MORE RELIGIOUS DISTURBANCES

For a number of years there are no records of any serious disturbances occurring in the Borough, but in 1903 this tranquillity was broken by two different religious sects. The first, known as the Wycliffe Preachers, under the leadership of a Mr. Wise, came to Birkenhead from Liverpool each Sunday in numbers estimated at 3,000. Their meetings were held near the Park Entrance and to keep order 100 police were borrowed from Liverpool. On one occasion it is recorded that eight people were arrested at one of these meetings.

The second series of incidents concerned a body called the Kensit Crusade who marched through the streets with bands and banners. Their principal objection appears to have been to the Bishop of Chester, and when he attended Birkenhead to speak, disturbances were thought probable but did not materialise.

As a result of these incidents the Chief Constable was authorised to obtain the services of as many constables as were thought necessary, when he considered they were required. Also, as a result of the extra duty imposed on the Force, the Watch Committee allowed the payment of overtime at the following rates: Inspectors 9d. per hour; Sergeants 8d., and Constables 7d.

These meetings continued in number and in violence into the early part of 1904, causing the Chief Constable to submit lengthy reports on the damage caused and the compensation applied for under the Riot (Damages) Act. Finally, the Chief Constable recommended the adoption of a byelaw prohibiting processions taking part in the Borough other than on authorised routes.

#### CHIEF CONSTABLE ATTENDS MEETING OF CHIEF CONSTABLES' ASSOCIATION

For the first time in the records of the Force mention is made of leave being granted to the Chief Constable for the purpose of attending a meeting of the Chief Constables' Association of England at the Holborn Restaurant in London. This was in 1904.

#### DIFFICULTY IN FILLING POST IN DETECTIVE DEPARTMENT

In July of that year Superintendent Bennett retired after 42 years' service and was succeeded on promotion by Detective Chief Inspector Edward Parker. Chief Inspector Parker's promotion left a vacancy in the Detective Department which could not be filled from within the Force. As a result the Chief Constable visited the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police in an effort to find an officer to fill the post. He was unsuccessful as officers who were suitable were receiving better wages than those offered by the Birkenhead Watch Committee. A visit to Wakefield followed, and then a visit to Liverpool. Applications for the post were received from a Sergeant in the Wakefield Force and two Detective Officers in Liverpool. Finally, Detective Officer Eakins, of Liverpool, was given the post at an annual salary of £150.

#### MOTOR CARS-AND BICYCLES

October saw the Chief Constable submitting recommendations for the erection of signs under the Motor Car Act, 1903, at a number of places in the Borough, and also the payment of 4d. per hour to any constable who had need to use his bicycle on police duty.

#### MORE STRENGTH REQUIRED

The strength of the Force was increased by the addition of six constables to patrol the rapidly growing district of Tranmere, bringing the total strength at the end of 1904 to 198.

In addition to the normal training of recruits a system was introduced in 1905 whereby they attended at the Y.M.C.A. gymnasium for one hour twice a week for classes in physical exercises. This was followed later in the year by an application from Mr. Charles Lord, who was to become so well known as a physical culture expert, to be appointed Physical Training Instructor to the Force.

Another application for an increase in the strength of the Force was made by the Chief Constable in February. In submitting his application he drew the Committee's attention to "the fact that the number of crimes and offences dealt with by the Police in

this Borough are far above the average of that dealt with in other towns of the same size. The watching of the Borough to be effective must be closer than that of other towns of similar size owing to the fact that we have a large criminal population in Liverpool to reckon with. Their proximity and the facility of access to this Borough makes them very dangerous". The Watch Committee approved an increase of 15 constables.

### "ISRAEL'S CHOSEN FEW"

Further religious disturbances occurred in this year as a result of an Orange band, called "Israel's Chosen Few", marching in procession down Park Street. It appears to have become the practice for bands of this nature to choose areas inhabited by large numbers of Roman Catholics for their processions, thus causing strife. Again the Chief Constable applied for a byelaw to enable him to stop similar processions.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE MOTOR CAR, 1905

In August, 1905, the Chief Constable recorded his views on "the serious public danger" caused by the manner in which motor cars were being driven in the town, and recommended that the justices should impose imprisonment on the offenders instead of a fine. (See Appendix "A".)

### PENSION PROBLEMS

Prior to 1906 an officer who had completed 26 years' approved service was eligible for retirement from the Force on a pension of two-thirds of his annual pay. In March of that year, however, the Chief Constable reported that the Pension Fund had become a serious charge on the rates; in fact, the returns for the year showed that expenditure was in excess of income by £1,150. The Watch Committee thereupon decided that future candidates to the Force would be obliged to serve for 30 years before receiving the two-thirds pension.

### FINGERPRINTS

The Chief Constable's Annual Report for 1908 brings to light the use of fingerprints in the Force. The report reads: "It is interesting to note that in 26 cases the fingerprints of prisoners have been taken in the Main Bridewell and in 17 cases this method has led to the identification of prisoners as persons who have been previously convicted".

### PAY PETITION

In May of that year the Sergeants and Constables, through the Chief Constable, submitted a petition to the Watch Committee seeking:

1. The payment of rent allowance;
2. The establishment of a Sergeants' Merit Class and the increase in the Constables' Merit Class;
3. That annual leave should be increased for Sergeants from 10 to 14 days and Constables from seven to 10 days;
4. That "time off" should be allowed for attendances at Court and at drill parade during the officer's own time, and



5. An increase of 2s. 0d. in Sergeants' rates of pay.

The Watch Committee deferred decision on these matters but from later reports it seems that the only concession granted was that relating to "time off".

#### NEW EQUIPMENT

Two orders for new equipment are of interest in this year. A new prison van was purchased to accommodate 22 persons, and a new typewriter was ordered. The latter item was not the first of such machines in use in the Force, for it is stated that the old typewriter, which was purchased on 30th March, 1899, had become worn out.

#### POLITICAL PERSUASIONS

The emergence of what might have been the first signs of discontent within the Force appeared in January, 1909, when the Chief Constable had cause to report to the Watch Committee that a number of members of the Force were joining political clubs in the town. He felt that it was "most important that they should avoid even the appearance of bias and partisanship", and pointed out that it was a condition of service that members of the Force should not join such organisations. The Committee resolved that in future this condition would be strictly enforced.

#### TRAGEDY AT VICTORIA DOCK

In March of the same year a very tragic disaster occurred when 14 men engaged on construction work were drowned by the bursting of a coffer dam at the new Victoria Dock entrance.

#### DRILL DIFFICULTIES RESOLVED

The continual problem of space in which to drill the Police was solved in the same year when arrangements were entered into with the Army Authorities for the hire of the Drill Hall, Grange Road West, at an annual charge of £ 10.

#### WEEKLY REST DAYS

In December, 1909, the introduction in Parliament of the Police (Weekly Rest Days) Bill provoked much concern amongst local Authorities, and as a result a meeting was called of representatives of all Local Authorities with a population of over 100,000. A motion was passed at this meeting, objecting to the terms of the Bill. Later a deputation from the meeting was sent to the Home Secretary pleading that the terms of the Bill could not be enforced owing to the expense. In 1910 the Bill received the Royal Assent. The main provision was that as far as possible all members of the Police Force were to receive one rest day in seven. The opposition to the Act continued until 1911 when, in Birkenhead, the strength of the Force was increased by 17 to meet its requirements.

#### POLICE LAMPS

1910 commenced with the purchase by the Watch Committee of a number of electric police lamps. These proved a success and later the whole Force was equipped with them, thus abolishing the old oil burning lamps which were first issued in 1872.

## ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE V

In October, 1910, the Watch Committee, following the example set by the Home Secretary to members of the Metropolitan Police, agreed that any member of the Force who was suffering a decrease in pay as a disciplinary measure should have the balance remitted in commemoration of the accession of H.M. King George V.

## POLICE DOGS

At the instigation of the Watch Committee the Chief Constable visited a Police Dogs' Training Home at Harrow-on the-Hill in November, 1910. He reported on their efficiency and suggested the purchase of two dogs for use in the outlying beats of Oxtou and Tranmere. Although the question of the use of dogs was brought up by the Government Inspector four years later there is no record of any purchase being made. On each occasion the Committee's decision was shown as "Deferred".

## RIOT IN PRICE STREET

April, 1911, brought another small riot in Price Street when a crowd estimated at 3,000 people attacked four houses in that street occupied by Chinese nationals. The attack was caused by an allegation that one of the occupants had exposed himself to two females from a house window. Although the riot does not seem to have taken a very serious course, seven people were arrested.

## SWIMMING

The Chief Constable was obviously a believer in the need for constables to be proficient in swimming, for in the same year the Watch Committee, on the recommendation of the Chief Constable, agreed to the formation of a Police Swimming Club, and approved also that any member of the Force who qualified for a Life Saving Certificate should have the cost of his Baths season ticket (5s. 0d.) refunded.

## LOCAL STRIKE OF RAILWAY WORKERS

A local strike of railway workers took place in August, 1911, and as a result the services of 50 Nottingham and 50 Birmingham Police were obtained. Fortunately, all went off quietly and after a fortnight the borrowed police were returned to their respective towns.

## FIRST POLICE RESERVE

The Home Office, in October, 1911, mooted the idea of a First Police Reserve, but this received great opposition from the Chief Constables' Conference as it was considered that there would be difficulty in procuring sufficient men of a suitable standard to fill the Reserve. This opposition was made on several occasions but was finally overruled by the Home Office who issued a circular ordering the formation of the First Police Reserve under threat of withholding the certificate of efficiency from any Force which refused. At the same time, a Second Police Reserve was formed, and in Birkenhead 568 Special Constables were enrolled to fill this Reserve. Their duties were to assist the regular Police in cases of riot and disorder and their command was offered to a Colonel Hutchinson.

## PAY BROUGHT INTO LINE WITH LIVERPOOL FORCE

The Inspectors, Sergeants and Constables petitioned the Watch Committee in December, 1911, for an increase in their rates of pay. At this time the Committee's decision was deferred, but the petition was re-submitted in February, 1912, and, after being deferred, was granted on 1st April that year. This increase, for the first time in the history of the Birkenhead Force, brought the members' pay scale in line with that obtaining in Liverpool.

## CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ILLNESS

On 12th February, 1912, mention is made of illness causing the Chief Constable to be absent from the Watch Committee meetings, and from that date all reports were submitted by Superintendent Edward Parker. Later in the year the resignation of Chief Constable Davies was accepted by the Committee, but there does not appear to have been any great hurry to appoint his successor for Superintendent Parker continued to submit reports to the Watch Committee until the end of the year, and in fact issued the Chief Constable's Annual Report for 1912, signing it "Superintendent, Acting Chief Constable".

## ANOTHER LABOUR DISPUTE

A labour dispute arose on 15th July when dock labourers refused to accept the Clearing House Scheme which came into operation for the first time. About 2,000 dock labourers were "imported" into the town to continue the work at the docks and, in order to afford adequate protection to property and works, it became necessary to divide the Force into two shifts of 12 hours each. Use was again made of "mutual aid" when 100 Liverpool and 50 Nottingham Police arrived to render assistance to the local Force. The dispute lasted until 12th August and the peace of the Borough was well maintained.

## CORONATION MEDALS

During this year 11 members of the Force were awarded Coronation Medals, which were presented to the recipients by the Chairman of the Watch Committee.

## APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE

On 10th March, 1913, Superintendent Edward Parker was appointed Chief Constable of the Force, and his place as Superintendent was filled by Inspector Charles Jones. Thus a Chief Constable had risen through the ranks of the Force to the senior position for the first time in the history of the town.

## AWARD OF MERIT BADGE RE-ORGANISED

With the increase of pay granted to the Force in April, 1912, the Committee had ceased to pay holders of Merit Badges the award which had gone with that rank. In July, 1913, the new Chief Constable suggested that in future these badges be referred to as "Good Conduct Badges" without any monetary reward. He further suggested the introduction of a Merit Badge for "men who show great courage in the performance of extraordinary deeds of valour in the execution of their duty". This suggestion was

adopted by the Committee who, in addition, agreed that at the time of awarding the Merit Badge the Committee would consider any monetary payment that might be due.

## REQUEST FOR CONSTABLES TO POLICE SHIPYARD

On 28th July, 1913, application was received from Messrs. Cammell Laird and Co., Ltd., for eight constables to police their shipyard. The Watch Committee granted the application on an agreement being entered into that the Committee would be paid 40s. 0d. per week for each man; that the constables would be under the same control and direction as other members of the Force; that they should not be called upon to perform any duty they were not legally entitled to do, and that six months' notice should be given on either side to terminate the agreement.

