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“Endured until Pension?”¹

Every man will not make a good constable²

For a recruit into the Surrey Constabulary in January 1851 it was an adventure, a time when a new police force was moulded. There was no guarantee of success or that the newly appointed “leadership team” would coalesce around their new chief constable and be able to meet the challenge. Even the chief constable was a stranger to the role of policing and was only just given the role by 18 votes to 20! The 1840s was a time of agricultural depression, the “Hungry Forties” but also a time when revolutionary forms of transport and communications were being developed in time to have a significant impact upon policing in Surrey.

In 1851 the county was ready for a more professional and coordinated way of policing, though as always, paying for it was a contentious matter. The Morning Herald in December 1850 established the concerns of the residents of Surrey, considering one solution, recruiting from the army:

A little while ago the insecurity of life and property in some parts of England was a matter discussed with the liveliest interest by the public and commented on with emphatic earnestness by the press. In some of the southern counties there was something very much like a panic invading our thresholds. A grim shadow of personified burglary darkened our doors. Householders in rural districts, alarmed and astounded by the frequency of the outrages committed around them, closed their doors, and guarded their premises with tenfold vigilance, and still laid their heads on their pillows with a disturbing sense of insecurity within them, and woke with mingled feelings of gratitude and astonishment that they had not been robbed and murdered in the night.

As to the efficiency of the new constabulary body, it is a mere commonplace to say that it will mainly depend on the judicious selection of the components of the force. Every man will not make a good constable; but every man out of employ thinks he will.

¹ A quote from “Policing Victorian Community” Carolyn Steadman page 81

² The Morning Herald (London) 13 December 1850

Judging by the performance of ordinary village constables under the present system and the nature and extent of their capabilities, it is not strange that a very low estimate both of what it is necessary for a constable to do, and what is necessary for a constable to be, should be formulated by the commonality at large. The immense number of incapable men will offer themselves for this service is as certain as incapacity itself; but we have sufficient faith in the judgement and discretion of the Surrey magistrates to believe the members of the new police force will not be hastily chosen.

There was then, a vehement outcry against the inefficiency of the rural police, and a loud clamour for immediate remedial measures for the protection of the lives and properties of dwellers in the country. ³

Given the agreement that a Surrey Constabulary was necessary, how was the force established and who was selected and what restraints and guidance were placed on the new recruits to Surrey? One immediate hurdle to recruiting for the new forces was the Metropolitan Police who were in January 1851 about to recruit to police the Great Exhibition and were seeking 13 inspectors, 52 sergeants and 1031 constables.⁴ Considerable competition!⁵

A significant proportion of the recruits were transferees from other forces, from roles as full-time parish constables or from one of the micro police forces within the county. All five superintendents and first seven inspectors were experienced officers. Of the first 100 recruits 44 had previous police experience at differing levels. There were no sergeants in the Surrey Constabulary until 1865.

Previous police experience brought to the county came from the Indian Police, Irish Constabulary, Dublin, City of London, Metropolitan Police, Staffordshire, Plymouth, Bath, Essex, Kent, Hampshire and other forces. A handful from Guildford and Godalming Borough, Farnham town and Dorking town. Additionally, there were full time paid constables from Shamley Green, Chertsey, Chobham, Windlesham, Thorpe, Nutfield and Shere.⁶

The chief constable was to be paid £300 per annum with £100 for horses, travelling expenses. Chief Superintendent Biddlecombe was to be paid £170, with five superintendents each earning £85. There was a budget for eight inspectors paid a total of £483.12s about £60. Seventy constable's salaries totalled £3463.4s plus the cost of uniform and equipment £1227 11s.

On the 21 January 1851 the South Eastern Gazette reports:⁷

Mr Biddlecombe, late superintendent Godalming, has been appointed by Captain Hastings as his chief officer. The following are the Superintendents at a salary of £85 each; Messrs Codd, late Staffordshire Police; Casey late Staffordshire Police; Hughes;

³ The Morning Herald (London) 13 December 1850

⁴ "Rowan and Mayne" Tony Moore page 284

⁵ Of the first 100, 13 were or had served in the Metropolitan Police; SCC History Centre CC98/4/1

⁶ Defaulters register SCC History Centre CC98/4/1

⁷ 1851 South Eastern Gazette 21st January

Northumberland; Hollington; Guildford; and Sergeant (sic: should read Sargent) late of Essex and now of the Bath Police.

Inspectors; Messrs High, late sergeant, Mr Biddlecombe; Wilson, Thorpe; Benham, Chertsey; Collins, Chobham; Bidwell, Wales; Donaldson, Dorking and Radley, Essex.

Fifty constables have been appointed and great care has been taken by Captain Hastings to secure officers from the forces in different parts of the country as well as the metropolis. A further selection will take place on Thursday; there is no lack of candidates.

Captain Hastings had intentions to recruit a type of man but his plan had soon to be ignored:

- Men who had already served in a county police force⁸
- Men from HM Forces⁹
- Parish and borough constables¹⁰

The men had to be honest, sober, under 30¹¹ and at least 5 feet 7 inches; with no apparent minimum age as one appointed constable was aged 14 and another 15.^{12 13} The principle established by Peel that the police was to be a “lower-deck” organisation, led in the counties and cities by men of a suitable class able to mix socially with the magistrates. Aspirational officers could seek chief officer rank within boroughs. The principle of recruiting from the working man, military and serving police officers, brought with it the horrors of overindulgence of alcohol. The working man consumed a great deal of alcohol and those who joined the police were no different. It was a curse that ruined many lives. Issues around sobriety when recruiting is not obviously addressed, giving doubts about the effectiveness of the recruiting process, the taking of references, local enquires as to suitability. Who interviewed and approved recruits is unclear, but as the chief constable micro-managed everything it is hard to believe he delegated any hiring or firing. Recruiting was to become a continuing chore following so many resignations and dismissals.

