



A HISTORY OF POLICING IN MANCHESTER 1839 - 1974

THE BOROUGH POLICE The Incorporation of Manchester was achieved in 1838. An elected Town Council that could raise rates was set up, albeit with much local, and vocal, opposition. The councillors then set up the first Watch Committee in January 1839 with the purpose of introducing a new borough force to the area but the Court Leet and Police Commissioners (the former bodies charged with appointing Constables and running a Night Watch respectively) refused to disband the old day police and night watchmen. Encouraged by anti-incorporationists' claims that the Incorporation of Manchester was technically illegal, they refused to recognise the new Watch Committee and barred them from the existing police premises. The result was chaos: three distinct police bodies, totalling around six hundred men, operated at the same time in the town, but without any central control.

The threat of disturbance in the town by Chartists, the radical reform group, coupled with the disorganised state of the police, caused the Government to pass the Manchester Police Act of 1839 and appoint Sir Charles Shaw as Commissioner of a new police force run on the Metropolitan pattern. This came into being on 17th October 1839 with a strength of two hundred constables. Very soon afterwards the force was increased in size to 357 officers.

Shaw went on to establish a similar force in Bolton, again because of local disputes over Incorporation. Eventually problems regarding Incorporation were solved and the Manchester Borough Council gave a pledge to adopt the Government force but they would not accept control by Shaw. To overcome this problem the Commissioner's role was ended in September 1842 and on 24th October 1842. Captain Edward Willis was appointed Chief Constable at a salary of £450 with £50 allowance for expenses, commanding a force of sixty-five officers and 251 constables. The headquarters of the new force was in the old town hall building with an entrance in Cross Street.

A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1848 to 1974

1848 - A series of mass meetings and demonstrations were held in Manchester by the Chartists. Their demands included the right of every man to vote and the use of the secret ballot. By April of that year the authorities were afraid of a Chartist upris-



ing so they reacted by swearing-in 12,000 Special Constables. On 10th April thousands of marchers set off for Manchester from surrounding areas, but the town was garrisoned in preparation. As the marchers approached the city, the police warned them of the danger in proceeding and persuaded them to disperse. The new police had faced its first major incident and had succeeded in controlling the situation without the use of violence or military help.

1867 - The first Manchester policeman was murdered on duty. Two members of the Irish Nationalist group known as the 'Fenian Brotherhood' had been captured in the city. On 18th September, Sergeant Charles Brett was escorting three prisoners to the Belle Vue Prison on Hyde Road, Manchester, when the van in which he was travelling was attacked and the prisoners rescued. Brett was shot dead during the rescue. Three men were hanged for his murder and subsequently they became known as 'Manchester Martyrs'.

1868 - Jerome Caminada joined Manchester City Police at the age of twenty-four. He rose through the ranks to become the Chief Detective of the City and one of the greatest detectives ever to serve in the Manchester area.

1877 - The present town hall in Albert Square was opened. The basement housed a police charge office and cells with admittance being gained from the Lloyd Street entrance.

1898 - Robert Peacock (later knighted) was appointed Chief Constable. He was the first Manchester Chief Constable to have served in the ranks of the police and had previously been Chief Constable at Oldham. He introduced great policing changes - a comprehensive Instruction Book, promotion examinations and the introduction of notebooks for Constables to use. He also declared that each policeman should have a definite meal-time allotted during which he could eat his food at some convenient station. By 1911 most of the officers could take a twenty-minute meal break.

Most importantly, he redefined the balance of power between the Chief Constable and the Council Watch Committee, putting greater responsibility for operational policing in the hands of the Chief. He served the people of Manchester for 28 years as Chief Constable, dying in post in 1926.

1908 -The taking of one day off in seven was authorised and special evening classes for police officers were introduced.

1928 - A new police box system was introduced involving the closing of old police stations and their replacement by a number of wooden huts or 'boxes'. Being un-



manned, these boxes would release officers previously employed on station duties and return them to the beat. In the years of interwar austerity and depression, the box system was also cheap and meant that some of the most decrepit Victorian stations could be closed, and replaced with a network of boxes and a single, modern station that would act as the network controller. The boxes contained a telephone that could be used by police or public. Even though the radical plan to replace police stations was not fully implemented, the boxes remained a vital part of the Police communications network until the 1960s.

1933 - In June a drama and tragedy occurred at the Victoria Bridge over the River Irwell. A man named William Burke fell into the river and PC Tom Jewes, recently married and already holder of the Watch Committee Medal For Bravery, went in to rescue him. Both were drowned. Jewes' funeral procession brought the city to a stand-still as 20,000 people lined the route.

1937 - Manchester City Police took control of their new headquarters at Southmill Street. The Chief Constable stated "The new building made it possible to completely centralise administrative control and permitted the creation of several new departments in the scientific aspects of criminal investigation". For the first time special offices and laboratories were available for fingerprint work, photography and forensic examinations.

1939 - On 16th January a bomb exploded below the pavement in Hilton Street, Manchester. One man on his way to work in Smithfield Market was fatally injured. Two more pedestrians received serious injuries following explosions at Mosley Street and Princess Street. The bombs had been placed by members of the Irish Republican Army. Within twenty-four hours the police had arrested ten people after raids on their houses, recovering six barrels of explosives and forty sticks of gelignite. One of those arrested was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

1940 - Police and other Emergency services struggle to cope with the heavy raids of Christmas 1940, which devastated 30 acres. At one point the strain on the City was so great that the Manchester Chief Constable, Sir John Maxwell, had to resist pressure for the imposition of Martial Law.

Also in this year, the first six Policewomen Constables are appointed. The first women in police uniform had been seen on the streets of Manchester as early as 1917, but they were not granted full police powers. The pressures of the war and the need for contributions by everyone to the war effort meant that Authorities finally bowed to years of pressure by women campaigners. The immediate post war years saw the creation of Policewomen's Departments in many forces.



1945 - In June the 'King of Forgers' - Herbert Winstanley - was caught passing forged pound notes whilst placing a bet at the Albion Stadium in Salford. At his home in Lindum Street, Rusholme, police found a complete forger's workshop and thousands of forged pound notes stacked in bundles. He received ten years imprisonment.

1950s - This period saw the commencement of many experiments with radio vans and personal radio sets for beat officers. First tried and tested in the neighbouring Lancashire County force, the unit beat system or 'panda' system, with the twin features of the 'panda' patrol car and the personal radio, was introduced to Manchester in 1967.

The officer in the car was to provide back-up to the area constables. Each district was divided into beats which became the responsibility of one individual constable who was free to police his beat with a certain amount of discretion.

1968 - On 1 April Manchester City Police amalgamated with the Salford City force to become Manchester and Salford Police force, Salford forming the 'F' Division of the 2,193 strong force.

1974 - On April 1st, Greater Manchester Police was created and the old Manchester and Salford City areas became the hub of the new force. The divisional headquarters for the hub were based at Bootle Street (City Centre A Div), Rochdale Road (Colyhurst B Div), Grey Mare Lane (Bradford C Div), Stockport Road (Longsight D Div), Platt Lane (Rusholme E Div) and The Crescent (Salford F Div).