## STRENGTH

At the close of 1913 the strength of the Force stood at 238, consisting of one Chief Constable, one Superintendent, six Inspectors, 18 Sergeants and 212 Constables.

## UNSETTLED YEAR

1914 is notable for the very unsettled state of the Force both in manpower and economy.

The year opened with an increase in strength of three constables at the request of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. These constables were employed in plain clothes giving special supervision to the property of two shipping companies, the Bibby Line and Lamport and Holt, Ltd.

In February the Sergeants and Constables again petitioned for an increase in their pay, and this was granted by the Committee. It consisted of 6s. 0d. for Sergeants and 4s. 0d. for Constables.

On 25th March, 1914, Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary visited the Borough and, in order to cope with the vast crowds of people who attended, the services of 469 constables from Liverpool and 100 constables from Manchester were obtained.

In May, 1914, the Government Inspector visited the Force and during his inspection asked if any members of the Force were trained in the use of firearms. As a result of this a search was made of the Stores and the revolvers which had been received for the Fenian Riots (47 years previously) were discovered. These firearms were, of course, out of date and when the matter was brought to the attention of the Committee it was decided to obtain 25 revolvers and ammunition, to be used in guarding vulnerable places in the Borough.

## OUTBREAK OF WAR

In August, 1914, the Great War broke out and as a result the following months showed many transfers of members of the Force to the armed services. In all 12 Police Reservists were called to the Colours; four constables resigned to "join up", and seven constables were given the temporary rank of Sergeant and seconded to the Army as Drill Instructors. To replace these men 22 members of the First Police Reserve were appointed. These men consisted in the main of pensioned constables. Between August and November 1,105 Special Constables were sworn in and commenced duty watching

Depots of the Corporation. They worked in reliefs of four hours each week from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

P.C. John Appleton was mentioned in Dispatches for gallant and distinguished conduct on the field in carrying a wounded Officer from the front line to a place of safety at La Bassee. There are also instances of members of the Force being badly wounded.

In 1915 there are many mentions of economy. The strength of the Force was reduced by 10, and 10 vacancies were kept open. One issue of clothing was cut out and stationery was reduced by one-third.

Many members continued to enlist with the Armed Forces and were replaced by the First Police Reserve.

### 86 CONSTABLES RESIGN

On 8th March, 1915, the Chief Constable submitted to the Watch Committee the resignations of 86 constables. These resignations were tendered on the grounds that the Watch Committee had failed to grant compensation for weekly rest days lost since the commencement of the war, and the period of service for pension was 30 years instead of 26 years. Later, at the request of the men, 40 of them were reinstated as Temporary Constables, their appointment to be terminated at the pleasure of the Committee.

### R.M.S. "LUSITANIA"

The sinking by a German submarine of R.M.S. "Lusitania" in May provoked a strong anti-German feeling, which resulted in serious rioting. During these riots damage was done to property belonging to persons of alien and enemy origin, and resulted in 41 claims being made on the Police (total value £3,180) under the Riot (Damages) Act, 1886. During these riots 436 Special Constables were enrolled.

### APPOINTMENT OF FIRST CIVILIAN STAFF

The appointment of the first civilian staff is mentioned in November, 1915, when two typists were engaged for clerical duties to take the place of constables called to the colours.

### REINSTATEMENT OF TEMPORARY CONSTABLES

In October, 1916, an application was made by 28 of the Temporary Constables, who had resigned in 1915, to be reinstated as ordinary Constables. After the Watch Committee had agreed to this reinstatement it was pointed out that their service as Temporary Constables could not be counted as pensionable service.

### DEPLETED STRENGTH OF THE FORCE

In December the Military Authorities requested the Force to release more of its members for service in H.M. Forces. Although the Force at that time was seriously depleted it was considered that additional members should be released for Military Service. In reporting on the difficulties which had as a consequence arisen in manpower the Chief Constable pointed out that it was becoming harder to obtain the services of suitable candidates to the Force who were over military age. In order to meet this difficulty he suggested that women police should be employed to help fill the vacancies.

Twelve women were enrolled in February, 1917, and although we are not told their precise duties one was given the rank of Sergeant and the impression is that they were employed on normal patrol.

In addition to the Armed Forces urgently requiring manpower, in March, 1917, four constables, expert ploughmen, were loaned to the Agricultural Commissioners to assist them in farm work, owing to the great shortage of skilled farm workers. The wages paid by the farmers for these men's services were paid into the Borough Treasurer, and the constables continued to draw their ordinary police wages.

On the recommendation of the Home Office six further constables were released to join the Army, thus further depleting the strength of the Force. Owing to this continual drain on the manpower and an increase in the number of offences committed in the Borough, the Chief Constable issued an order in July, 1917, that until further notice only one rest day would be allowed each fortnight, payment being made for the rest day lost.

## TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS

The year 1917 saw two important events in the life of the town. The first was a visit of a semi-private nature made by King George V and Queen Mary to Cammell Laird's shipyard on 14th May, and the second was the holding of the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales in Birkenhead Park on 5th, 6th and 7th September. This latter event was attended by the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. D. Lloyd George, M.P., upon whom the Freedom of the Borough was conferred. On both occasions large crowds of visitors entered the town, but all passed off in an orderly manner and without incident. During the Eisteddfod men of the 2nd Battalion (Birkenhead) Cheshire Volunteer Regiment were attested as Special Constables, but their services were not used.

## FIRST AWARD OF NEW MERIT BADGE

The first constable to be presented by the Watch Committee with the new type of Merit Badge (plus £5) was P.C. 22A John G. Colligan. He was awarded the Badge for his courageous conduct in the face of danger when arresting an armed Chinaman in Cleveland Street. - (See Appendix "A".) The following year Constable Colligan was awarded the King's Police Medal for this act of bravery.

## AIR RAID WARNING DEVICE

Reports to the Watch Committee give the impression that enemy air raids were being conducted near to the town and, as a result, in March, 1918, after much discussion, it was decided to equip the Fire Station and all Police Stations with a mortar capable of throwing a maroon to a height of about 1,000 feet. The maroon would make a loud report, thus giving the inhabitants warning that an air raid was imminent. Should an air raid ensue, arrangements were made for constables to extinguish all lighted street lamps.

## MONTHLY REPORTS TO WATCH COMMITTEE

The number of Chief Constable's Reports to the Watch Committee altered in this year, when it was decided to hold Watch Committee meetings once a month, instead of fortnightly as before.

## PAY AND REPRESENTATION TO WATCH COMMITTEE

In October, 1918, the Sergeants and Constables presented a further petition to the Committee requesting an increase in pay, which was eventually granted.

During the time that this petition was made a note appears of a Sergeant Ingham being the spokesman of a deputation formed to express the views of the petitioners. This Sergeant is reported as saying that he was a member of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, and that he was the organiser for the Birkenhead District. Perhaps this deputation caused the members of the Watch Committee to think that the members of the Police Force should have some form of representation, because in November, 1918, they informed the Chief Constable that the Committee were agreeable to a Police Representative Board being set up within the Force to enable the members to meet the Police Authority on matters connected with conditions of service and welfare, other than matters of discipline. A ballot was held within the Force concerning this organisation and it is recorded that 17 voted for the Board and 96 against. The Committee, in view of the ballot, decided to take no further action.

### ARMISTICE

On 11th November, 1918, the Mayor announced the signing of an Armistice and although the inhabitants were allowed "a certain amount of latitude" there were no riots or great disorders.

In connection with the Armistice it is recorded that during 1918 one constable was killed in action in France, several were wounded and three were awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field.

At the conclusion of the year the strength of the Force was 229, consisting of one Chief Constable, one Superintendent, six Inspectors, 19 Sergeants, 108 ordinary Constables and 41 Temporary Constables, leaving 53 vacancies. The strength of the Special Constabulary stood at 574.

### DISBANDING OF SPECIAL CONSTABULARY

On 31st January, 1919, the Special Constabulary was suspended and on 1st September, 1919, it was disbanded, each member being presented with a medal in recognition of his services to the Borough during the War. With the return of regular constables from the Forces, many of the Temporary Constables who had rendered great service during the war were retired.

### POLICE STRIKE

The year 1919 was the year of the Police Strike when in Birkenhead 114 Sergeants and Constables failed to perform their ordinary tours of duty. The first signs of the strike occurred in June of that year when the Watch Committee received a letter from the Secretary of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers demanding that the Union be recognised by the Police Authorities, the reinstatement of a named Metropolitan Police Constable and a number of pay increases. At the time this letter was read to the Committee, the Chief Constable reported that a ballot had been held amongst the members of the Union as to whether they would be in favour of withholding their services if called upon by the Union. A large majority of the members had been in favour of this course.

On 1st August many sergeants and constables throughout the country withdrew their services. This was followed by looting, rioting and serious damage to property. Military aid was requisitioned, and on the 2nd and 3rd of the month 500 troops arrived in

the town. Special Constables, under Mr. Arthur F. Moore, Solicitor, were called out, and many people who had taken part in the looting and violent behaviour were arrested. On 18th August peace was restored and the troops were withdrawn. As a result of this incident 115 claims, amounting to £ 15,146, were made on the Police under the Riot (Damages) Act, 1886. Full details of the strike are embodied in Appendix "A".

At the conclusion of the strike and as a result of all sergeants and constables taking part being dismissed, many men were taken on as constables until, in December, 1919, the Force had been brought almost up to strength.

The results of the strike became apparent in the latter days of August when new pay scales, as recommended by the Desborough Committee, were introduced, and in November, when the first Police Federation Branch Board was set up within the Force.

The Chief Constable expressed his views on the strike in the following words: "The result of the strike has removed from the Force causes of unrest which have been a disturbing factor for the last several years. It is now (January, 1920) at its normal strength and has improved both in contentment, efficiency and discipline".

### POLICEWOMEN RESIGN FROM FORCE

1920 opened with an application being made to the Watch Committee by the three remaining policewomen in the Force to be placed on the same scale of pay as the men. The Committee declined the application after the Chief Constable had stated that his experience in the last three years had convinced him that "they are only fit for the lighter parts of police work and that they are considerably below the value of policemen". Later in the year the application was presented to the Government Inspector with the same result. This was followed by two of the policewomen resigning. The remaining member continued until March, 1921, when she too resigned.

### HOUSING

Difficulties in housing members of the Force were brought to the attention of the Watch Committee in April, 1920, when the Chief Constable reported that he was experiencing a number of vacancies as a result. The Committee were asked to assist him, but there is no record of any housing being provided.

### RETIREMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT

In July Superintendent Charles Jones retired and was succeeded by Chief Inspector Arthur Lodge.

### FIRST MOTOR VEHICLE

The purchase of the Force's first motor vehicle occurred in February, 1920, when a Rover Sunbeam motor van was obtained from the Fire Service. It was converted to suit the requirements of a prison van and remained in use for some months until it was found to be too heavy, when a second such vehicle was obtained.

In February, 1921, each member of the Force was issued with a First Aid Field Dressing, for use when on patrol, and in April the same year point duty men were issued with white gloves for traffic duty.

### JOINT BRANCH BOARD

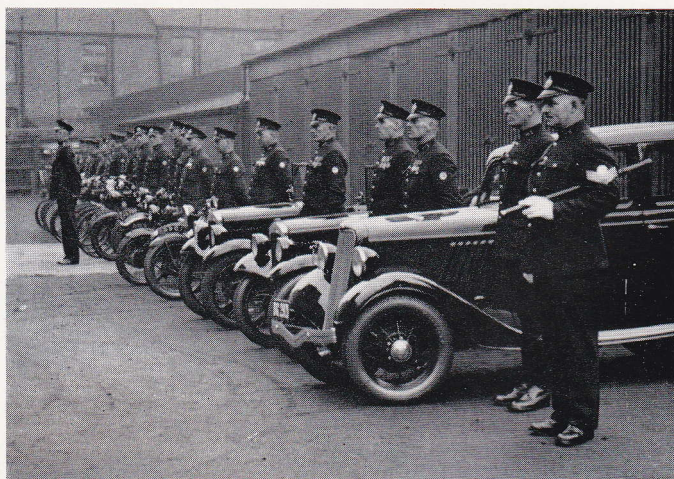




CHAIRMAN OF THE WATCH COMMITTEE (Councillor M. HALLIGAN) WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE FORCE WHO ATTENDED THE INSPECTION OF POLICE BY KING GEORGE V IN HYDE PARK, LONDON, IN 1935



BIRKENHEAD POLICEWOMEN (1917)



THE TRAFFIC BRANCH (1933)

One of the first successes of the joint Branch Board was in May, 1921, when, as a result of their representations, it was made a condition of service that in future each member of the Force would have a deduction made from pay in order to support the Liverpool and Bootle Police Orphanage.