Recruits took an oath before a magistrate and were never an employee or servant of the Police Authority, but a local citizen appointed under the Crown, answerable to his chief constable and the law. Professional and upper classes would have been treated warily and with caution, the police then as now spending much time working among small sections of frequently disadvantaged communities. Controlling behaviour, enforcing licensing laws, bringing discipline to the streets was not always welcome and was frequently met with violence aggravated by drink. Two Surrey officers, Donaldson and Mason were to be killed in the 1850s by beating and many other officers suffered from violent assaults. Officers were frequently on

⁸ Brought in urban officers

⁹ Only six former servicemen joined in the first hundred

¹⁰ Most locally employed constables soon resigned or were dismissed from the Surrey Constabulary

¹¹ 41 of the first 100 recruits were over 30

¹² A Hundred Years of the Surrey Constabulary by Superintendent Durrant 1951

¹³ Possibly because it was difficult to get clerks – early cadets!

their own, reliant on the community to come to their assistance if under threat. A rural policeman walked a fine line between being feared and respected, the latter likely to achieve support from “locals” when in a tight corner.

There were four classes of constables paid at differing rates, with newly appointed officers starting at class four and moving through the classes on promotion and frequently down again through discipline. Except for the inspectors and superintendents no one joined above third-class constable. All were required to work seven days a week and granted twelve days leave a year, which had to be taken in summer as no leave was permitted during the winter. It was not until 1852 that an Instruction Book was provided for each man to give guidance on policing matters, although the system of General Orders began on 30 January 1851¹⁴. The first order related to the taking of leave.

General Orders has many entries detailing constables rising through the classes from four to first, many going up and down as they commit disciplinary offences. A reduction in class was a meaningful punishment as it meant a reduction in pay, and sometimes accompanied by a house move paid for by the constable. A first-class constable was the equivalent of a sergeant and men were promoted inspector from this class.

There was no shortage of recruits although as always, the pay was poor, seventeen shillings a week, and the conditions harsh. Of the first 100 men appointed only 12 served long enough to receive a pension including two ill-health pensions. Seventeen of this hundred were dismissed with four more required to resign in the first 13 months of the life of the Surrey Constabulary.

Newly appointed senior officers were the core of the new constabulary, with a responsibility for training recruits including the chief constable! There does not appear to have been any formal training though the instruction book of 1852 was the basis for all activity, but no copy of this booklet seems to have survived. (There are copies of the 1862 and 1882 versions and given the slow pace of change little will be different between the volumes)

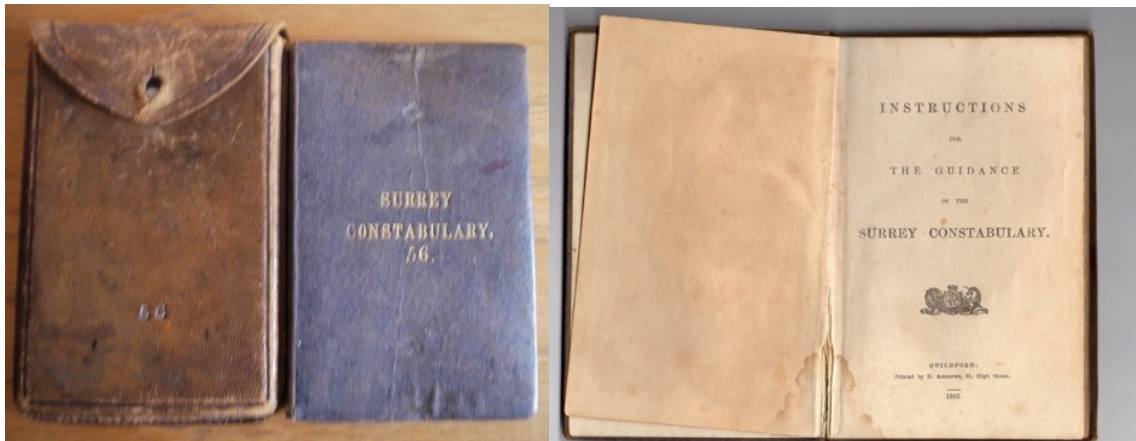
The superintendents were soon in post, which indicates an advert was out in December before Hastings was appointed on 1 January, and some may well have been selected by the magistrates but there is nothing to indicate this. The men would have needed to resign from their existing forces and move to Surrey probably in days not weeks, yet most were appointed early in January.¹⁵ Whatever was involved happened quickly as senior men were in post by 9 January.

Initially, to bring about the new force, there was a significant reliance on the experience of the superintendents and inspectors who were the link to the constables, the work force. Bringing together a disparate number of men, ensuring some form of instruction, and briefing as to their role and the activity of policing. The writing of the conditions of service and general orders

¹⁴ The Metropolitan Police established GOs from formation in 1829

¹⁵ January 1, 1851, in the Morning Post Wednesday: “At the Surrey Quarter Sessions yesterday the rural police committee recommended Captain Hastings for the post of chief constable carried by a majority of two, the numbers being 20 and 18.

guiding the running of the force, the specifications for uniforms and the limited equipment there was, horses, carts, buildings, housing, stabling, relationships with magistrates and the courts all probably managed under the very tight control of Captain Hastings.



Instruction Book 1862¹⁶

The wording of the Instruction Book of 1862 is recognisable, is explicit and appears a straight lift from the Metropolitan Police Instruction Book, under heading “Primary Objects of an Efficient Police,” particularly the paragraph on prevention of crime to which every effort is to be directed. “Cut and paste” is not a new phenomenon. The following are extracts from the 1862 Instruction Book which give an understanding of what was trying to be achieved and frequently, how:

The following instructions for the Surrey Constabulary, are not to be understood as containing rules of conduct applicable to every variety of circumstances that may occur in the performance of their duty; much must necessarily be left to the intelligence and discretion of individuals, and according to the degree in which they show themselves possessed of these qualities, and to their zeal, activity, and judgment on all occasions, will be their claim to future promotion and reward.

Every constable must readily and punctually obey the orders of his superiors; if they appear to him improper, he may complain to the chief constable, through his superintendent, who will pay due attention to him. Any refusal to perform the commands of his superiors, or negligence in doing so, will not be suffered. It should be understood at the outset, that the principal object to be attained is the prevention of crime. (Note the Metropolitan Police instruction used the term primary object)

(Much of what follows has come from the 1829 instructions to the Metropolitan Police)

To this end, every effort of the constabulary is to be directed. The security of persons and property, the preservation of the public tranquillity, and all the other objects of a well-regulated police force will thus be better effected, than by the detection and

¹⁶ In possession of Shane Burrows

punishment of the offender after he has succeeded in committing the crime. This should be constantly kept in mind by every member of the force, as a guide for his own conduct. Constables should endeavour to distinguish themselves by such vigilance, and activity, as may render it extremely difficult for anyone to commit a crime within that portion of the district under their charge.