#### WITHDRAWAL OF PLAIN CLOTHES CONSTABLES FROM BERTHS ON DOCK ESTATE

Also in May the Dock Board withdrew the services of the three plain clothes constables who had been engaged in watching the berths of Messrs. Bibby Brothers and the Lamport and Holt Line since 1914. One of these constables retired on pension and the other two were absorbed into the strength of the Force.

#### REMOVAL OF DEAD BODIES

In October, 1921, the Chief Constable reported on the need for one of the town's undertakers being employed to remove dead bodies found in the Borough. Since 1914 it had been the practice for bodies to be removed to the Mortuary in a lined box on wheels, which was obtained from either Meadow Lane Police Station or Duke Street Gate, taken to the site where the body was lying, and then wheeled through the streets by the constables to the Mortuary. This was undesirable as frequently the constables were asked by passers-by whose the body was and also they were followed in procession by large numbers of children.

#### HARD TIMES

1922 was a year of widespread unemployment and in consequence many economies were called for in Government Departments. In this respect the Birkenhead Force was asked to economise by reductions in the strength of the Force, leaving vacancies unfilled, reducing uniform issues, reducing rent, boot and plain clothes allowances, and a 2 1/2 per cent reduction in the pay of all ranks.

#### PROMOTION EXAMINATIONS

Since 1899 constables who wished to be considered for promotion to the rank of sergeant had been required to sit an examination in order to qualify for promotion. In 1922 this provision was also instituted for sergeants seeking promotion to the rank of Inspector. At the first of these examinations 11 sergeants sat and it is recorded that seven passed.

#### APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Chief Constable, Mr. E. Parker, retired from the Force in March, 1923, after completing 40 years' service, 10 of them as Chief Constable. On 30th April he was succeeded by Captain A. C. Dawson, formerly Chief Superintendent in the Liverpool City Police Force.

The new Chief Constable informed the Committee that in the past it had been the practice of Chief Constables to wear uniform on very rare occasions, numbering three or four times a year, but that it was his intention to wear uniform much more often. In view of this he applied for, and was granted, a uniform allowance of £25 per annum.

In June, 1923, the Chief Constable was sanctioned by the Committee to stop 1d. per week from the wages of members of the Force for the Athletic Society in order "to

foster all kinds of healthy recreation and games which make for the physical well-being of the men". At this time the Athletic Society organised football, cricket, bowls and billiards.

### TRAGIC DEATH OF CONSTABLE ON DUTY

June proved to be a sad month for the members of the Force as on the 15th the body of P.C. John Daley was recovered from Morpeth Dock. This Constable had been missing since 3rd March when, owing to the darkness of the night and squally weather conditions, it was presumed that he had fallen or been blown into the Dock whilst on patrol.

### BEGINNINGS OF TRAFFIC BRANCH

The purchase of a four-speed motor cycle combination for £91 in October, 1923, was the commencement of the modern type of Traffic Department. This machine was bought for traffic purposes and later proved its value in checking excessive speeding of motor vehicles. It was used in the prosecution of motorists for exceeding the speed limit for the first time in the Borough.

### INTRODUCTION OF POLICE CADETS

The present Police Cadet system may be traced to 1924, when in February of that year Harry Robert Harvey, 16 years, commenced employment as a junior Clerk in the Chief Constable's office at a weekly wage of 12s. 6d. The employment of junior Clerks was subject to their physique and educational ability being such that they would be eligible for recruiting into the Force at some future date.

### REVISED STRENGTH OF DOCKS DIVISION

In May, 1924, the strength of the Docks Division was increased by one Inspector, one Sergeant and nine Constables and, in addition to paying the wages, cost of clothing, etc., of the whole of the Docks personnel, it was agreed that the Dock Board should contribute 20 per cent. of the wages of the Chief Constable, Superintendent and Police Surgeon, and 10 per cent. of the wages of the Inspector, C.I.D., and the Chief Clerk.

### REORGANISATION OF THE FORCE

A complete reorganisation of the Force occurred in 1924 when the Chief Constable divided the whole of the Borough (excluding the Docks) into three Sub-Divisions. There were 10 beats each for morning and afternoon duty; for night duty "A", or Central, Sub-Division had 20 beats, and "B" (Slatey Road) and "C" (Meadow Lane) Sub-Divisions 10 beats. An Inspector was placed in charge of each Sub-Division and was responsible for it for the whole of the 24 hours.

Cycle beats were introduced for the outlying areas of Oxton and Tranmere, and cyclists were allowed 2s. 6d. a week for the use of their machines.

The Chief Constable's Annual Report of 1924 makes some interesting comments on the recruiting of constables. In that year 714 applicants were tested but only 45 were engaged. The rejections were mainly on the grounds of character, education or physical unfitness. Each recruit appointed received eight weeks' instruction in Police Law and Practice, Crime and Offences, Local Acts and Byelaws, Powers of Arrest, Drill, etc.

At the conclusion of the year the Force of 250 was distributed as follows: -

Headquarters- 1 Chief Constable, 1 Superintendent, 1 Chief Inspector,  
3 Inspectors, 10 Sergeants, and 23 Constables (including 5 recruits).

"A" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 4 Sergeants, 62 Constables.

"B" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 3 Sergeants, 40 Constables.

"C" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 3 Sergeants, 42 Constables.

"D" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 4 Sergeants, 43 Constables.

Vacancies - 6.

### MURDER IN ROCK FERRY

Another undetected murder occurred in January, 1925, when a young girl named Nellie Clarke was brutally killed in Rock Ferry. Despite intensive enquiries made by members of the Force with the assistance of Liverpool Police and Scotland Yard the offender was never traced.

### EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE ASSISTANT AND POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER

In the same month the Home Office raised the question of employing policewomen in the Borough, but the Chief Constable informed the Watch Committee that he did not think their employment was justified. Instead, arrangements were made for a Female Assistant to be engaged. Her duties were to obtain statements from women and girls on matters of indecency, and generally take charge of all females brought to the notice of the Police.

In April, 1925, the Chief Constable recommended the need for Police photographs of prisoners, scenes of crime, etc. He stated that the Force did not have an official photographer but that there was a member of the Force who was skilled in photography. This constable was willing to use his own camera for Police work, and the Watch Committee granted him a gratuity of £5 per year for his services.

### INDUSTRIAL SITUATION IN 1926

The early months of 1926 showed a distinct promise of improvement in the industrial situation, but these hopes proved disappointing for later in the year the whole nation was involved in the General Strike.

In the disorder which arose out of the strike, Birkenhead appears to have been more fortunate than other parts of the country, for in the Chief Constable's Annual Report for this year we read: "In a year during which the whole industrial world has gone through a crisis unparalleled in the history of this country only two persons in the Borough were before the Court for disorder arising out of that crisis".

Although there appears to have been so little disorder, the precautions instituted by the Police to meet the threat of violence involved the cancellation of all Police weekly rest days and annual leave, the introduction of longer hours of duty (sometimes 18 and 19 hours), the enrolment of Special Constables numbering 1,015 for the protection of banks, works, etc., and the engagement of pensioned Police as Temporary Constables.

A detailed account of the expenditure involved in all the preparations mentioned above is included in the Chief Constable's report of May, 1926, which gives a total of £821 7s. 8d.

### THE AGE OF THE MOTOR CAR

By 1927 "the Age of the Motor Car" had arrived and the Chief Constable was expressing concern about matters which have become daily routine for the present Police Force. These matters included parking of vehicles in main shopping centres, "joy riding" and the provision of ample parking space. Measures adopted to combat the difficulties included the prosecution of offenders for stealing petrol when "joy riding", provision of "parks" in Hamilton Square, and a suggestion for one-way traffic in Grange Road on Saturday evenings. Reading that the Hamilton Square parking places were being misused by Liverpool businessmen who left their cars there in the early morning, travelled to Liverpool, and returned to collect the vehicles in the evening, one is reminded of an identical problem facing the Police today.

### RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES

In August, 1927, the Chief Constable had occasion to report to the Watch Committee that a number of Orangemen had held a meeting at the Haymarket, ostensibly to discuss the Revision of the Prayer Book. As soon as the meeting opened, however, an attack was made on the religion that they opposed. Although there were about 300 people present, including "a rough element from Liverpool" no disorder occurred. The Chief Constable expressed his intention of taking all the measures within his power to prevent the religious controversies which had been a feature of the town in the past. He appears to have been successful as no further mention is made of this matter for a number of years.

### EXTENSION OF THE BOROUGH

The boundary of the Borough was extended in 1928 when the districts of Prenton and Thingwall were included. Consequent on this extension the strength of the Force was increased by one sergeant and six constables.

### RETIREMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT

In the same year Superintendent Arthur Lodge retired on pension and was succeeded by Chief Inspector W. E. Hughes, who was promoted Superintendent.

### INSTALLATION OF FIRST TRAFFIC LIGHTS IN THE BOROUGH

In July, 1928, the Chief Constable and members of the Watch Committee visited the Borough of Leeds to inspect a system of controlling traffic by traffic lights. On their return they recommended the use of these lights in the town, and by the end of the year the junction of Conway Street and Argyle Street was fitted with the Borough's first traffic lights.

### FURTHER AWARD OF MERIT BADGE

In the same month Constable 44C T. Griffiths was awarded a special Merit Badge and £5 by the Watch Committee for "great courage displayed in effecting an arrest after having been savagely attacked and dangerously wounded by a man with a razor". As a result of his injuries he was off duty for 39 days. (See Appendix "A".)

### WELL LANE POLICE STATION OPENED

By 1928 the Police Station at Meadow Lane had become obsolete and, in view of the extension of the Borough boundary and the pressing need for housing accommodation steps had been taken to build a new South End Police Station. These plans came to fruition in December, 1928, when Well Lane Police Station, with a number of Police houses attached, was opened by the Government Inspector, Major General Sir L. W. Atcherley, C.M.G., C.V.O.

### SCOUT JAMBOREE

The holding of the first World Scout jamboree at Arrowe Park in 1929 caused the Birkenhead Police a great deal of extra and arduous work. In order to alleviate some of it, use was made of "mutual aid" and a strong detachment of Police from Liverpool arrived in the Borough to take up duty.

### MERSEY TUNNEL

In 1929 also the first mention of the Mersey Tunnel was made. In preparation for it the Watson Street Bridewell had to be closed. This Station had been used by the Docks Police for some time but, with its closing, the facilities at Price Street Station (where the Docks Inspector resided) were used by the members of this Division.

### FIRST DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE

The honorary title of Deputy Chief Constable was first bestowed on a member of the Force by the Watch Committee in January, 1930, when Superintendent W. E. Hughes was given that rank.

### BULLET-PROOF PROTECTION FOR THE POLICE

A very unusual offer is recorded in May of the same year when Mr. Robert Gladstone presented to the Force a heavy bullet-proof truck-shield, nine light shields and three bullet proof hand-shields, for use if an armed offender established himself in a house, making direct approach difficult.

### ROAD TRAFFIC ACT, 1930

The Road Traffic Act, 1930, brought the provision of a grant to all Police Forces from the Road Fund for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining motor vehicles for traffic purposes. Birkenhead took advantage of this by buying three new motor cycle combinations for traffic patrol and transferring six constables to this type of duty. The mechanisation of the Force was further increased the following year when an Austin 16 car was purchased, but it appears that this vehicle was used solely for supervision purposes.

### POLICE BOX CORPORATION ROAD

In February, 1931, the Chief Constable drew the Committee's attention to the need for a Police box in the area of Laird Street owing to the difficulties involved of men parading for duty at Slatey Road before commencing to patrol the Laird Street area and the conveyance of prisoners from the area to Price Street Station. He felt that the provision of a Police box would also assist the public in obtaining the services of the

Police when required. Later in the year such a box was built on vacant land at the St. James's Church end of Corporation Road. It provided direct telephone communication with Slaty Road Police Station and "by means of an electrical contrivance a flambeau light on the roof calling the attention of the Police" could be switched on from Slaty Road Station.

#### FIRST ATTENDANCE AT A COURSE OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH

In January, 1932, the first record is made of a member of the Force attending a Course outside the Borough. In that month a Detective Sergeant was sent to New Scotland Yard for instruction in criminal investigation.

#### GOLD MEDAL ESSAY WINNER

In 1932 Inspector W. R. Jones received notification that he had been awarded the King's Gold Medal and a first prize of thirty guineas in the 1931 Police Gold Medal Essay Competition, the first and only member of the Force to be so honoured.

#### POLICE ATHLETIC SOCIETY PAVILION

The Police Athletic Society seems to have been conducted on progressive lines, for in April of that year plans were submitted to the Watch Committee for the erection of a pavilion on ground at the rear of Well Lane Station.

#### RETIREMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT AND D.C.C.

The Superintendent and D.C.C. retired in April, 1932. The position of Superintendent does not appear to have been filled until October, when Chief Inspector A. O. Everard was promoted, having been promoted Chief Inspector in the previous April.

#### MORE RIOTS

In September, 1932, a number of serious riots broke out in connection with the Means Test and the Public Assistance Committee. Riots occurred in Bryanston Road; outside the old Board of Guardians Office; Conway Street, and in various parts of the Price Street neighbourhood. Many arrests were made and members of the Force were injured. The Birkenhead Police were forced to perform extra duty and assistance was received from Liverpool. At the conclusion of these disorders many claims for compensation were received by the Police.

#### KING'S POLICE MEDAL FOR CHIEF CONSTABLE

In the 1933 New Year's Honours List Capt. A. C. Dawson, the Chief Constable, was awarded the King's Police Medal for Distinguished Service.

#### FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE BOROUGH

A further extension to the Borough boundary occurred in March, 1933, when the Upton district was taken over from the County. Included in the take-over were two Cheshire County Constables and the Upton Police Station. This increased area



necessitated the erection of police boxes at Sparks Lane, Vyner Road and Overchurch Road, and in the same year a similar box was erected in Pine Walks, Prenton.

The Road Traffic Patrol was enlarged in November by the addition of an Austin 7 Army reconnaissance type motor car, and later a similar vehicle was purchased for the use of Sub Divisional Inspectors.

With the extension of the Borough boundary an increase in strength was granted of two Chief Inspectors and two Sergeants, whilst a reduction of one was made in Inspectors. At the end of the year the Force's strength was 259 and was distributed as follows: -

Headquarters- 1 Chief Constable, 1 Superintendent, 1

"E" Division Chief Inspector, 3 Inspectors, 8 Sergeants and 33 Constables.

"A" Sub-Division - 1 Chief Inspector, 5 Sergeants, 51 Constables.

"B" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 4 Sergeants, 46 Constables.

"C" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 5 Sergeants, 44 Constables.

"D" Sub-Division - 1 Inspector, 5 Sergeants, 48 Constables.

### THE POLICE CONCERT PARTY

In the spring of 1934, the Chief Constable was asked by the Liverpool Seamen's Friend Society if members of the Police Force would provide a concert for seamen at the Gordon Smith Institute, Liverpool. As a result the Birkenhead Police Entertainers came into being.

The first public concert was given at the Y.M.C.A. Hall, then in Grange Road, Birkenhead. This proved to be the forerunner of many successful concerts given in and around Merseyside during the next nine years. All were given either in the cause of charity or free at institutions, youth clubs and similar places.

The Police Concert Party, as it became popularly known, ran on even after the outbreak of the Second World War when entertainment was provided for personnel at many military and other service establishments. It was indeed a matter of regret when the combination of enemy action and prolonged hours of duty brought down the final curtain.

### OPENING OF MERSEY TUNNEL

The highlight of the year 1934 was undoubtedly the visit of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary to the Borough on 18th July. The visit was made in order to open the newly-constructed Mersey Tunnel and the Central Library in Borough Road. Detachments of Police were loaned to Birkenhead from Manchester, Wallasey, Chester and Bootle, and the whole visit passed off without any incidents. As an appreciation of the arduous duties involved all members of the Force were granted an additional day's leave with pay.

With the opening of the Mersey Tunnel the question of its policing was brought into prominence. Temporary arrangements were made and eight constables from the Borough were detached for duties in the Tunnel, similar arrangements being made by Liverpool. These constables used their own motor cycles on this duty and were paid an allowance for their use.

### INSPECTION OF POLICE BY KING GEORGE V

For the first time in their history the Police were inspected by the reigning sovereign, when on 20th July, 1935, H.M. King George V inspected representatives of County, City and Borough Forces in Hyde Park, London. The representatives from

Birkenhead were the Chief Constable (Captain A. C. Dawson), one Superintendent, one Inspector, one Sergeant and 24 Constables.

### DISTURBANCES BETWEEN DOCK LABOURERS AND "BLACKSHIRTS"

A minor disturbance was created in June, 1935, when a clash occurred in Park Street between some dock labourers and members of the British Union of Fascists (or "Blackshirts"), but order was soon restored by the Police.

### MAGISTRATES' COURT FIRE

In November, 1935, a local journalist passing the entrance to the Magistrates' Court noticed that a small fire had started in the roof of the Court Room. Although the Fire Brigade and Police immediately attacked the fire the Court was soon a mass of flames; the roof completely destroyed and the walls and fittings severely damaged. A complete reconstruction of the Court took place and it was officially re-opened in January, 1937.

### WIRELESS EQUIPMENT IN USE

The most important advancement in Police work in 1936 was the equipping of four cars and eight pedal cycles with wireless receiving sets for greater speed in communications. The general transmitting centre was in Liverpool and, in addition to Birkenhead, parts of Lancashire and Cheshire, Bootle, Wallasey, Southport, St. Helens and Chester were included in the scheme.

### OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST IN 1936

On 18th May, 1936, Constable 26D Bostock was awarded the Merit Badge and £5 for his gallant action in saving a woman from drowning in the docks, narrowly escaping losing his own life. Later he was awarded the King's Police Medal for bravery for the same deed. (See Appendix "A".)

In 1936, the probability of war must have occupied the minds of many people, for conferences, lectures and discussions were held on air raid precautions. Arrangements were made for the enrolment of the Special Constabulary if needed, and members of the Borough Force were trained in anti-gas action and passed through the Gas Chamber.

The holding of meetings at the Park Entrance by the British Union of Fascists and the Communist Party caused the Chief Constable difficulty in November, when he reported that each Sunday it had become necessary to have 70 members of the Force on duty at these meetings in order to prevent any disorder. Although disorders did not arise to any great extent the Watch Committee finally banned the holding of similar meetings at the Park Entrance.

In the month of June two of the Road Traffic cars were fitted with public announcement equipment.

### ORDER OF ST. JOHN-AWARD TO CHIEF CONSTABLE

On 23rd July, 1937, the Chief Constable was appointed an Officer of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

### COPING WITH STRAY DOGS

The difficulty experienced in the conveyance of stray dogs to the Dogs' Home received the attention of the Chief Constable in 1937 when he reported that sometimes dogs found in the Upton area had to be walked from there to the Dogs' Home in Corporation Road by the beat constable. In order to reduce this waste of manpower the Committee agreed, at the Chief Constable's suggestion, to purchase a trailer for fitting to the rear of patrol cars so that dogs could be conveyed by the Road Traffic Patrol.

#### AWARD OF ANOTHER MERIT BADGE

The award of another Merit Badge and £5 is recorded in January, 1938, when Constable 28B Metcalfe received the award from the Watch Committee for "displaying tenacity and courage of a very high order" in the attempted arrest of a man in Egerton Road on 28th October, 1937. (See Appendix "A".)

#### AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS AND PROPOSED NEW SCHEME OF TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS

1938 is notable for two important matters in connection with the Police. The first was an increase in the precautions taken in respect of air raids. The Police undertook many duties in this connection including the recruiting and training of street wardens, the assembly and issue of respirators and the instruction of members of the public in anti-gas precautions.

The second important matter was the submission to the Watch Committee of a scheme drawn up by the Chief Constable for the installation of police pillars at 26 places in the Borough. These pillars were to provide Police and public telephone communications, but owing to the financial situation it could not be proceeded with at that time.

#### AWARD TO DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE

The year 1939 commenced with Superintendent A. O. Everard, D.C.C., being appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire.

#### OUTBREAK OF WAR

On 3rd September, 1939, war broke out and as a result heavy duties were imposed on the Borough Police. The introduction of the "black-out" increased the number of accidents involving vehicles. The training of Air Raid Wardens and instruction in anti-gas precautions were intensified, as also was the issue of respirators.

The strength of the Force was varied by seven constables being recalled to the Colours, seven members being appointed to the First Police Reserve and 19 members of the Police War Reserve being appointed. Two whole-time Special Constables were appointed and 284 Special Constables (part-time), under the command of Captain Alan Layfield, M.C., were brought into use.

At the conclusion of the year the strength of the Force is shown as 255 Regular Police and 28 Auxiliaries.

1940 brought to the town a number of serious air raids, in which two members of the Force sustained severe injury by shrapnel splinters, and damage was caused to two police houses and the Police Stations at Price Street and Slatey Road. In the case of the latter Station plans were drawn up for its reconstruction, but finance appears to have been against the rebuilding as no progress was made.

## MERIT BADGE AWARDED

In 1940 A/Sergeant 49C Daly was awarded a Merit Badge for initiative and great courage displayed whilst off duty during a heavy air raid in the Devonshire Park area. Details of this award are shown in Appendix "A".

## MAINTAINING THE QUEEN'S PEACE AIR RAIDS AND LONG HOURS OF DUTY

The Borough was subjected to more very serious air raids in the early part of 1941 and during these raids Sergeant A. J. McTavish and Constable Herbert Swetnam were killed and several Constables received serious injuries.

Constables 46A Tushingham and 50D Brown were commended by His Majesty the King for their bravery during an air raid on 25th June.

The Force was required to perform many long and arduous tours of duty and rest days were very few. As a result it was found that the men were becoming exhausted and, with a view to assisting their recovery, a scheme commenced in June, 1941, whereby one sergeant and nine constables were exchanged with a similar number from Blackpool Borough Police Force in order that they could perform duty for a fortnight in a quieter town.

In the latter part of 1941 twelve women were enrolled in the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps for clerical and similar duties.

## RETIREMENT OF CHIEF CONSTABLE

A further ten members of the Force were called to the Colours in 1942, and in the month of August Captain A. C. Dawson retired from the Force, having served the town as Chief Constable since 1923.

## APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE, MR. H. J. VANN

On the retirement of Captain Dawson, the Watch Committee appointed to the position Mr. H. J. Vann, Chief Constable of Maidstone and formerly Chief Constable of Lancaster and Newark, with previous service at Swansea.

The remaining months of 1942 were spent by the new Chief Constable in obtaining details of the working of the Force and in considering means for increasing its efficiency.

## MODERNISATION OF THE FORCE

1943 was without doubt one of the most important in the history of the Force. In that year a complete modernisation was recommended by the Chief Constable. Many of his suggestions were not put into effect until later but the following is a brief summary of some of the measures introduced in 1943 and 1944: -

At the outbreak of the war the Police wireless car system was closed down for security reasons, but in 1943 the Chief Constable installed an advanced system of high frequency short-wave wireless communications. Fixed receivers were installed at Headquarters, the Sub-Divisional Stations and in each patrol car.

A Cycle Registration Scheme was brought into operation, whereby members of the public could register their bicycles with the police, thereby assisting in the tracing of stolen machines.

An Accident Prevention Section of the Transport Department was set up, with the object of teaching road safety, distributing propaganda for the prevention of accidents, and analysing conditions and causes of accidents.

His report to the Watch Committee dealt with the decentralisation of the Force; revisions of Divisional boundaries and strengths; new methods of policing based on the sitting of new Sub-Stations and additional Police telephone pillars; a complete re-organisation of the Police telephone system, including the installation of inter-office equipment; the purchase of a car for C.I.D. duties, and the appointment of policewomen.

Other measures of importance recommended were the start of a Single Fingerprint collection, the modernisation of the Photographic Department, and the provision of a boat on the Dock Estate to be used by the Police in cases of rescue.

By the end of 1943 the strength of the Force was as follows: -

1 Chief Constable, 2 Superintendents, 3 Chief Inspectors, 8 Inspectors, 25 Sergeants, 185 Constables and 1 Policewoman. Total 225.

In addition the Docks strength was: -

1 Inspector, 6 Sergeants, 68 Constables and 25 War Reserve Constables. Total 100.

### RETIREMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT

During 1943 Superintendent A. O. Everard, M.B.E., retired, and was succeeded by Chief Inspector W. R. Jones. Later in the year, the appointment of an additional Superintendent having been approved, Chief Inspector R. Tankard was promoted to the higher rank.

### CHIEF CLERK'S WAR SERVICE

Chief Inspector T. J. Oliver, who graduated from the post of Police Cadet to become the Chief Clerk, joined the Forces in 1943 and was one of a number of Police Officers who landed in Normandy shortly after D Day. He served as a Staff Officer with the U.S. and British Armies in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. He was demobilised in 1947 and went into the Control Commission, eventually becoming the Inspector General, Public Safety Branch, British Military Government, Berlin, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

When the time came for disbandment he elected to retire from the Police Service and from July, 1955, became the Civil Defence Officer for the County of Kent.

### MODERN METHODS SUGGESTED BY CHIEF CONSTABLE MADE EFFECTIVE

1944 saw the measures suggested by the Chief Constable in the previous year being fully implemented. These increased the efficiency of the Force and, in order further to improve contact with the public, the Chief Constable introduced a Communications Room to provide a central point to deal with all communications, internal and external. This had the effect of regularising and accelerating the receipt and despatch of messages connected with crime and other matters.

Having dealt with the external methods of policing the Borough the Chief Constable then introduced modern filing and indexing systems.

### CONSTABLES IN THE ARMED FORCES



SLATEY ROAD POLICE STATION DAMAGED DURING AN AIR RAID (1940)



THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WATCH COMMITTEE (ALD. M. HALLIGAN) AND OFFICERS  
OF THE FORCE (1955)

The Watch Committee were notified in 1944 of the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar to Constable F. C. Bone and the Military Medal to Constable J. C. Davison, and the Chief Constable regretfully informed them of the death in action of Constable P. Hurley.

In April, 1945, the Force had the misfortune to lose another constable on active service, Constable George Norman Gillin being killed on operations in China.

### CARGO SUPERVISION SCHEME

A scheme for the supervision of cargo being loaded into vessels on the Dock Estate was introduced in April, 1945, when two Sergeants and 18 Constables were specially detailed for this type of work. Unfortunately, with the release of War Reserve Constables at the conclusion of the War in August, the scheme had to be suspended until sufficient recruits could be obtained to augment the strength. This scheme was revived in 1951.

### SPECIAL CONSTABULARY

In 1945 the Special Constabulary, which had performed 425,000 hours of duty in assisting the regular Force during the War, was "stood down".

### APPOINTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT AS DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE

In June, Superintendent W. R. Jones was appointed to the position of Deputy Chief Constable of the Force.

### ANOTHER KING'S POLICE MEDAL

Constable Thomas Bingham was awarded the King's Police Medal for conspicuous gallantry in the arrest of an armed criminal on 26th March, 1945, and details of his action are shown in Appendix "A".

### NEW IDEAS -WIRELESS-DIRECTED CAR SCHEME AND POLICE HOSTEL

During 1945 the Chief Constable extended the scope of the use of Police wireless by means of a Wireless-Directed Car Scheme. This enabled the public to have the services of a policeman within two or three minutes of calling the Communications Room. The scheme was the most far-sighted ever introduced into the Borough Police and since its inauguration has contributed more than anything else to the efficiency of the Force.

The Chief Constable next arranged with the Watch Committee for the purchase of a large house in Bidston Road as a Police Hostel for the accommodation of single recruits who could not obtain other places of residence. It was closed down in 1952 when the housing problem became easier.

### SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER

By the beginning of 1946 most of the War Reserve Constables had been released and a number of regular members retired, thus leaving the Force in the precarious position of being 62 under strength. This position deteriorated during 1946, even with the return of members from the Armed Forces and a certain amount of



recruiting until, by the end of the year, there were 72 vacancies. This unhappy situation was, unfortunately, to remain for a number of years.

## TRAINING OF RECRUITS

The setting up of Training Schools in various parts of the country commenced in 1946 and all members recruited to the Force attended an intensive 13 weeks' training course at one of these schools. In order to extend and develop this training a home study course was inaugurated which each recruit was required to undergo during probation.

## EXTENSION OF ACCIDENT PREVENTION WORK

During the same year the Home Office and the Ministry of Transport began to take a great deal more interest in accident prevention and, as a result, the Accident Prevention section of the Force, which had formerly been included in the Transport Department, became a separate entity and an Inspector and staff were appointed to deal solely with this work.

## POLICE HOUSING, VEHICLES AND STRENGTH

In his Annual Report for 1946 the Chief Constable stressed the need for the provision of more houses for recruits to the Force as he considered that many eligible recruits would not join the Force owing to the difficulty of obtaining housing accommodation.

Police buildings also received his attention and in 1946 he made two important suggestions to the Watch Committee which were to bear fruit in later months. One was the conversion of the war-time Fire Station for use as a Police Station for the Dock Estate, and the other was the provision of a new Police Headquarters on the site of a former timber yard in Chester Street near to the Town Hall.

The growing importance of the need for skilful driving of Police vehicles, both as an example to the public and in order to detect offences, is shown in the early part of 1947 when members of the Force commenced to attend an advanced Motor Patrol Training Course at the Liverpool Police Training School.

In April of the same year the authorised strength of the Force was increased to 339, consisting of one Chief Constable, three Superintendents, two Chief Inspectors, 11 Inspectors, 40 Sergeants, 276 Constables and six Policewomen, but the actual strength at the end of the year showed a total of 119 vacancies. This shortage of police, together with an increase in the number of housebreaking offences, caused some public spirited residents in the Upton area to band themselves into Vigilante Patrols. These patrols looked after unoccupied houses and worked in a similar, manner to the methods used by residents of the township prior to the institution of Police.

## TRAINING AND WELFARE

In order to combine the ever-increasing duties of training and welfare of members of the Force, the Chief Constable during this year formed a Training and Welfare Department with the objects of enrolling, training and instructing recruits after leaving the Police Training Centre, organising refresher courses for older members of the Force and dealing with all matters relating to housing, sickness, etc.

## CONSTABLE RECEIVES LL.B.

On 7th July, 1948, Constable K. Bannerman received the degree of Bachelor of Laws at the University of Liverpool. He later resigned from the Force to take up an executive position with the National Coal Board.

### INTRODUCTION OF TEAM POLICING

The continuing shortage of manpower compelled the Chief Constable during 1946 and 1948 to resort to the use of "mutual aid" and as a result members of Flintshire, Denbighshire, Caernarvonshire, Stockport, Nottingham, Cheshire, Durham and Staffordshire Forces performed duty in the Borough for short periods during the summer months.

This aid, however, could not be continued indefinitely and, as a result, the Chief Constable introduced as a temporary expedient, a system of Team Policing. This virtually abandoned the old ideas of beat constables patrolling allotted areas and concentrated on the use of wireless-directed patrol cars for conveying teams of constables to areas requiring their attention. The scheme, using the element of surprise, although not to be compared with full beat cover, provided a more mobile and flexible system of working and made fuller use of the reduced manpower available at the time.

### USE OF POLICE DOGS CONSIDERED AGAIN

The Chief Constable was of the opinion that the system of Team Policing could not effectively be used on the Dock Estate and in 1949, in view of the shortage of manpower in that Division, he submitted to the Watch Committee a detailed report on the use of Police dogs. This recommendation coincided with the all out export effort, but there was much apprehension and the idea met with such opposition that it had to be abandoned. Birkenhead could have been pioneers in what is now an accepted aid to all modern police forces.

### CRIME PREVENTION EXHIBITION

In September, 1949, the Force organised a Crime Prevention Exhibition at the Church Hall, Wilbraham Street, when various aspects of the work of the Police were on display. Over 13,700 people visited the exhibition and it proved to be an unqualified success.

### CHIEF CONSTABLE AWARDED KING'S POLICE MEDAL

In October, 1949, the Chief Constable was presented with the King's Police Medal for distinguished service. The award was made on behalf of H.M. the King by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Leverhulme, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Chester.

### ROYAL VISIT

The resources of the Force were strained to the utmost in May, 1950, when H.M. the Queen (now Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother) visited the borough to launch H.M.S. "Ark Royal" at Messrs. Cammell Laird's Shipyard and to lay the foundation stone of the Technical College in Borough Road. Extra police from Cheshire County, Wallasey Borough and Liverpool City were drafted into the town and, assisted by the local Special Constabulary, ensured that the visit passed off successfully.

## CALLED TO THE BAR

After qualifying as a barrister Constable B. R. Allen was called to the Bar in 1950, and resigned from the Force in order to practise law.

## MORE ABOUT POLICE BUILDINGS

Plans for an increase in the number of houses for the Police were drawn up in 1950, and during the following years many houses were obtained by the Watch Committee for members of the Force. In addition, plans were laid for new Police buildings which were to be completed in later years.

## POLICEWOMAN SERGEANT APPOINTED

The strength of the Policewomen Section was increased in 1950 by the addition of one Policewoman Sergeant, bringing the total to seven.

## REINSTATEMENT OF CARGO SUPERVISION SCHEME

1951 saw an improvement in the overall strength of the Force, and as a result the Chief Constable was able to report the reintroduction of the Cargo Supervision Scheme on the Dock Estate with an immediate decrease in the number of cargo thefts.

## DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE HONOURED

In the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 1952, Superintendent W. R. Jones, the Deputy Chief Constable was awarded the M.B.E. Superintendent Jones retired the following year and Superintendent R. Tankard was appointed Deputy Chief Constable.

## CORONATION MEDALS

On the occasion of the Coronation of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II medals were issued to the Chief Constable, The Deputy Chief Constable, two Superintendents, one Chief Inspector, two Inspectors, four Sergeants, seven Constables and three members of the Special Constabulary.

## INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDANCE CENTRE

The Criminal Justice Act, 1948, prescribed a new form of dealing with youthful offenders by way of an Attendance Centre, and in August, 1953, such a centre was inaugurated in the Borough under the jurisdiction of the Chief Constable.

This centre has been under the personal direction of Inspector J. Gallagher and has contributed with considerable success to the rehabilitation of offenders, particularly between the ages of 14 and 17 years.

## OPENING OF NEW POLICE HEADQUARTERS

On the 30th October, 1953, the new Police Headquarters were officially opened by Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, G.C.V.O., Q.C., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department, and for the first time in its history the Force possessed a building admirably

suited to the needs of its members. But this was only part of the final structure referred to later on.

### AWARD OF O.B.E. TO CHIEF CONSTABLE

In 1954 the Chief Constable was awarded the O.B.E. and in the same year a detachment of Police from the Force took part in the Review of the Police by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in Hyde Park, London.

### STREET LIGHTING

Ever since the early records of the Watching and Lighting Committee the members of the Force had been responsible for the sitting of street lighting throughout the town. This duty had enormously increased during the years after the 1939-1945 war, and in 1954 the responsibility for this work was handed over to the Works and Buildings Committee.

### JUVENILE LIAISON SCHEME

For a number of years the Chief Constable had been perturbed by the increasing number of crimes committed by juveniles in the Borough and, in order to reduce this, he introduced in 1955 a juvenile Liaison Scheme with the idea of co-operating with all local child welfare services in an effort to prevent further juvenile delinquency.

### ANOTHER MURDER

On 24th September, 1955, the discovery of the body of a murdered woman in a disused Army pillbox near Woodchurch Road resulted in nation-wide enquiries being made in an effort to discover the person responsible. Despite many long hours of duty performed by members of the Force and the assistance rendered by New Scotland Yard, the investigation was not brought to a successful conclusion.

### FURTHER HONOUR FOR CHIEF CONSTABLE

A further honour came the way of the Chief Constable in December, 1955, when he was admitted as a Serving Brother to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

### RECENT TIMES

During 1955 and 1956 a further series of building ventures was brought to fulfilment when new auxiliary stations were completed at Laird Street and Salisbury Street and an extra wing was built on to Police Headquarters to provide additional accommodation.

### M.B.E. AWARDED TO DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE

Superintendent R. Tankard, the Deputy Chief Constable, was awarded the M.B.E. in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 1957.

### COMPARISON OF STRENGTH

The year 1957 ended with the authorised strength of the Force being one Chief Constable, four Superintendents, four Chief Inspectors, 14 Inspectors, 45 Sergeants, 311 Constables, one Policewoman Sergeant, and 13 Policewomen, a total of 393, which makes an interesting comparison with the first recorded strength of the Force, i.e. one Captain of the Night Watch, three Night Watchmen and one Parish Constable.

## **APPENDIX "A"**

The following pages are devoted to interesting incidents which are recorded in the official documents of the Force from its early years.

### **1845**

Inspector Watson was awarded 2 guineas, Constable Yarwood £2, Constable Donoghue £1 and Constable Mason F -I for their manly conduct in a riot with some brickmakers at the Park Hotel.

### **1846**

Inspector McNeill commended Constables Burgess and Doyle for courageous conduct displayed in the recapture of a drunken and disorderly prisoner when furiously attacked by a mob of about 200 men and women from Back Chester Street and the adjacent locality, in an attempt to effect the offender's rescue.

Mr. Cowan, the Albert Dock Superintendent, rewarded Constable Reilly with a handsome silver patent lever watch and guard of the same metal, and five guineas in money, for his most praiseworthy conduct in rescuing a woman from a watery grave in February.