Conditions of Service

The way of life and ways of working of the constable are unambiguously established within the conditions of service originated by the chief constable. It was what he believed at that time, to be the best for the Surrey Constabulary though liable to change at his discretion. Again, the following, which has been edited, was no doubt based on rules in place elsewhere.

- Each man shall devote the whole of his time to the service of the Surrey Constabulary, and conform to all the rules and regulations of the Service
- He shall serve and reside wherever he is directed, and not receive a lodger without the sanction of the Chief Constable; neither shall he, if living in a police station, or lock-up, keep any description of animal without permission.
- He shall promptly obey all orders, which he may receive from those in authority over him, and his demeanour must always be respectful towards them.
- Not receive for his own use, money from any person, without the permission of the Chief Constable.
- On entering, furnish himself with two pairs of white gloves, two pairs of boots, suit of plain clothes: a notebook.
- His pay, (increased from 1851) at the rate of twenty-two shillings and nine pence per week, shall commence from the day on which he is sworn in.
- At all times appear in his uniform, unless when otherwise directed
- Receive pay monthly when a deduction of 2.5 per cent towards Superannuation Fund
- If absent from his duty, in consequence of ill-health, or on leave, the Chief Constable will exercise his pleasure as to stopping any portion of his pay during such absence.
- He is not to carry on any trade, nor will his wife be allowed to keep a shop.
- Not quit without giving one calendar month's notice. A sum not exceeding ten shillings deducted from pay due for the purpose of having his uniform altered for his successor.
- Not belong to any political or secret society.
- Every man dismissed or resigns shall deliver up at the Chief Constable's office, every article of dress, and all appointments, which have been supplied, to him.
- Each person is liable to immediate dismissal for unfitness, negligence, or misconduct, and such dismissal renders him ineligible for appointment in any other Constabulary.
- The Chief Constable may also dismiss officers without assigning any reason.

More detail was set down as to what the responsibilities were of the constable working mostly rural beats. Remember he was isolated from his colleagues and left to his own devices something that police management (i.e., military) found difficult. How do you tightly regulate

the workforce when they work most of the time without close supervision and expected to use common sense and discretion? It takes a certain type of man, strong of will and a flexible mind, not always the sort who bends to military style discipline!

The constable on first arrival at his station, wait upon the magistrates residing within his district, and take every pains to inform himself of all bad characters residing in the neighbourhood.

When he goes on duty, he will take care to be at the appointed place, (if not before) precisely at the prescribed hour and he will be held responsible for the security of life and property within his beat, for the preservation of the peace, and general good order during the time he is on duty.

Never appear out of uniform, except when on leave or by the direction of the chief constable, or superintendent, in cases where disguise may be considered necessary in the execution of a particular duty. Not refuse to show his number or tell it when asked.

When walking the streets, he must not shoulder past any person. In towns, he should keep on the outward side of the footpath during the day and next to the houses at night.

He is strictly cautioned against idle conversation referring to the Service, and he must not whilst on duty, enter conversation with anyone, except on matters solely relating to his duty. Insolence or incivility will not be overlooked, and improper language is on no pretence to be used by the constable.

He is not to associate or hold any communication with men who have been dismissed the Service.

He is to treat every Magistrate with attention and respect and be civil to persons of every rank and class. As it is of the greatest importance that each man should be respected by the magistrates and people, he will be extremely cautious in his demeanour, and by sober, orderly, and regular habits, respectful attention to every person, and ready zeal to execute the lawful orders and commands of the magistrates, endeavour to obtain the approbation of all classes.

He must take care that persons giving information be duly protected, and strict secrecy observed with respect to them.

He will caution persons against assembling or loitering at the corners, or other places in the streets, to the inconvenience or annoyance of the public.

Children found wandering abroad, unable to give an account of their residence, are to be taken to the nearest station, and authority procured from the overseer of the parish, or relieving officer for their admittance into the workhouse.

If the constable observes anything in the roads or streets likely to produce danger or public inconvenience, he must report it to his superintendent.

He must remember that there is no qualification more indispensable in a constable than command of temper.

He must when his usual hours of patrol are over, return to his own quarters, and unless called out to perform service (the nature of which must be reported by him), he is expected to be found there until the hour of his again going on duty arrives.

When a constable resides in a police station, he must not leave it without permission of the officer in charge; and when allowed to do so, must always report his return.

On no account to absent himself from his detachment, on private affairs, without permission of the chief constable, or superintendent: when desirous of obtaining leave to do so, application must be made in writing, specifying the day and hour of departure, as well as of return. Leave will not be granted to any constable who has served less than twelve months in the force, or during the winter months, viz: from November 1st to March 1st, except under urgent circumstances. Constables returning from leave of absence must always report themselves to the superintendent of the division.

When the constable has occasion to visit Guildford, whether on public or private business, he must report himself to the chief constable's office immediately on arrival.

As far as practicable, the duties on Sundays and other days appointed for public worship will be arranged to enable every constable to attend divine service.

When the constable is unable to perform his duty in consequence of sickness, a medical certificate must be forwarded to his superintendent. Before return to duty, another certificate is to be given to the superintendent, certifying that the constable has sufficiently recovered from such illness.

Journals

Management may not be present and able to constantly regulate activity and so the men have to record all they get up to later, to be reviewed and no doubt questioned. The keeping of journals or timesheets was a process from early days until modern times including the logging of conference points and supervisory visits until the coming of the personal radio made such activities unnecessary. Every constable was supplied with a journal, which was to be kept perfectly clean, and carefully filled in daily. A long list of instructions follows on how it is to be completed and supervised.

This was seen as an important document only to be inspected by a “Superior Officer belonging to the Force” and no one else without permission of the chief constable.

Alterations were to be made by drawing the pen through the word to be expunged; no other erasures can be allowed.¹⁷ Conferences with senior people or other colleagues were to be entered and should he miss a point, he must report to his Superintendent immediately.

The constable must, when practicable, attend Divine Service at least once every Sunday and if not, an entry to be made on the timesheet.

A record kept of when his detachment is visited by a superior officer, why conferences were omitted, the names of farmers and others called upon, and any complaints made by them together with every remarkable occurrence. To be forwarded to the Superintendent every Monday, and the constable does not deliver it himself, he must always enclose it in an envelope, properly addressed.