### **1852**

#### **FIRST MENTION OF MURDER**

About 1.15 a.m. on Sunday morning, 5th July, 1852, Constable 11 Bradshaw was going his rounds when he found a man named William Green lying dead on the footwalk of Beckwith Street. The deceased belonged to the brig "George" lying in Birkenhead Docks. It appeared that between 12 and 1 o'clock on Sunday morning the man was walking along Park Street when he was set upon by 10 or 12 men, two of whom knocked him down and left him lying on the ground. The unfortunate man got up and ran into Beckwith Street, where he collapsed and was found later by the Constable. Two women saw the men knock the deceased down and kick him, and in consequence of a description given by them to the Police, several men were apprehended, but only one could be identified. His name was Martin Byrne and on the following morning he was brought before the Magistrates.

### **1853**

Gangsters are mentioned in this year, when it was reported that a cash box containing upwards of £120 was stolen from the Liverpool Arms, Chester Street, and the theft was believed to be the work of three of the "Swell Mob".

A fight took place in Oak Street between "the Irish of Connaught" and "the Irish of Dundalk". When Police interfered to clear the street, both parties turned on them and assaulted them with stones, sticks, etc. The Police succeeded in apprehending four of the ringleaders.

### **1855**

On 26th December, Detective Officer Hodgson and Inspector Gunning were assaulted in the execution of their duty in dispersing a prize-fight on vacant land situated between Priory Street and White Street, when Hodgson's head was severely cut by the blow with a stone thrown by one of the fighters, Thomas Benyon.

**1856**

#### **MURDER OF P.C. VAUGHAN**

"The Superintendent has the painful duty to report to the Committee of the melancholy death of the late Police Constable William Vaughan, who was stabbed in the heart with a knife by a man named Thomas Smith, 9 Cobden Place, whilst in the execution of his duty in Bridge Street at 2 o'clock on Tuesday morning, 23rd December 1856. He was much beloved of the whole Force, and leaves an aged mother and an infirm sister, of whom he was the sole support."

**1857**

A fire broke out in the Magistrates' Bench, Town Hall. A Judge of the County Court was sitting on the Bench at the time and was obliged to adjourn for half an hour. The fire was soon put out with a few buckets of water.

#### **MILITARY USED ON OCCASION OF STRIKE**

On 23rd February a strike took place at Messrs. Thompson's Works, Great Float. The following day Mr. Thompson made application for the assistance of the Police to protect his foreman and property and to preserve the peace, but as the Force was not sufficient to suppress the mob the military were sent for and arrived on the Friday morning by special train from Manchester, 111 strong including officers. The Superintendent was obliged to compel the men to perform extra duty which was done by the men without the least murmur."

In February, 1857, a fire occurred at Wallasey Church (St. Hilary's) when the building was gutted. The Birkenhead engine attended, but was of little service for the want of a good supply of water. The registers and some valuable documents were saved.

**1859**

#### **THE BURIAL BOARD RIOTS**

In June there was an election in the Town Hall in connection with the Burial Board. The excitement caused in the township on the first day, but more particularly towards the evening, was very great, some thousands of persons congregating about the Town Hall and locality, but nothing of a serious nature took place on Monday. On Tuesday, a greater excitement prevailed amongst the two opposite parties, and at 10 o'clock some hundreds of men arrived in Market Street and Hamilton Street, armed with spades, shovels, sticks and other weapons, when the Rev. Canon Chapman interfered and succeeded in turning the mob back. They returned and collected the navvies on the Dock works (those who refused to join were assaulted), and made their appearance a second time in Market Street and Hamilton Street.

"The polls closed at 12 midnight and between 1 and 2 o'clock the mob in thousands proceeded towards Mr. Laird's yard in Church Street where an unprovoked attack was made on several of his workmen as well as doing damage to a considerable amount of the premises. At this stage the Police had to interfere and succeeded in arresting five of the mob. Had Mr. Laird's men left the yard the consequence might have been most serious on both sides, but fortunately they remained within.

"About 3 o'clock the mob in still greater force, and armed, assembled in Hamilton Street and Market Street for the purpose of releasing the prisoners from custody, using all kinds of threatening language as to what they would do. At which time the Magistrate (the only one present) A. Bryans, Esq., and others deemed it safer to liberate the men,

on the Rev. Canon Chapman undertaking that the men should appear on the following Thursday. The Superintendent has not the least doubt if the men had not been bailed out at the time, the Town Hall would have been pulled down by the mob, besides damaging and destroying other property in various parts of the town and most likely lives lost by the Police and the mob, as the number of Police (41 men) was inadequate to deal with the mob.

"The disturbances continued until Thursday when the men appeared in Court and, on account of the unsettled state of the township on that day, the Military were sent for and were stationed in the Town Hall from 3 o'clock on the Thursday afternoon. After that things quickly returned to normal in the centre of the town but the Bridewell at the North End was attacked and searched by the mob, there being only one Constable on duty there at the time."

## **1860**

### **THE FIELD STREET AFFRAY**

"On 30th January the Superintendent reported that the navvies intended to turn out to make an attack on the Bridewell in Hamilton Street with a view to liberating the prisoners, who were committed for assaulting Constables Massey and Randles in Field Street, on the 25th January, but fortunately there was no breach of the peace or attempt at rescue. On the same day the prisoners were removed to Chester Castle for safety in case a further attempt should be made on the Bridewell. The Superintendent, with the assistance of the Committee, used every precaution to prevent an outrage in the township. He had all the men off and on duty in attendance. Captain Smith, Chief Constable for the County, arrived in the town at an early hour with 120 of his men. Major Greig, by direction of the Watch Committee (of Liverpool), had 150 men and two Superintendents in reserve all day ready to be sent across in a moment's notice in the event of a riot breaking out.

"The military at Chester were communicated with, and it was arranged that a company of militia should be promptly in attendance should their services be required."

## **1862**

### **THE GARIBALDI RIOTS**

"The Superintendent reports that on 8th October, 1862, a meeting of the Parliamentary Debating Society was announced to take place in the Institute, Brook Street, in connection with Holy Trinity Church, Price Street, to discuss the subject of "Italy and Garibaldi". Previous to the doors being opened at 7 o'clock a large number of men, women and children had collected in the immediate locality of the Institute which rapidly increased to some hundreds. Inspector Gregory and several of the men were stationed in front of the building and when the doors were opened the mob began shouting and yelling and stones were thrown from the rear, thereby breaking the lamps in the hall of the entrance to the lecture room. At this time some of the members and the Inspector deemed it most prudent to abandon the idea of holding the meeting. Consequently the doors were closed and the gas put out, and the mob were informed that the meeting would be dispensed with that night. When the mob saw this they became more enraged and began shouting and yelling, also stones were being thrown freely through the windows of the Institute. The mob still remained in the street until the Roman Catholic Priests made their appearance and dispersed the mob in two separate lots for their homes. One lot went towards Price Street along Trinity Church wall where they threw several stones through the Church window, there being service held in the Church at the time, which greatly alarmed the congregation; also the mob threw stones through the windows of the Welsh Baptist Chapel in Price Street as they were leaving a prayer meeting, and by half past 9 o'clock the streets were comparatively in the usual orderly

state. "The number of squares of glass broken in the Institute and Church windows are between 90 and 100, and the amount of damage altogether will not exceed £3.

"The Superintendent regrets that there were none apprehended for the stone throwing, but it was impossible to detect them as they were thrown from the rear of the mob and the night being rather foggy.

"In conclusion Superintendent regrets that the said outrage has been so much exaggerated through the public newspapers."

"At about 7 o'clock p.m. on Wednesday evening, 13th October, 1862, Inspectors Gunning and Keenan were despatched in charge of 16 men to Holy Trinity Church, Price Street. The door of the Institute at the back of the Church was then open, and numbers of persons began to flock to same with a view to attend the adjourned debate of the British Parliamentary Debating Society in a perfectly orderly manner. A large number of idle spectators at the same time began to assemble round the Church, and the thoroughfares both in Price Street and Brook Street were literally blocked up. One half of the Police then present under Inspector Keenan were ordered into Price Street where they succeeded for a time in keeping the street clear. About 7.30 p.m. rumours reached the Police that a general attempt would soon be made to upset the meeting and that fears were entertained that serious damage would be done both to the Church and to property in the immediate locality. Inspector Gunning promptly despatched a message to the office with the aforesaid information. At this time J. B. Case and D. Graham, County Magistrates, made their appearance in Price Street. The Police continued their exertions with increased vigour, but their position became unsupportable and they were ordered to fall-in in front of the Church and await reinforcements.

"The streets became thronged to suffocation, loud cheering and yelling was heard in the direction of Watson Street, and a report again reached the Police that the mob had pulled down a wooden fence in connection with the Prince Albert public house, and were in large numbers armed with all sorts of formidable weapons.

"Presently a moving mass of men was seen approaching the Church in Price Street with long poles reared on their shoulders, in front of which was the Rev. Father Gouldin. The crowd halted at the Church, and Father Gouldin began to harangue them, and after calling on them for three cheers for the Pope he again called for three cheers for the Queen and the British Dominions, which were lustily responded to. The cheers had just subsided when 30 of the Birkenhead Police under Inspector Thompson, six mounted policemen including Inspector Gregory, the whole headed by the Superintendent, were promptly on the spot. The crowd became very excited and disorderly expressions came from that quarter to the effect 'Go into them', meaning the Police. The crowd was remonstrated with both by Father Gouldin and the Police but all efforts were unavailing. They became more and more excited and the Police began to disperse the crowd. A general assault took place, stones were thrown at the Police, and they boldly and courageously charged the mob pressed on them through Watson Street, Oak Street and St. Anne's Street, all the while exposed both from back streets, entries and houses to a most destructive volley of stones. Several of the Police were severely wounded but having completely routed the mob the Police retired in good order, and took up their position at the corner of Park Street in Price Street. The Special Constables having by this time arrived in great numbers were drawn up in two bodies across Price Street, the County Constables under Captain Smith occupying the centre. They were kept in excellent order under the command of Lieut.-Colonel King, forming a complete barricade in Price Street. At 8 o'clock the mob routed and driven from Price Street formed themselves into detached bodies and began the work of destruction in the neighbourhood of Watson Street. Several of the inhabitants had to desert their houses and fly with their families to other places of safety; in fact, Watson Street was completely in the hands of the mob. Inspector Keenan at the head of about 30 of the



Birkenhead Police made several successful dashes on them, routing and driving them into houses and other dark places from which they dealt out most destructive and murderous assaults by stones on the men under his command.

"In every charge made by the Police some of them had to be carried off severely wounded. Fourteen officers had to be removed to their houses, P.C. 43 Morris being subsequently removed to the Hospital from a beer house to which he had been taken for safety. Thirty-five officers and Inspectors Keenan and Thompson, although much injured, did not leave, but in the absence of any assistance being rendered them, though almost worn out by fatigue, they fought with a determined courage and bravely, well supported by the mounted Police, and frequently scoured the streets, lanes and courts exposed to a murderous shower of stones at every winding or corner. Owing to the rioters fighting in so scattered a manner it was ultimately directed that the mounted Police should retire, but not before they were seriously assaulted. Inspector Gregory had a severe blow on the arm, which completely paralyzed it, and his cutlass falling from his hand has not since been recovered. After their retiring the men before mentioned kept up a continual series of attacks on the rioters in their places of concealment until about 10 o'clock, when they were comparatively subdued and the Police were enabled to take five prisoners whom they conveyed to the Bridewell. About this time the County Constabulary moved from their original position in Price Street in the direction of Eldon Place passing along to Oak Street. Inspector Keenan, perceiving their movement, brought up the Birkenhead Police in their rear and by that movement enabled them to attack certain houses and carry off several prisoners.

"The rioters having now been completely dispersed, the whole Police Force drawn up at the corner of Park Street in Price Street divided into two companies, and under the command of the Superintendent marched through Watson Street without molestation. On making a survey of the place, the windows and doors of ten premises were found to be totally destroyed.

"From this the mob proceeded to the Methodist Chapel at the corner of Cathcart Street and Beckwith Street and left scarcely one whole pane of glass in the windows. They afterwards broke the windows of the Welsh Chapel in Price Street. The probable damage done to these two buildings may be about £10. In addition to the bodily injuries sustained by the Police they have lost in their general appointments 16 hats, two cutlasses, two pairs of handcuffs and to the amount of about £12.

"It is to be regretted that notwithstanding the assaults committed on our men being of such a serious character and so very numerous, the County Constabulary, who were kept in reserve during the heat of the fighting although frequent applications had been made to the Magistrates, were not made available to operate in conjunction with our men until about 10 o'clock, at which time the great bulk of the rioters had retired to their own houses, and when under cover of the Birkenhead Police they were enabled to carry off their prisoners, their whole Force moved in escort of the same to the Town Hall and did not again make their appearance until there was not a light to be seen in a house nor an individual in the streets.

"At 10 o'clock Inspector Gunning made an appeal to the Magistrates in the Court stating our men were being cut up in all directions. This appeal was not attended to. Shortly afterwards Inspector Gregory rode to this office and stated that two men were nearly killed. He was asked their names by one of the Magistrates. He said he did not know. He was then told he brought a half tale and so no attention was paid. The Superintendent afterwards made an application with a like result. About 2 o'clock a.m. the township had been restored to its usual tranquillity which has happily not since been broken."

**1864**

### **EXPLOSION ON THE "LOTTY SLEIGH"**

"The Head Constable reported early in the year that `At 6.30 o'clock a ship called "Lotty Sleigh" of Liverpool, lying in the river opposite Monks Ferry, was blown up from an explosion of a quantity of gunpowder being on board. Having been on fire for some time before the explosion, the crew were fortunately taken off before the accident. From the shock of the explosion a great amount of damage has been done in various parts of the township but more especially in the neighbourhood of Woodside Ferry, Chester Street, Church Street, Hamilton Street, Hamilton Square, and Argyle Street. For some time the public were in a state of the greatest alarm. The amount of damage cannot at present be ascertained'."

### **VISIT OF THE HIGH SHERIFF**

"The Head Constable has the honour to report that an Agent from the High Sheriff of the County waited upon him on Saturday last to intimate the intention of the High Sheriff to pass through Birkenhead in procession on Friday next, 1st April, on his way to Chester to attend the Assizes there, the procession to be formed at the Park Entrance by 11 a.m., pass through Conway Street, Argyle Street, Hamilton Square, Market Cross and Chester Street. A number of the Police will be required to attend the High Sheriff through the town, not only for the preservation of order, but respect for his high office".

It is later recorded that the Head Constable was instructed to order a suitable carriage for the Chairman of the Birkenhead Commissioners and a horse for his own use. Seven Inspectors and 52 Constables were detailed to attend to the procession.

**1873**

At 10 p.m. on 17th March, 1873, the Police attended a fire near West Kirby. Prior to their departure from the fire it is reported that "the Police had great difficulty in getting the engine away from the scene of the fire owing to the turbulent conduct of the men who had been working at the pumps and who threatened if they were not paid that they would take off the wheels and throw two members of the brigade over the wall. The determined conduct of both officers prevented any damage being done to the engine or tackle".

**1880**

"The Superintendent has the honour to report that P.C. 25 Beard stopped three men at Woodside Ferry on 15th September carrying three bags. He questioned them as to what they contained and was told `sailors' luggage' and that they had been engaged by a man named Antonio Fernandez to carry them from South Castle Street, Liverpool, to a Spanish ship in the Birkenhead Docks. Fernandez then came up and gave the P.C. a sovereign saying: 'It is all right, officer, they are a few revolvers. We poor sailors do a little trade on the coast, do not be too hard on us.' The P.C., thinking all was not right, called the Ferry Inspector and had all the men brought to the Police Office, and on the bags being opened they were found to contain four parcels in each of which were 25 canisters of gunpowder, the whole weighing about 3 cwt. The men were then locked up and brought before the Magistrate on the following morning.

"Fernandez was fined £10 and costs for conveying a quantity of gunpowder across the river in one of the Woodside ferries, contrary to the regulations. The other three men were discharged. The gunpowder has been destroyed. P.C. Beard was later allowed to keep part of the sovereign as a reward."

### **THE SALVATION ARMY RIOTS**

"On Wednesday evening (3.10.83) a serious disturbance took place near Oak Street in consequence of the Salvation Army parading in Oak Street, Park Street, etc. Several persons were severely injured. On Thursday evening the disturbances were renewed

and a man named Thomas Green, walking in the ranks of the Salvation Army, was arrested for stabbing two young women. He was charged with the offence on Friday and remanded.

"On Friday, the North end of the town was in a great state of excitement and the Chief Constable considered it necessary to put in force the new Byelaw against tumultuous processions by summoning Mr. Woolley the Captain. Mr. Solly supported the information, which was heard on Saturday, and offered on behalf of the Chief Constable to have it adjourned sine die, if Mr. Woolley would undertake not to lead his processions through those parts of the town where disturbances were likely to be created. This he refused to do, and the Stipendiary fined him 1s. 0d. and 9s. 6d. costs.

"Yesterday afternoon, in defiance of the ruling of the Magistrate, he led his procession along Conway Street to the Dock Cottages, where Inspector Alison strongly advised him to return by the same route. This he refused to do and went down Brassey Street and Vittoria Street. The consequence was that a most serious disturbance took place and several persons were severely injured. There must have been 2,000 people assembled and the sympathisers with the Army contributed to the showers of brickbats, as much as did their opponents. The Chief Constable informed Mr. Woolley that he should stop by force any further procession yesterday evening and, if he persisted in leading one, that he should apprehend him. The proceedings were therefore confined to the inside of the rink. Three rioters were arrested yesterday. The town was quiet at 9.30 p.m."

## **1887**

"Inspector Fenna reports that at 11.50 p.m. on 24th March, P.C. 30 Burns was on duty in Chester Street and heard shouts of 'Murder, Police' from St. Mary's Gate. He ran up and saw a woman running along shrieking, 'My children, my children'. He then saw one of the eldest boys, Robert, aged 11 years, jump out of the front bedroom window of the dwelling house of Richard Dowell, No. 3 St. Mary's Avenue, which was on fire. He broke in the door and found the house enveloped in flames. Telling the neighbours to look after the inmates, he ran blowing his whistle to the Police Office. P.C. 19 Coatup who was on duty there heard the whistling and with the assistance of the Clerk got the reel and ladders out before Burns arrived.

"They arrived at the fire at 12 midnight, being ten minutes after Burns first heard shrieks of 'Murder' and 'Police', and found the above house in flames with smoke issuing from the bedroom windows back and front. It was stated that the children of Mrs. Dowell, six in number, were in bed. The second boy suddenly jumped from the front bedroom window into the street. A ladder was put up to this window but it was found impossible to gain access from the density of the heat and smoke, although two branches were playing from a hydrant in St. Mary's Gate. The ladder was then removed from the front to the back bedroom window, which is over a deep yard with stone steps leading down and the ladder could not be fixed in it, and Inspector McClelland on hearing that there were more children in the room placed the ladder resting on the top of the wall and ascended at great risk. The rooms were full of suffocating smoke and the flames darting up the stairs. He groped till he found the bed and brought out Patty Dowell, a girl six years of age, who was unconscious at the time, and on being passed down the ladder P.C. Burns instantly took her to Doctor Cornwall where she died on her arrival. Inspector McClelland on having a lamp passed to him made his way to the front bedroom and there found the dead bodies of Margaret Dowell, eight years of age and Thomas Dowell, 10 years of age, which were also passed down the ladder and taken to a neighbour's house where Dr. Cornwall stated they were both dead.

"The excitement of the spectators at Inspector McClelland's danger and his three journeys into the burning house was very great. By this time the fire was got under control, namely 12.50 a.m.

"The house was tenanted by Richard Dowell, his wife and six children. Dowell is at present in Wrexham and at the time the fire broke out the occupants were Mrs. Dowell and her six children. They having retired to rest and Mrs. Dowell having been awoken by the flames at once rushed to the front door which was bolted. She got out at the back door with her baby into the street in her nightdress. The two eldest boys attempted to escape by the stairs but finding the flames too strong escaped out of the front window."

1905

"With reference to the circular addressed by a number of members of Parliament to Local Authorities re the Motor Car Act, 1903, the Chief Constable has the honour to report that it appears to him that the strict enforcement of Clause 1 Section 1 of this Act would entirely meet the case." (The Section which deals with reckless driving is then quoted.) "If this Section were strictly enforced no speed limit appears to be necessary. The present system of timing cars over short distances by the Police with stop watches is very unreliable and unsatisfactory - such work can only be undertaken by experts.

"A suggestion is made in the circular that each Local Authority, should be allowed to fix its own speed limit but that would make the use of motor cars impossible as no driver when driving through a strange neighbourhood could possibly know when he passed the limits of the jurisdiction of the various authorities. The erection of the necessary notice boards would be a very serious expense.

"The suggestion that the motor car should be impounded does not appear to be of any practical use as that would not prevent the offending driver from driving other motor cars. The more frequent and stringent enforcement of Section 4 (Sub-Section 1) of the Motor Car Act which provides for the suspension of the licence of the offending driver and for his disqualification would have more effect.

"The hands of the justices should also be strengthened in dealing with offenders enabling them to impose a term of imprisonment with hard labour in substitution for a fine. There is no doubt that the imposition of fines has been abortive in many cases.

"At present there is no doubt that motor cars are a serious public danger owing to the reckless and careless driving of a number of both professional and amateur chauffeurs, but the Chief Constable submits that if the present Act were strictly enforced and amended as regard the substitution of imprisonment for fine there would be some amelioration of the present state of things."

**1911**

#### **ATTEMPTED MURDER OF A CONSTABLE**

At 9.40 p.m. on Saturday, 2nd December, 1911, P.C. McManus heard screams of "Murder" and "Police" in Field Street. On enquiring into the case he found a man named George R . . . and his wife quarrelling in the street, and R . . . had in his possession an open razor. Upon being remonstrated with, R . . . immediately turned his attention to the Constable and savagely attacked him, cutting his ear and cheek and cutting through the collar of his cape and overcoat, inflicting a serious wound on his neck. The Constable, "finding matters serious", thereupon drew his baton and struck the man down. He then took him to the Bridewell where it was found that both the prisoner and the Constable were in a state of collapse and had immediately to be removed to the Borough Hospital where both were detained.

R . . . was later sentenced to five years' imprisonment and Constable McManus awarded the Merit Badge and £5.

**1916**

#### **STRUCK BY LIGHTNING**

At 4.0 a.m. on 17th March, 1916, Sergeant Towers was on duty in Brassey Street during a heavy thunderstorm, when he was struck by a flash of lightning which dazed

him for a few minutes but he was afterwards able to complete his tour of duty. On getting up from bed at 5 p.m. same day he found that his eyesight was very much affected and that he could scarcely see. The Police Surgeon was called and attended to him. He did not appear to make satisfactory progress and was seen by a specialist who ordered treatment and said he would completely recover before long.

It is later reported that Sergeant Towers had to wear spectacles and finally was pensioned because of his affected eyesight.

## **1917**

### **ARREST OF ARMED CHINAMAN**

On 3rd September, 1917, P.C. 22 Colligan was informed that a Chinaman named Lee Que had run amuck in the house of another Chinaman named Lee Foo at 4 Cleveland Street, and had shot at Mrs. Lee Foo with intent to kill her. When the Constable got to the house he saw Lee Que standing in the lobby with a revolver in his hand and, after considering the situation, deemed it advisable to enter the house by the back way. On going round to the back and partly opening the yard door, he saw Lee Que with a revolver still in his hand coming towards the door. On seeing the Constable, he made a dash for the door which was closed and held by the Constable and, failing to open it, he fired a shot from the revolver which grazed the Constable's wrist, making a small wound. He then turned and went back towards the house and Colligan then loosed his hold on the door and slipped into the back yard opposite. In a few seconds Lee Que returned to the yard door and opened it but before he could make further use of the revolver Colligan pounced upon him, knocked him down with his staff, disarmed him, and afterwards lodged him in the Bridewell. On further investigation it was found that Lee Que, during his frenzy of madness, had deliberately fired two shots at Mrs. Lee Foo and two at a Chinaman who lived in the house. The revolver was found to contain one live and four spent cartridges. Lee Que was later sentenced to three years' penal servitude for shooting with intent to murder.

## **1919**

### **THE POLICE STRIKE**

The following is a detailed copy of reports made by the Chief Constable to the Watch Committee at two special meetings held in August, 1919: -

"The Chief Constable has the honour to report that on 1st instant he gave permission to members of the Force who are members of the Police and Prison Officers Union to hold a meeting in the Sessions House for the purpose of considering the action for a strike taken by neighbouring Police Forces and also the action they themselves should take as a protest against the Police Bill now before Parliament.

Although the meeting showed a balance in favour of the resumption of duty the men were eventually persuaded to withdraw their services, and by midnight on this day the town was virtually denuded of police. The hooligans of the town took advantage of this and began breaking into and looting shops and by this morning he found that damage amounting to about £3,500 had been done. He also found that many of the 1st relief men had not reported for duty and the condition of things was serious and likely to grow worse.

On enquiry he found that the conditions in Liverpool were so serious that troops were employed there. He reported to the Officer Commanding Mersey Defences and requested troops to be sent to Birkenhead. He also reported the circumstances to His Worship the Mayor.