How to act in cases of larceny

The aim was to prevent crime but by 1851 police forces had long learnt that detection went with the role and there was much to learn. Much of what was contained within the instructions for dealing with crime would no doubt have been passed on to non-police recruits by the more experienced. There is every probability, when the inspector and sometimes superintendent on meeting constables at conference points, would discuss how crime or other incidents were best dealt with. Discussions around recent crimes and incidents and how colleagues had responded. This was the opportunity to seek help and guidance and for the more senior people to get to understand the abilities and aptitudes of their constables.

The IB has clear guidance on what a constable is to do when confronted with crime. Most crime was referred to as robbery and when reported the constable was to go immediately to the scene, undertake enquiries, and seek any suspects and ascertaining if any strangers have been in the neighbourhood.¹⁸

Following a burglary, the constable was told to make a judgement whether the thief appears to have been familiar with the premises. Was the crime “an inside job”? Had an entry been effected at once, or had ineffectual attempts to gain entry been made. Examine the ground under windows and around the house for footmarks. If found, to be measured, examined, securely covered with boards to preserve them. When comparing footmarks, “not to place the boot or shoe over the footmark which has been discovered as he may thereby injure or efface the mark, but by the side of it. This should be done with the boots or shoes of both feet and when practicable in the presence of a witness.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Still practice in the 1960s – the pneumonic No Elbows was used the E being for no erasures- change was slow!

¹⁸ Page 33 of 1862 instruction Book

¹⁹ Page 33 of 1862 instruction Book

Examination to be made in fields and lanes around the scene with the view of ascertaining the direction taken by the thieves both in coming to and going from the house. “The constable will then inquire at all the public and beer houses in the neighbourhood as to what persons have called or have been lodging there; and having made a note of all these particulars he will send a messenger to inform his superior officer thereof whilst he himself continues his enquiries on the spot.” Where there is a likelihood of catching up with the suspect the constable was permitted to hire a horse or other conveyance to pursue them. Nine robberies out of ten the thieves live in the neighbourhood.²⁰

Rural crime frequently involved not just poaching but the theft and killing of fowls and sheep. Officers were advised to discover footmarks in the surrounding fields and gaps. Where a sheep has been slaughtered in the field, and the carcass skinned and carried off, the thieves almost invariably live close by. The constable was told to set a watch on the houses of the suspected persons to detect any attempt to bring home the meat at night.

The messenger dispatched to the superintendent with the information of a robbery should be directed to inform all constables stationed on the road, as it is desirable that the intelligence should be spread as widely and as speedily as possible.

In case of fire, the constable to give immediate alarm and as soon as possible send information to his superintendent. To be useful and endeavour to keep the space near the fire clear. Special attention must be directed at such times to the thieves and pickpockets who are usually in the crowd.²¹

There was military style drill to be taught including how and who to salute. The army influence was there but had some value in deportment, moving numbers in squads and care of uniform. It was probably not just foot drill and saluting. There is evidence of the issue of sabres during disorder and no doubt there were drills to be learnt. When gathered for drill it is most unlikely that the local superintendent did not take the opportunity to give instruction and guidance on policing issues. Such gatherings in Surrey continued until the 1970s, known as Divisional Parades.

Operationally the superintendent and inspector ranks had personal responsibility for the investigation of all serious crime and incidents such as fires. Senior men on the division would deal with crime such as murder, infanticide, concealment of birth and serious acts of violence. Biddlecombe was to deal with a number of suspicious deaths including one at Esher when six children were killed by their mother. Constables dealt with crime, made arrests for public order, deserters and dealt with diseases of animals both prevention and outbreaks. During the early months of 1851 whilst the constabulary was forming, and postings being made across the county there remained the prosecution and conviction of the Isaacs’ gang and dealing with some of their crimes still being committed until the whole gang was rolled up.

²⁰ Page 34 1862 Instruction Book

²¹ Page 35 1862 Instruction Book –Copy from urban force? Pickpocketing unlikely an issue in rural Surrey

The chief constable required that he be notified of serious matters, which meant for most of the county this was by letter, then a lot faster than it is today with several collections and deliveries a day. An early General Order from the chief constable:

1851 January 31: GO 6: Superintendents on receiving information of a robbery or any other serious offence having been committed are required immediately to communicate the same with the chief constable.²²

A range of crime and activity was addressed in its first year, what follows is heavily edited but sheds light on the nature of policing and the police response:

1851 25th February. Sussex Advertiser - Guildford Petty Sessions - Reuben Smith was charged with having on 15th February, kept open his beer shop at Compton, after the hour of 10 o'clock.

1851 February 1 stealing an ewe sheep a man sentenced to ten years transportation²³

1851 February 1: GO 8: First commendation PC James Walker for the way he conducted himself in a felony case. Promoted to second class but March 1852 was reduced again for drunkenness and resigned.²⁴

1851 About February: First murder charges brought by the Constabulary against John Keene aged 22 and Jane Keene aged 25 charged with the murder of Charles Broomer aged three years in Albury.

1851 February 8: Sheep Stealing: On Saturday night ewe sheep was stolen from a field in Weybridge. Captain Hastings despatched from Shalford on Tuesday Inspectors Wilson and Benham arriving late in the afternoon of Tuesday. After examining the spot where the sheep had been slaughtered and discovering the entrails and a pair of fine lambs taken from the ewe left behind, they closely inspected the supposed route of the depredators suspicions fell upon the notorious character Joseph Bidwell of Newhaw.

On the officers going to Bidwell's house found him in bed and parts of a shoulder of cooked mutton and parts of a breast were on the table. On being questioned as to the possession of the mutton he responded that was his business! He was taken before a magistrate at Byfleet and remanded to the house of correction at Kingston. Great credit is due to Wilson and Benham and their success in the present case argues well for the future efficiency of the newly organised police.²⁵

²² Surrey Constabulary General Orders Book 1 1851-. The term robbery a generic term for crime

²³ Superintendent Durrant First 100 Years 1851-1951 Page 12

²⁴ Surrey Constabulary General Orders Book 1 1851-

²⁵ February 8, 1851: Windsor and Eton Express; Berks, Bucks and Middlesex Journal and West Surrey Gazette

1851 April 29: GO 35: County horses are not being cared for and were not to be ridden at a greater speed than 6mph.²⁶

1851 May 6 Sussex Advertiser: Guildford Police Court, a lad of fourteen charged with stealing three brass terrets (loops or rings on a horse's harness pad for the driving reins to pass through) and one brass buckle. Inspector Radley stated on the evening of 26th inst., he apprehended the prisoner who told him he had taken the brass terrets - sentenced to seven days hard labour.

1851 May 13 Superintendent Codd Guildford Police Court regarding two cases of Drunk and disorderly. ²⁷

1851 May 13: Sussex Advertiser Guildford Police Court: Labourer charged with assaulting PC George Lemon who said that between one and two o'clock on Tuesday morning, he saw police constable William Earl, struggling with James Loe Scotman, in the gutter in front of the Town-Hall. He went to the assistance of this brother officer, when the prisoner struck him a violent blow across his head with the hurdle stake produced, a most formidable looking weapon. His hat was broken in two (the hat was produced), he felt rather staggered but on recovering himself, he looked around and saw the defendant drop the hurdle stake. The defendant ran across the road into the crowd but was brought him back and taken into custody. Committed to hard labour for two months.

1851 May 17: George Pink aged eleven stole a piece of "oaken wood" value two pence and was sentenced to seven days hard labour and ordered to privately whipped once.²⁸

1851 May 18: at Godstone a thirteen-year-old boy was whipped for stealing a faggot and at the same court a boy aged fifteen was sentenced to two months hard labour for stealing a quantity of wood.²⁹

1851 August 28: For trespassing in search of game three men were charged and committed for trial where they were sentenced to six months hard labour.³⁰

1851 September 21: Police Office Guildford: suspicion of having committed a felony. First arrested for drunk and disorderly then searched and found to be in possession of a considerable amount of money in silver. His account not deemed satisfactory he was remanded till Saturday next after being fined 5s for being drunk. ³¹

²⁶ Surrey Constabulary General Orders Book 1 1851-

²⁷ 1851 13th May Sussex Advertiser

²⁸ Durant Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951 page 13

²⁹ Durant Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951 page 12

³⁰ Durant Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951 page 12

³¹ 1851 September 21: The Sussex Advertiser, Surrey Gazette

When the Surrey Constabulary was formed it took responsibility for policing the rural parts of the county including incorporating the Guildford Borough Police. However, it seems as if the Watch Committee for the Brough retained an element of control.

1851 October 21: Tuesday: Attempted burglary Addlestone: Collier 25 and Tovey 25, were indicted for attempting to break into the house of Sarah Willis 72, who lived alone in Addlestone. Saturday night she went to bed and after about three hours she heard breaking glass. She up and went to the window where she saw some faces. One of the men called out “Give us some money or it will be the worse for you.” They started to force the door, so she put a piece of iron against it to prevent them breaking it open. She noticed a knife coming through the shutter and took up a candlestick and pushed against it to stop it coming any further.

Walter Ayling one of the Surrey Police said he watched the prisoners from a beer-shop. He followed them and hid in an outhouse and saw them trying to break open the door. They then broke several panes of glass so the old lady told them to go round, and she would give them some money. The police officer followed them, but they ran away but he captured Tovey whom he took to Collier’s house. While standing there, Collier came home and having sent for the superintendent they were both taken to the police station.

Superintendent Biddlecombe of the Surrey police said he examined the old lady’s house afterwards and found the back door broken very much as if the thieves intended to force the lock back by wrenching it off the bottom board. The verdict of Guilty was returned. A former conviction against Tovey having been proved he was sentenced to 10 years transportation and the other prisoner to 12 months hard labour

Making a reference to the murder of the reverend Hollest at Frimley, the chairman told the prisoners that had it not been for the courageous old lady they would have entered her house and might have succeeded in committing a crime similar to that in another part of the county for which two men suffered recently.³²

1851 October 28: Sussex Advertiser: Guildford Police Court John Thompson, a cadger brought up in custody on a charge of felony and committed for trial at borough sessions.

1851 Guy Riots: A large-scale disturbance between the Guys and police occurred at the bottom of the High Street near the Mount where heavy fighting took place with casualties on both sides forcing the police to withdraw to the county police station in Woodbridge Road.³³

1851 2 December Sussex Advertiser: On Friday night last about 10 o’clock our active and vigilant Superintendent Radley was near the Railway Station when he observed a

³² 1851 21 October: Daily News

³³ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

man, evidently a stranger to town, looking about him as if undecided which way he should go. He answered the description of a wanted person in the Police Gazette for a burglary at Walton on Thames. Superintendent made an instantaneous change in his dress, to avoid suspicion and followed the man up the Portsmouth Road before returning to the Wheatsheaf.

The superintendent followed him and accosted him and said he must see what he had about him. The man was searched and taken from his pocket was a large centre bit, in common use among burglars. He also found a very large life preserver, certainly the largest and most formidable weapon he had seen. On searching his bundle, skeleton keys were found as well as other articles, making up along with those previously found, the complete stock in trade of a finished 'cracksman.'

The man was arrested and gave the name Alfred Garnet, and said he was a journeyman harness maker. On Saturday he was brought before the Police Office charged with being in possession of skeleton keys and housebreaking implements without reasonable excuse and a long list of articles found on him was produced. He was then remanded until the following Monday. The magistrates expressing the opinion that very great credit was due to Superintendent Radley for his conduct on this occasion.

1851 December 10: Harry Percival age twenty-eight a labourer stole a handkerchief and eight pence three farthings and was transported for ten years. ³⁴

1851 December 16: Guildford Borough Police Court: Henry Lloyd was brought up in custody having had in his possession a quantity of counterfeit coin purporting to be shillings and sixpences with intent to utter the same. Superintendent Radley in evidence said he suspected parcels containing bad money had frequently been sent to the Swan beer house in Swan Lane where the prisoner was lodging. Radley went on Monday night the 8th to the railways station watching several trains arrive from London. By the 7 o'clock train a parcel arrived directed to "Joseph Mills, Swan, Swan Lane, Guildford." He opened the parcel and found the coin he then produced. It was wrapped in a piece of rag and consisted of 80 pieces purporting to be shillings and eight pieces purporting to sixpences. He packed the parcel up again in the same manner as it was before and caused the delivery to be delayed until Tuesday morning at 10am by the porter. He was in a position the following morning to see the parcel delivered to Mrs Seebrook the landlady. The prisoner was outside washing himself and after the porter left, he took the parcel upstairs, coming down again in six or seven minutes and the superintendent arrested and searched him finding the coins wrapped in rag in his trouser pocket. The prisoner was remanded until Monday³⁵