"The Chief Constable has the honour to report, in continuation of his report to the Committee on 2nd instant, that during the afternoon of 2nd instant contingents of the 3rd Sherwood Foresters and Leicestershire Regiment arrived in the Borough,

comprising eight Officers and 208 rank and file with wagons and machine guns, and were billeted in Sessions House, Drill Hall, Grange Road West, and the Police Station, Price Street.

"Special Constables were warned to report for duty. "After 9.45 p.m. the time of parade for ordinary Constables of 3rd relief it was found that four Sergeants and 98 Constables had joined the strike, and for that reason had failed to report for duty during the day.

"As the evening approached, the main thoroughfares became abnormally crowded and signs were apparent of something serious going to happen. Between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. looting commenced and continued in various parts of the town until between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on 3rd instant, resulting in 36 premises of different kinds being broken into, causing damage and loss of property amounting to many thousands of pounds worth. The Military were frequently called into action but on occasion the action was weak and ineffective.

"The Police and Specials did good work and during the night 45 persons were arrested.

"On 3rd instant I reported military weakness to the Officer Commanding Mersey Defences and His Worship the Mayor requested a strengthening of the Military Forces. At 4 p.m. on same day Colonel H. M. Smith, 17 Officers and 407 rank and file of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry arrived, when the Leicestershires and Sherwood Foresters were returned to their units. The business-like manner in which these troops set to work by patrolling the main streets with strong pickets and the vigorous action they took when necessary had a marked effect.

"One hundred and ninety-two Special Constables patrolled the town and did good work, and although there were large crowds in many of the streets very little damage or pilfering took place.

"The situation has continued to improve each day since and today the peace of the town is practically normal.

"The condition of the Force is as follows: One Chief Constable, one Superintendent, six Inspectors, 10 Sergeants on duty, 74 Constables on duty, nine sick, 11 on leave, four vacancies, four Sergeants absent, 107 Constables absent.

"Two hundred and twenty-two Special Constables were on duty last night. His Worship the Mayor has invited all fit persons to attend and be sworn in as Special Constables but owing to the poor response it may be found necessary to compel such persons to serve in this capacity."

## **1928**

### **AWARD OF MERIT BADGE TO CONS. 44 GRIFFITHS**

On 25th February, 1928, Constable Griffiths, whilst in the execution of his duty, was savagely attacked by a man with a razor and dangerously wounded, receiving a wound three inches long which cut through the muscles of the scalp and extended down to the bone, necessitating five stitches and rendering him unfit for duty for 39 days. His assailant was committed for trial at the Assizes on a charge of attempted murder, but was found insane and ordered to be detained during His Majesty's pleasure.

## **1936**

### **KING'S POLICE MEDAL AWARDED TO CONS. 26 BOSTOCK**

At about 10.25 p.m. on 15th April, 1936, Constable Bostock was in Tower Road, Birkenhead Dock Estate, when he heard a shout "There's a woman in the Dock". He ran towards Egerton Dock and saw a woman about 10 yards from the North East corner of the Egerton Dock -East Float Passage.

Constable Bostock threw off his helmet and overcoat and jumped into the Dock. He swam out and caught up to the woman. He caught hold of her and she began to struggle and shout "Let me drown, let me go, I want to die".

Both were eventually rescued and afterwards taken to the General Hospital. At the spot where the Constable entered the Dock the water was at least five feet below quay level and there are no steps in the vicinity. The depth of water in the Dock was 28 feet and at the time the temperature was only a few degrees above freezing point.

### **1937**

#### **AWARD OF MERIT BADGE TO CONSTABLE 28 METCALFE**

Arising out of a complaint made by three ladies at Slatey Road Station on 28th October, 1937, Constable Metcalfe accompanied them to the place indicated and, in order to render himself less conspicuous, wore a mackintosh and trilby hat. On approaching the corner of Egerton Road and Palm Grove a man was seen standing there and the three ladies at once said he was the man complained of. As Constable went towards him he walked away and then began to run and vaulted over the gate of 5 Egerton Road. Constable followed him, got him in a corner near a garage and told him he was a Constable. The man at once viciously attacked Constable with a steel jemmy wrapped in a sock and a terrific struggle ensued, Constable drawing and using his baton. Constable received two more blows on the top of his head, being stunned. His baton was forced out of his hand and, although completely exhausted and almost unconscious, he managed to grab and retain the man's jacket and raincoat. This jacket, as it turned out, proved to be a most important clue as it ultimately led to absolute identification of the wanted man.

After extensive enquiries in which the Liverpool Police rendered most valuable assistance the man was arrested on warrant at his house in Liverpool. He was tried at Manchester Assizes on 13th December, being sentenced to three years' penal servitude for wilfully and maliciously wounding the Constable and to twelve months' hard labour (concurrent) on each of three charges of housebreaking, etc.

Constable Metcalfe, who received very serious head injuries necessitating much stitching, was off duty for 33 days. He displayed tenacity and courage of a very high order.

### **1940**

#### **AWARD OF MERIT. BADGE TO ACTING SERGEANT 49 DALY**

On the evening of 17th September, 1940, Acting Sergeant Daly was at home, off duty, when he heard bombs dropped quite close to his home.

He ran out of the house and was hurled off his feet by the blast of another bomb which exploded nearby. On recovering, he ran into Rockybank Road where the bomb had exploded, and found that a house had been hit by the bomb and that the occupants were trapped beneath tons of debris.

With assistance, the Acting Sergeant removed sufficient debris to allow a free passage of air to the trapped people and whilst this work was in progress his clothes were covered in dust and soot.

After more than three hours work, two persons were rescued alive and the body of a third recovered, but the body of a fourth person was so wedged in the wreckage that owing to the increasing danger of the rest of the house collapsing, the work of recovering the dead body had to be discontinued until daylight. During the whole of this time the Acting Sergeant was in charge of the incident.

### **1945**

#### **AWARD OF KING'S POLICE MEDAL TO CONS. 10 BINGHAM**

At about 4.35 a.m. on 26th March, 1945, Constable 10 Bingham was on duty in Grange Road on the opposite side to the Services Club when he heard noises which appeared

to come from the Services Club. He immediately crossed the road and heard someone inside the Club. He obtained the assistance of another Constable whom he sent to the rear of the premises. He then forced the front door and made a search of the lower floor. He noticed that property behind a counter had been disturbed and on looking into a recess inside the front door saw a man who was holding a revolver. This man pointed the revolver straight at him and said, "This revolver is loaded and if you come any nearer I will let you have it". The Constable closed with him, took the revolver from him, and took him into custody.

Upon examination it was found that the weapon, a Service revolver in perfect working order, was fully loaded in all six chambers.

The prisoner afterwards stated that the Constable was very decent with him but that if he had raised his baton he would have shot him.

## **1956**

### **AWARD OF BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL TO CONS. 240 ALLEN**

At 3.30 p.m. on 14th September, 1956, a Mr. H . . . , aged 81 years, was boarding a bus in Manchester when a man who was already inside the vehicle pushed past him to alight, remarking that he had boarded the wrong bus. When Mr. H . . . had boarded the bus he found that his wallet was missing. He informed Constable Allen who was also travelling on the bus, in civilian clothes whilst off duty, and the Constable chased and caught the offender. He attempted to arrest the man who said, "I'll knife you", and struck the Constable on the face with an open pocket knife, inflicting a wound four inches long on the left cheek. He then ran away, but the Constable, although bleeding badly, pursued and caught him.

Constable Allen was treated for his injury at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, six stitches being inserted in the wound.

## **APPENDIX "B"**

### **SOME INTERESTING DISCIPLINE CASES**

**D U R I N G** the early years of the Force the number of recorded incidents of Constables and Inspectors being charged with offences of drunkenness is outstanding. In fact, seldom did a week go by without at least one officer being so charged. The Watching and Lighting Committee made repeated attempts to stamp out this drunkenness and finally on 26th May, 1862, issued an order that officers guilty of offences of drunkenness would be punished as follows: -

First offence ... .. Fined 5s. Od.

Second offence ... .. Fined 10s. Od.

Third Offence ... .. Dismissed from the Force. In addition, to the above, there emerge from the records many amusing and enlightening disciplinary incidents, some of which are listed below.

### **1845**

A Constable reported for keeping a beerhouse in Tranmere at which he resided, contrary to the orders of his commission. Suspended for a week and then dismissed.

### **1847**

#### **FINES FOR MISCONDUCT**

"The Police Superintendent, as requested, having reported on the best application of the fines inflicted on Police Constables for misconduct during the current year, considered that it would be productive of good in two ways, first in checking the



commission of offences in future, and secondly in strongly inducing those who have conducted themselves well to persevere in well-doing, and recommended a distribution of fines among the officers at the end of the year as follows: -

To those who have been in the Force twelve months or upwards without being fined, the largest moiety; to those who have been in the Force eight months without being fined, a smaller sum, to those who have been in the Force for six months without being fined, a still smaller sum; and to those who have been only once fined and not for drunkenness within the last twelve months, the smallest sum".

#### **1855**

"Mr. Andrew Taylor's driver, John Young, complained of a Constable assaulting him at Woodside Ferry, and also improperly obtaining from him the sum of 5s. Od. (a bet) relative to the year of Her Majesty's reign."

"The Superintendent reports six Constables for disobedience of an order in refusing to go on duty at 9 o'clock on Thursday night last until explained by the Superintendent why a Detective Officer got his pay allowed while on leave last week-which is contrary to the discipline of any Police Force for any officer to ask such questions."

#### **1860**

"Inspector Gregory reports a P.C. for aiding and assisting a man to obtain a noggin of whisky and half a gallon of ale from Mr. Gatehouse, Prince Albert, Watson Street, at 17 minutes past 12 o'clock on Sunday morning."

"Inspector West reports a P.C. for not coming to his starting point at 12 o'clock on Sunday night, and for being absent and not going his rounds from 12 until 12 1/2 o'clock, and being found drunk at home in bed."

#### **1861**

##### **BEGGING PETITION**

"A Constable was reported for obtaining various sums of money by means of a begging petition from several parties in Chester Street whilst on duty. The petition was drawn up on behalf of P.C. 17 to the effect that he was in great difficulties, etc. Cautioned to be very careful in future.

#### **1863**

Several Borough Constables complained of the conduct of a Park Constable for "being intoxicated when on duty at 124 o'clock in the morning and knocking violently with his stick on the flags, thereby causing several of the men to leave their beats and go to his assistance, believing he was in trouble".

#### **1867**

"A P.C. failed to report the receipt of 20s. Od. reward he had received for finding a dog. He divided the money as follows: 2s. Od. to the boy who found the dog, 7s. Od. to a P.C. who assisted him to search for the dog, and 1 ls. Od. for himself." Forfeited in both cases to the Superannuation Fund.

**1870**

"The Head Constable reports a P.C. for the following conduct: - "While the men were practising with the hose the P.C. was holding the branch and wilfully turned the water on Mr. Beaumont of Liverpool. The case was rendered more flagrant by shouts of other Constables of 'Give it him'."

**1874**

A Docks Constable was deprived of his Merit Badge for keeping fowl on the Dock Estate contrary to orders, "as this would lead to grave irregularities such as looking after them when he ought to be attending to his duties, and obtaining food for them from ships, etc."

**1875**

**CONSTABLE TO BEERHOUSE KEEPER**

The Head Constable reported the resignation of a Constable "who, by a second marriage, has become possessed of some money and has resolved to turn beer house keeper".

**1879**

"The Head Constable reports that he has suspended a P.C. for misconduct in standing up in a free and easy singing room at the Great Western Hotel, singing to the accompaniment of a piano at 10.30 p.m. before 60 or 70 of the lowest class of roughs from all parts of the town."

**1883**

"On Saturday night (14.1.83) at 9.40 p.m. Inspector Parker visited the Feathers Inn, Chester Street, and found a P.C. behind the bar acting as barman, serving customers, receiving money and giving change. He had no explanation to offer except that Mr. Walker was short of hands and he wanted to oblige him. He was ordered to resign and is now engaged as permanent barman at the Feathers Inn."

**1887**

Two Constables fined 2s. 6d. by the Chief Constable for disobedience of orders in delivering early morning newspapers at private houses.

**1908**

Two Constables ordered to attend the Watch Committee for not making themselves efficient. These men failed three times and twice respectively in the examination for the Medallion of the St. John Ambulance Association. Both were severely reprimanded and warned that if they did not pass the Committee would reduce their wages.

**1915**

The Chief Constable submitted a letter to the Watch Committee which he had received from the Secretary of the Royal Automobile Club, London, complaining of the Constables on point duty making signals with their heads instead of their hands to persons in charge of vehicles. Some months before a complaint of this character was mentioned at a meeting of the Committee and at that time the Chief Constable had all point-duty men thoroughly instructed in their duties. He also warned them that any failure in carrying them out would be met by severe punishment and removal from point to ordinary duty