³⁴ Durant Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951 page 12

³⁵ 1851 December 16: The Sussex Advertiser, Surrey Gazette

1851 December 16: Magistrate's Clerk's Office: December 12 Ockham: James Wells a labourer from Ockham was brought up in custody by PC Murtell having been charged with threatening to take the life of his wife Martha who is in a far state of pregnancy, because she refused to take drugs to induce an abortion. The prisoner was severely reprimanded by the magistrates who ordered him to find two sureties in £20 each to keep the peace for 12 months. The required security not being forthcoming he was sent to prison for two months.³⁶

1851 Detection rate: There was not a great deal of crime but those prosecuted had an excellent chance of acquittal, in fact an even chance, possibly because of poor investigation and case preparation by untrained and inexperienced police officers. The large number of arrests in proportion to the recorded crime is further evidence. Interviewing and investigating had to be taught but mainly constables arrested suspects to take them to the superintendent for further investigation. In the past people were detained by the constable and taken before the local magistrate who undertook direction of the enquiry.

This interesting case from early 1852, details the decision making of the superintendent and the shortage of men he had to deploy, giving details of where they were stationed.

1852 13th February Evening Mail – At Surrey Quarter Sessions on 11th February, Superintendent Codd was a witness to a Prize Fight on Burstow Common. The defendants were all found guilty.

Edward Codd, Superintendent for Reigate district, stated on 2nd December with Inspector Benham and a constable went to Burstow Common, about five miles from Reigate arriving at 2 o'clock. There were about 300 persons and men were fighting in a circular ring formed by ropes. He got into the ring and asked them to desist in the Queen's name, but they continued fighting. The bystanders then rushed into the ring flourishing sticks and then fists so he thought it prudent as there were only three of them to retreat.

Codd had only nine men and an inspector in the Reigate District, and he was the only mounted one. His nine men were in different places some ten miles from Burstow Common. At Reigate he had one man and an inspector as this was the head station. He was himself stationed at Redhill. His district extended for nine or ten miles and the next man might be a mile and a half off.

Police Stations and Housing

³⁶ 1851 December 16: The Sussex Advertiser, Surrey Gazette

The new Surrey Constabulary adopted existing police stations at Bagshot, Chertsey, Dorking and Farnham which passed to the county and new stations were built at Egham, Godstone, Guildford, Haslemere, Hersham, Leatherhead, Reigate and at Chertsey.

Police officers in the county were provided with housing in both town and villages. Officers were to be deployed covering each of the 96 parishes though initially there were not enough men to achieve this aspiration. It is likely that first superintendents, appointed to each of the divisions were tasked to find accommodation in the towns and villages for the married men with single men probably to be in the town in or very near the police stations. A rural PC was part of a team – him and his wife!

Initially superintendents were stationed at police stations in Reigate, Dorking, Godalming, Farnham and Headquarters which covered Guildford, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh. In Guildford there were three constables and a superintendent upon amalgamation. Dorking Superintendent Donaldson and two constables. Godalming numbered the same and Farnham and other parishes had full time locally paid constables. Each division was by Home Office instructions not to have less than a population of 26,000.

Uniform

The Clerk of the Peace who had the task of implementing the magistrates wished advertised for uniform contractors:

Surrey County Constabulary: Persons desirous to SUPPLY the ARTICLES hereunder mentioned are invited to deliver tenders on or before Wednesday the 22^d instant, at the office of the Clerk of the Peace, specifying separately the quality and price of each article.

For Inspectors: Superfine blue dress coats, silver embroidered collars and buttons; blue milled cloth trousers, the pair; blue –milled cloth great coats; silk stock.

For Constables: Blue dress coats, embroidered collars; blue dress trousers the pair; blue undress ditto, ditto, great coats; embroidered badges; police capes; armlettes (stripped duty bands), boots, the pair, shoes the pair.

For Force Generally: Truncheons, lanthorns, rattles, pocket handcuffs, leg irons, stocks and clasps, hats with leather tops and sides, leather girdles and cape straps, button brushes and stocks

WORONZOW GREIG Clerk of the Peace, Record-office, North-street, Lambeth Jan 13 1851. ³⁷

³⁷ Morning Chronicle 15 January 1851

The uniform was based on the Metropolitan Police, consisting of a swallowtail coat of dark blue cloth, a well-glazed “stove pipe” top hat with white duck trousers in the summer and blue serge in the winter. Issued oil skin cape, truncheon, handcuffs, rattle.

The equipment and uniform varied little. In 1864 the helmet replaced the top hat, the whistle for the rattle in about 1884. The rattle was frequently carried in the breast pocket over the heart to protect against knife attacks. In several recorded incidents the life of a Peeler was saved when the rattle deflected a blade.³⁸

Recruiting the constables

Of the first 100 recruits, the originals, 23 were born in Surrey and 20 of the recruits were living in the county when they joined. The change of life from a skilled artisan or agricultural labourer must have been incredibly demanding.

Several men had been either full time parish constables in numerous parishes across the county or members of the micro police forces some finding the discipline and restrictive roles of working withing a command structure difficult, and the many were soon to resign or be dismissed. Resignation and dismissal were a continual drain on time and resources as recruitment was a constant necessity.

First 100 Resigned etc.

Resigned	Pension including ill health	Dismissed	Died
Resigned 54 of which ordered/permitted to resign 11	12	35 reality 46 if ordered/permitted included	3 (one beaten to death)

The men with previous experience as paid constables in the county or from the Metropolitan Police or other constabularies were vital to establishing an effective police service. The chief constable with no experience was reliant on his superintendents, and between them they replicated the model of policing made popular by Commissioner Rowan. It is what they knew.

The concept of policing at the beginning was simple. The Metropolitan Police were to replace Watch and Ward by patrolling and prevention. That is why the police officers remained attached to the central London magistrates’ courts, there were no detectives, the Thames Police and Bow Street Horse Patrols remained in existence. The responsibility for dealing with crime was perceived to remain the responsibility of the magistrates who employed their own police. By the time the Surrey Constabulary was formed these, and many other disputed issues, had been resolved. Policing the day to day was not the responsibility of magistrates and the Home

³⁸ Quoted in *The Victorian Policeman* by Simon Dell A Shire Book 2004 page 21

Office could not dictate operational responses. The new chief constable was answerable to the police committee of magistrates sitting at quarter sessions also responsible for dealing with crimes and taking prisoners before the magistrates.

Working as a rural policeman in 1850s

The population of the county of Surrey to be policed by the Surrey Constabulary in 1851 was 108,792. A great deal of reliance was placed on a small book of guidance issued to each officer and carried in a leather pouch on his belt. With this, a pocketbook, truncheon, a rattle and lamp officers walked twenty miles a day, often in the dark, and it was very dark. Split shifts, little sleep, mud in the winter dust in the summer walking the country lanes and roads that were little more than modern bridleways rutted by carriages and carts, torn up by horses' hooves. Clothing that was possibly the best to be bought but by modern standards not fit for purpose.

Social isolation. Living in the community but never a part of it – treated by most with respect but always kept at a distance.

These were tough, strong, fit men, brave and stoical and in as time went on in most cases reliable, being a central figure in the rural community alongside the vicar and doctor with whom they would have worked and knew well but in no way treated by them as an equal.

Police officers were provided with a cottage where they had to stay when off duty unable to leave without permission. Wives trying to keep the children quiet when husband trying to sleep and when not at work or sleeping, life in the garden to provide food to supplement pay.

Police pay was slightly above the level of an unskilled agricultural labourer for which he worked seven days a week for 10-12 hours usually in two shifts the longer up to seven hours at night. In time there were 10 days leave a year once the officer had been in post 12 months. This was the only time to visit family but with no money to go away as normally this was without pay such visits were few!³⁹ In 1893 the number of days leave was extended from 10 to 14 – that is 42 years without a change.⁴⁰

There were frequent house moves so the officer did not become too familiar with his locals – leading to touting for references from vicars to the chief constable to be allowed to stay a practice guaranteed to upset the chief constable. Although postings were frequent for most some officers seemed to remain in their rural area for many years possibly as a direct result of the influence of some landowner! Moves always seemed to mean the new house and garden was not up to the standard of the one left leading to a great deal of cleaning and gardening!

For all ranks, every activity was covered by a general order or regulation, every breach threatens the loss of your job and home. They walked a daily tightrope avoiding discipline,

³⁹ A History of Police in England and Wales TA Critchley 1967 page 151

⁴⁰ A History of Police in England and Wales TA Critchley 1967 page 166

trying to avoid a move to a new division or beat and resulting house move particularly at own expense as part of a punishment posting.

Not allowed to vote until 1887 in Parliamentary elections and 1893 local elections

The Village Constable

The village constable was in an uneasy position in the community for while he was notionally the equal protector of all citizens' rights and property, he was seen by many as the representative of the landowner. George Sturt wrote about The Bourne, in Surrey:

There is probably no lonelier man in the parish than the constable. One hears him mentioned in the same accents of grudging caution which the villagers use in speaking of unfriendly property-owners, as though he belonged to that alien caste.

The cottagers feel they themselves are the people whom he has stationed in the valley to watch." The conviction that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor was deeply ingrained.

The village policeman rarely had to deal with serious crime although rape and murder were not unknown, they were more likely to have to cope with poachers, fowl stealing, a fight in the pub, neighbourly disputes, with the occasional petty theft.

Ricks were fired by arsonists or by itinerants with a grudge and animal maiming was not uncommon. The Victorian version of anti-social behaviour was ever present with drunken louts letting animals from fields, the breaking of fences or even the pulling down of dry walls. "Beer, that filthy beer is the root of the evil".⁴¹

Pensions

A police officer was one of the first working class occupations to have some sort of pension.⁴² From 1829 -1890 there was no absolute entitlement to a pension at the minimum age of 60 the award being at the discretion of the police authority whether to pay and what amount ⁴³ An Act of 1840 had obliged justices to maintain a superannuation fund supported by 6d a week stoppages and other sources such as fines.

Probably most recruits hoped eventually to qualify for a pension but only a small proportion outside London succeeded in doing so. Even when a man had served long enough and had reached the minimum pensionable age, justices in the county or the watch committee in the Boroughs (who had to obtain the permission of the town council) still retained complete discretion whether to grant a pension, and to determine the amount, subject to a fixed maximum.

⁴¹ "Victorian Village Life" Albion 1993 Neil Phillip page 112

⁴² "The Great British Bobby" Clive Emsley Page 6

⁴³ A History of Police in England and Wales TA Critchley 1967 page 168

Surrey Constabulary Superannuation Fund

The Fund (for pensions) was maintained not by the county treasurer but under the control and discretion of the chief constable. In addition to the 6d a week stoppage from pay it was added to by a range of sources including rewards and discipline fines.^{44 45}

In 1851 General Order 42 clearly establishes the independence of the Superannuation Fund.

The Chief Constable directs that in all cases where half the fine is awarded to the informant, and that informant is a police constable, Superintendents will request the Magistrates Clerk to hand that amount over to them, instead of paying it to the County Treasurer with other monies, as the moiety.⁴⁶

Another source of revenue for the Fund was established in 1853

“--- as new clothing for the year 1853 will shortly be served out to them, they will become entitled to that which was supplied to them in the year 1851 upon payment of the sum of four shillings each, and next year to that for the year 1852 upon payment of the sum of two shillings and six pence and so on in future years. The amount accruing from this source will be paid into the Superannuation Fund.”⁴⁷

There may have been a pension fund, but it was not set up to pay an annuity to the widow of an officer killed on duty, as was Inspector Donaldson in 1855. A public subscription was begun on behalf of the inspector's family, and later a petition was sent to the Home Secretary asking that his widow might receive a pension. Lord Lovaine, chairman of the police committee made a request for a pension for Mrs Donaldson's but was unsuccessful. It took a year and a county court order taken out by Mrs Donaldson to release any benefit from the subscriptions of £200 (£16,037.22 today) held by the trustees at Haslemere.

(The National Archives calculate in 2017 that in 1851 £200 could buy 13 horses or 37 cows or a 1000 days' pay of a skilled tradesman.⁴⁸)

The loss of PC Mason from injuries sustained whilst making an arrest, left Mrs Ann Mason a widow in need of urgent help to care for her three children, Ann, aged 8, Allan 7, and Agnes one year. The Quarter Sessions had the power to grant her up to two thirds (£35) of Allan's annual pay and the chief constable at the Epiphany sitting on 7th January 1860 proposed that they did so. He added that Police Constable Mason had six years' service, and “died in consequence of injuries he had received in the performance of his duties in July” (1859). “He had been very steady while in the force and had left a widow.” With commendable swiftness, less than a month after Allan's funeral, Mrs Mason was given £35 as a grant. It was not a

⁴⁴ “Policing Rural Surrey” Robert Bartlett www.surrey-constabulary.com page 322

⁴⁵ Defaulters Register SCC Archives Woking

⁴⁶ Each of two parts into which a thing is or can be divided

⁴⁷ 1853, March 8, Surrey Constabulary General Order 94

⁴⁸ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>

pension because widows' pensions for officers killed on duty would not to be introduced for another thirty years.

Additional contributions to the Superannuation Fund are not obvious from this order of 1858: “--- having ascertained that it is the practice in some counties where rewards are allowed to the Constabulary for the apprehension of deserters etc. the chief constable resolved to constitute a fund for the reward of good conduct, the support of the Library, and for other such purposes as may benefit the Force generally, and to pay into such fund the half of all rewards received in future by the Constabulary”.⁴⁹ Over the decades pensions improved to the point where police pensions were seen as desirable, the envy of many.

How did the police move about?

Walking was the main means for moving around! Each division had a horse mostly for the use of the superintendent or inspector and several horse-drawn carts were available for tasks such as prisoner transport. The main road system in Surrey is very ancient with roads from London to the west country (A30) to Portsmouth and Southampton (A31), the Roman Road to Chichester (A29), to Sussex (A22, A23, A24) and cross the county through the middle now the A25 and M25. Many of these roads were at times very dangerous to travel on given the likelihood of robbery and murder especially on the heaths of the north and west of the county.

Using the train was a revolution for travelling by criminals and police who travelled to investigate crime, go to court with or without a prisoner, collect prisoners from elsewhere in the county or country, wherever the villain was arrested. Police on aid, mostly Metropolitan Police, between forces used the train.

The 1840s saw 'railway mania'. By 1851 6,800 miles of track had been laid. Soon it was possible to travel from London to Bristol in hours rather than days at speeds of around 60 mph. One of the early steam railway lines ran from London to Southampton and was opened by the London and South Western Railway Company in 1838. Its route took it through Surrey and stations were opened in Esher, Walton-on-Thames, Weybridge, and Woking. The company continued to expand its rail network, and in 1859 a line was opened to Godalming. Other early train stations were built at Chertsey in 1866, Ockley in 1867, and at Bookham in the 1880s.

On 5th May 1845 Guildford received its first railway, when it was joined to the London-Southampton line at Woking Junction. Guildford remained a "terminus" station for over 5 years, until 15th October 1849 when the line from Reading to Redhill opened. On the same day, the Guildford line was also extended south to Godalming (LSWR). This line was further extended south on 1st January 1859, when trains first ran all the way down to Portsmouth. It is known that members of the Isaacs' gang travelled by train to come together or to travel to London no doubt to sell stolen property.

⁴⁹ 25 October, Surrey Constabulary General Order 141

Horsham was joined by rail shortly after Guildford, on 14th February 1848, when a line was built from Three Bridges to London. It became a junction on 10th October 1859, when the line from Petworth via Pulborough joined there. On 16th September 1861 another line joined just south of Horsham, from Shoreham. The Leatherhead to Dorking Line was the London Brighton and South Coast extended south to join up at Horsham on 1st May 1867.

If rail travel shrank the country, the telegraph crushed it. The spread of railways stimulated communication, and Rowland Hill's standardisation of postal charges in 1839 saw a boom in mail services. But this was nothing compared to the revolution of the telegraph which opened in the 1840s and soon went stratospheric. Within ten years exchanging telegrams had become part of everyday life.⁵⁰

Though the telegraph was well established before the formation of the Surrey Constabulary and was in use in the constabularies certainly in January 1851 when a message was transmitted from probably Guildford to Tunbridge Wells, about a member of the Isaacs Gang.⁵¹ In London at this time telegraph links were established from the site of the Great Exhibition to Scotland Yard, 4, Whitehall Place.⁵² Reference is made to the use of the telegraph by a journalist in Dorking in 1853⁵³ and in 1855 it was said that it was cheaper and more efficient for police at Woking to deal by telegraph with Scotland Yard than it was with local town machinery!⁵⁴ The murder of a draper named Ovenden at Nutfield in 1857 involved notification of the case to Scotland Yard by telegraph.⁵⁵

It was not until 1898 that the Surrey Constabulary declared its intention to install telephones, writing to the Commissioner proposing that Egham be linked to the Metropolitan Police at Staines. The Metropolitan Police would not cover the greater part of the cost and so the proposal did not go ahead. (Later implemented with Surrey able to access the Metropolitan Police internal telephone system.)⁵⁶

Policing has never been easy though in some parts of the country a soft option was referred to as a "Bobby's Job"!⁵⁷ The original officers appointed in the Surrey Constabulary were faced with a range of challenges associated with the formation of a new organisation, though many of the practices and procedures had been established elsewhere, particularly in the Metropolitan Police. It must have been a difficult if not fraught time working together, getting to know individuals' capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, working out the best way, appropriate police buildings, homes for families recruiting and handling new accounts and ledgers. The speed in recruiting, equipping, and deploying in weeks was amazing particularly when the lack of

⁵⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/speed_01.shtml

⁵¹ 1851 25 January: The Northern Star Saturday

⁵² "Rowan and Mayne" page 285

⁵³ 1853 Sept 15: Dorking, The Standard

⁵⁴ 1855 February 17: Letter London Daily News

⁵⁵ 1857 16 February: The Times

⁵⁶ "From Rattle to Radio" John Bunker page 104

⁵⁷ A Bobby's job: A safe job, a "soft" duty. Meant usually by way of a reflection on the comparatively "safe" duties of a military policeman in wartime. https://thegreatwar.miraheze.org/wiki/Bobby%27s_job

communications other than face to face or letter is acknowledged. They managed and managed well as there was soon an effective police organisation covering the county day and night, dealing with all manner of crimes and situations.

It worked! Scrutiny never ceased. Money was forever in short supply! The workload increased as did police numbers evolving into what was thought by many of the Surrey Constabulary in modern times to be more than a job but The Job! A way of life. A family force.

The more you learn of these men the greater is the respect!